

7. DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

This chapter addresses the results of each of the case studies in chapter 6 with respect to the genogram and thematic content obtained and then comparatively discusses these results, with regards to the dominant themes yielded by each individual analysis. Discussion of results will bear in mind the research focus of the current study, namely:

- “How does the family system of a person who commits serial murder function?”

That is, what is the family structure, who are the people in the family system and how do they maintain the family system.

The discussion will commence with the case study of Mr X, followed by that of Mr Y, attending predominantly to the focus of the research, whilst the latter portion of this chapter will reflect upon any similarities between the two case studies, and if the findings of this research are similar to other research or theories which have commented on the families of such individuals.

7.1 DISCUSSION OF RESULTS OF CASE STUDY ONE – MR X AND HIS FAMILY

As discussed in the previous chapter (chapter 6), the clinical observations of the members of the X family, the genogram and the interviews conducted yielded considerable information concerning the family system of Mr X. This information was supplemented with interviews with the prison psychologist of the prison where Mr X is being held, as well as the psychiatrist who initially assessed Mr X for the purposes of his initial trial. Newspaper reports were also consulted as a secondary source of information.

Discussion of the results will now involve presentation of such results in accordance with the genogram interpretation method outlined by McGoldrick and Gerson (1985), followed by an interpretation of the information via a thematic content analysis applied to results.

7.1.1 Genogram interpretation

The genogram will now be interpreted with respect to the six categories outlined in the methodology section (chapter 5), namely:

1. Family structure;
2. Life cycle fit;
3. Pattern repetition across generations;
4. Life events and family functioning;
5. Relational patterns and triads;
6. Family balance and imbalance (McGoldrick & Gerson, 1985).

Each section will commence by outlining the main aspects applicable to the section found in the genogram, and then will elaborate upon each aspect in greater detail in terms of how it relates to the family system in the discussion section.

- **Category one: family structure.**
 - Nuclear family
 - Sibling constellation
 - Unusual structural configurations
 - Summary of family structure.

- Nuclear family.

As can be seen in the genogram (Chapter 6, figure 2), the family of Mr X takes a nuclear form, consisting of Mr X, father X and mother X. Neither father X nor mother X has been married previously, and Mr X is their only child. Mr X also appears to be the eldest grandchild for both maternal and paternal sides of the family system (see section on the nuclear family system where Mr X is described as having been the only child at many family gatherings when young due to having been the first grandchild). All of this information was obtained from the interview with mother X and father X, as discussed in the family data section in the previous chapter.

The nuclear family form seems to be the predominating form in this family system (see genogram). This form can be seen in both the maternal and paternal siblings, as well as on the side of the paternal grandparents. However, there is a deviation from this pattern in the case of the maternal grandparents, where the maternal grandfather remarried on two occasions (see chapter 6).

As evident in the previous chapter, the nuclear families within the family system are geographically and emotionally distant from each other, with little interaction between any of the sibling nuclear families on both maternal and paternal sides of the system. This was also the case with the paternal grandparents. The only link between members of the extended family system and those of the nuclear family system appears to have been between the maternal grandfather and mother X and Mr X (as stated by mother X – see chapter 6).

- Sibling constellation.

The genogram yields the following information concerning the sibling position of the members of the nuclear family:

- Father X was the third eldest of four siblings, and the youngest male with an older sister and brother;
- Mother X was the second eldest of four siblings, and the only female; and
- Mr X was an only child, and the eldest grandchild.

As evidenced in the previous chapter, both the father and mother of father X are deceased.

According to father X, he is not close to any of his siblings and does not keep in contact with them. He also described his sisters as “high society” and states that the nuclear family (father X, mother X and Mr X) is “simpler”.

As the youngest of two brothers and a middle child, he may have developed into a more introverted character, not able to assert himself (Toman, 1961). Growing up as part of a sibling constellation where the eldest position was occupied by a woman in charge may explain the spousal arrangement in his own house, with mother X taking responsibility for the household duties, while he provided instrumental support as the primary breadwinner.

This is stated by Mr X where he confirmed that “my dad just provided for us, he wasn’t, you know, he didn’t help me with my schoolwork or- there wasn’t a strong bond between me and my dad’ and ‘my mom basically raised me.”

With reference to the maternal side of the family system (chapter, 6), it would appear that mother X has three siblings and was the only female child in her family. She has one elder brother and two younger brothers. Her youngest brother is deceased. Both of her parents are deceased, and her father married three times. Mother X stated, as with father X, that she also was not in contact with any of her siblings.

As the only female child in the family, mother X may have been faced with taking responsibility for many of the household chores and duties associated with traditional assumptions about the role of the female in the family. She may have been socially excluded

from playing with her brothers due to the fact that they were boys and she was a girl, and consequently, this may have left her feeling quite lonely growing up.

She may have developed very segregated, and narrowly defined notions of gender and gender roles – namely, that men and women did separate things; did not socialize together; and had different responsibilities. This can be seen in her own spousal relationship. Mr X described the relationship between his parents as being very polarized with regards to duties and responsibilities, with his mother responsible for raising him, and his father for providing the financial support for the family. Mr X stated that “my mother basically raised me...my father looked after us but he didn’t help me with schoolwork or there wasn’t a strong bond between us...he was there but he was busy with his own things.”

Mother X’s notions of gender can also be seen in the following statement that she made during the interview with her. It appears that mother X seems to see women as more manipulative and deceptive in order to be successful peacemakers, whereas men are seen as blunt, straightforward and more brutally honest. Mother X stated that “I’ll keep things back, to keep the peace and so on...I’ll try to protect people to keep the peace...but Mr X and his father are straightforward...mothers always have a soft spot, you know, and I think most women have a soft spot...”

Given the implications of their respective sibling positions, the following statements may possibly be made about the spousal relationship of father X and mother X. Father X and mother X appear to be considerably compatible when viewed in light of their respective sibling positions and experience with peers of different sexes within their respective families. In other words, father X was used to females occupying a position of responsibility with regard to household chores and duties due to his experience with his elder sister, and mother X was used to occupying that position in her own family. Thus, she possibly met his expectations in this regard. Similarly, mother X was used to being taken care of by older

males, and hence, had little problems with father X's assumption of the role of primary breadwinner, and being older than mother X.

Additionally, father X's isolation from the nuclear family; and the segregated, rigid roles of husband and wife performed by father X and mother X in the nuclear family may have possibly been influenced by their respective patterns of interaction with peers of their own age group within their families of origin. Once married, both father X and mother X grew increasingly isolated from their extended family network. Father X stated that "we [his family members] are estranged, [Mr X] never knew his aunts because they are a little bit 'high society' – we are simpler. And my nieces, I don't know where they stay." Mother X stated that "we knew my family well when [Mr X] was very young but then they moved away and we lost contact...just my father and [Mr X] were very close...I don't know anything about my nieces or nephews."

This isolation is consequently geographical in the sense that all of their siblings live a considerable distance from the X nuclear family, as well as each other, and all seem emotionally distant. The only family member who lived close to the X nuclear family was the maternal grandfather. Mother X kept up contact with her father throughout the time that Mr X was growing up, and this appears to be the only extended family member with which contact was maintained (see the maternal side of the family system (chapter 6)).

Father X, conversely, was always very isolated from his extended family. While Mr X was younger (up until the age of about 13), the family would visit mother X's family in another province periodically; however, these visits declined over time, and now contact with the extended family is minimal (see chapter 6).

As indicated in chapter 6, it would appear that Mr X was an only child in the nuclear family system, as well as the first and eldest male grandchild in the extended family system. Mr X's position within the family system as the first and eldest male grandchild, as well as

the only child of father X and mother X, may have contributed towards pressure to carry the family name and reputation forward.

Due to the fact that many of the remaining members of the second generation did not have children of their own for some time after the birth of Mr X, he may have lacked peers of his own age with which to interact, and had to learn to interact with adults and play by himself from an early age. Mr X stated that “[at family gatherings] I was the only child and didn’t really have anyone to talk to, that would have made it more enjoyable for me...so it was difficult.” This may have led to Mr X becoming socially independent and less oriented to social relations, and maintained close attachments to his parents throughout life. Mother X describes Mr X as “very quiet, he was very loving and he didn’t have many friends – one or two that I know of.” This persisted into later life as can be seen in Mr X’s statement in that “I grew up alone...maybe that’s why I’m an introvert and not an extrovert, I don’t know.”

Mr X’s position as an only child may also have contributed towards a strong identification with Miss N, his first girlfriend, who was also an only child. Their relationship may also have been complicated by their close attachments to their parents – in Mr X’s case, this would appear to be his mother, and in Miss N’s case, this appears to have been her father (see chapter 6) – as well as the considerable immaturity that both seem to have exhibited as a result of parental overinvolvement. Mother X stated that Miss N “had a strict father... [who] loaned them money to buy a flat.”

Neither appears to have possessed the interpersonal skills necessary to assert themselves and break away from the influence of each other’s respective parents. This, together with competition for the privileged position and attention from those around them, may have placed considerable stress on their relationship. Mr X’s lack of experience of competition with his peers may have meant that he had to find other outlets to express this. Additionally, the relatively closed nature of the X family system may have limited the number of outlets

available for the release of stress within the X family system. Consequently, these outlets may have taken more deviant or extreme forms. For example, after an argument with his future father-in-law, he went out and committed the fourth murder near to the area in which Miss N and her family lived.

Finally, father X and mother X may have found it difficult to identify with Mr X's sibling position, as a result of both of them having grown up in families with other siblings. This may have made it difficult for them to recognize Mr X's need to socialize with peers of his own age.

- Unusual structural configurations.

The genogram demonstrates two significant unusual structural configurations, namely:

- absence of single children; and
- maternal grandfather's remarriages.

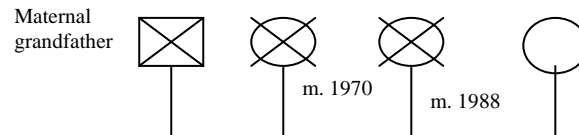
The genogram demonstrates that throughout the extended family system, other familial units in the system all have many offspring. Mr X is the sole instance of an only child within the family system. This may have contributed towards pressure on Mr X to carry the line of his parents further, and resulted in an increase in the intensity of emotional processes in any triangulation that may have occurred between himself and his parents (in the absence of another sibling with which to share the load).

Additionally, given that Mr X was the eldest and only grandchild for a considerable period of time, his position within the family system may have isolated him from experiences of competition or rivalry with peers of his own age or slightly older or younger (see quote above). Consequently, he may have had to compete with adults around him as a child (due to the absence of peers of a similar age). He may have always come off second best in these

exchanges that may have resulted in feelings of frustration, lack of power and low self-esteem, which would have persisted, into adulthood.

Figure 4.

Maternal Grandfather's Remarriages



The genogram demonstrates that throughout the family system (extended and nuclear), each member of a family unit has stayed married to their first spouse. The only exception to this was the maternal grandfather, who was married three times (see chapter 6). His first two wives died of natural causes and he only remarried after the death of his previous spouse. Consequently, there appears to be no indication of separation or divorce in the family system (extended and nuclear). Both of these exceptional aspects of the family system will be discussed, in the section on balances and imbalances in the family system.

- Summary of family structure.

The first category, family structure, yielded the following notable aspects of the family system of Mr X. The family system, consisting of both extended and immediate family systems, consists exclusively of nuclear family units. These appear to be relatively isolated from each other. The sibling position and constellation of the respective members of the nuclear family system (namely, father X, mother X, and Mr X) consist of two middle child position parents, and an only child. The respective sibling positions and constellations may contribute towards understanding father X's introversion; mother X's caretaking role with

respect to both father X and Mr X; and Mr X's relatively impoverished interpersonal skills and social isolation. The sibling positions of the respective members of the nuclear family system also add to understandings of the gap between Mr X and his parents; and his relationship with Miss N. Father and mother X appear compatible in certain aspects in light of their respective sibling positions. The nuclear family system also appears to be isolated from sibling family systems within the larger familial system. Unusual structural configurations include the absence of only children and the remarriages of the maternal grandfather. Mr X's position as the sole child in the nuclear or extended family systems may have contributed towards pressure on him within the family system to occupy a certain role within the system, namely as the member of the X family system to carry the X name onto a subsequent generation.

- **Category two: life cycle fit.**

The genogram and interview data revealed the following significant areas in the life cycle of the family system, namely loss and death, and intimate relationships.

- **Loss and death.**

The genogram appears to reveal a great deal of activity in the family system on occasions of loss and death. These occasions are:

- o the death of the maternal grandmother;
- o the death of the maternal grandfather's second wife; and
- o the death of the maternal grandfather.

As can be seen from the genogram as well as data used to compile the genogram (see chapter 6), Mr X was born in 1966, a year after the death of his maternal grandmother (1965). Given the close timing of these two events, these may be significant with regards to the family

system. Mr X may have signified a possible replacement within the family system for the lost member, in terms of the role that she may have performed or function that her position served. Mr X appears to have had a very close relationship with his maternal grandfather throughout his childhood (see chapter 6) which may be significant given that he was born a year after the death of his maternal grandmother. He may have acted as a consolation to his maternal grandfather. The maternal grandfather only remarried again in 1970 (see genogram, Figure 4), when Mr X would have been four years of age and probably less available due to commencing school or other possible commitments.

Another co-occurrence in the family life cycle, is Mr X's failing of Standard 3 [grade 5] due to illness (he had meningitis, see chapter 6) and commencement of his learning difficulties in 1976, the year after the death of his maternal grandfather's second wife (1975). This (together with the above) may be an indication of triangulated relationships and emotional fusion within the family system.

The death of the maternal grandfather (1988) coincided with a number of significant events in the family system. A year prior to the death of the maternal grandfather, 1987, he and Mr X had had an argument that resulted in the two of them breaking ties with each other. That same year, Mr X and Miss N started dating. In the year of his death, 1988, the maternal grandfather had remarried for the third time. In the year following the death of the maternal grandfather, namely, in 1989, Mr X was demoted at work, and committed the first rape and murder of his series.

As stated above, the clustering of significant events around areas of loss and death in the family system (specifically with respect to Mr X and his maternal grandparents), may be indicative of intense emotional fusion between the respective members involved.

The above also reflects a difficulty within this family system of dealing with loss and death, specifically on the maternal side of the family. The greater intensity of apparent

emotional involvement on mother X's side of the family and seemingly greater impact on the family from events from the maternal side, may have contributed towards father X's isolation from his extended family.

- Intimate relationships.

In terms of life cycle events, the capacity to develop intimate relationships, and leave the nuclear family system to form one's own nuclear family unit, is important within a family system and is an indication of a healthy family system. In this light, two problematic areas emerge in the family system of Mr X, namely:

- o Mr X's delayed and limited capacity for intimate relationships; and
- o the maternal grandfather's relationship history.

As can be seen in the genogram from data reflected in chapter 6, Mr X appears to have had his first girlfriend at the age of 21. This may indicate a delay in the development of a capacity for intimate relationships outside of the family. Interestingly, this event, namely going out with Miss N, coincided with the argument between Mr X and his maternal grandfather (1987). This may indicate that the withdrawal of the maternal grandfather from Mr X liberated a position for someone else to fill, and that this may have influenced the nature of the relationship between Mr X and Miss N in turn.

The frequency with which the maternal grandfather remarried, together with the short amount of time between spouses, reflects incomplete emotional processing between relationships as well as a particular attitude towards women (see figure 4). Incomplete emotional processing would have been on account of the maternal grandfather's own limited capacity to invest emotions outside of the family system and the message that may have been conveyed to Mr X was that women were replaceable and served to fill whatever void was left

by their predecessor. This can be seen as an indication of the limited adaptability of the family system.

Additionally, this behaviour may have reflected a possible ignoring of the intensity associated with emotional loss and bereavement and a lack of ability to bring about adequate closure to relationships. The “serial” nature of the maternal grandfather’s relationship history may have set up a model of ways of conducting relationships with the opposite sex, which was interpreted more violently and deviantly by Mr X in later life. It also seems to be apparent that he originally modeled on his maternal grandfather, being close to him for almost 19 years (see chapter 6). This, together with the emotional detachment in the relationship between his two parents, can be seen as playing an important part in characterizing his attitudes towards his victims and nature of his crimes, namely via their serial nature; his lack of empathy and objectification of his victims; and emotional detachedness from the violence of his murders and rapes. It is also significant that the one woman with whom Mr X’s maternal grandfather had a permanent, consistent relationship, was mother X. Mother X stated that “he [Mr X] was always close to my father, we used to spend a lot of time with him, good times...”

- Summary of life cycle events.

The second category, life cycle events, revealed two main areas that had considerable impact on the family system. These are loss and death, and intimate relationships. Loss and death events in the family system of Mr X have a considerable impact on the system. Loss and death events that appear to have impacted seem to be on the maternal side of the family system. These include the death of the maternal grandmother; the death of the maternal grandfather’s second wife; and the death of the maternal grandfather. This may have

contributed towards Mr X's possible emotional fusion with this side of the family in the family system.

Intimate relationships, relationship history and capacity for intimate relationships outside of the family system are also important areas in the family system life cycle. Two main observations emerge from the genogram and interview data, namely, that Mr X has difficulty in forming intimate relationships, and that the maternal grandfather has a relationship history that indicates a certain attitude towards women and seems to have had an absence of emotional loss after the death of his wives. Both of these aspects may explain Mr X's considerable fusion in the family system that would explain his difficulty in forming intimate emotional relationships outside of such a system, and thus a tendency towards aggressive and violent behaviour.

- **Category three: pattern repetition across generations.**

- Patterns of functioning
- Patterns of relationship
- Summary of pattern repetition across generations

- **- Patterns of functioning.**

In terms of patterns of functioning, the genogram demonstrates the following patterns being repeated across generations in the family system:

- emotional distance and cutting off as a means of dealing with confrontation;
- diminished coping skills with stress and anxiety;
- distribution of success and failure;
- movement; and
- absence of divorce or separation.

It would appear that the complete family system tends to deal with the disapproval of other family members or outsiders to the family system, and with conflict by distancing and emotionally cutting off from the individuals concerned.

This pattern of avoidance and detachment in response to confrontation and disapproval repeats itself in all three generations. In the first generation, the maternal grandfather distanced himself emotionally and withdrew from Mr X after their argument (as mentioned by mother X, see chapter 6); in the second generation, father X did this with his sisters who he felt believed that they were too good for him (as mentioned by father X, see chapter 6); and in the third generation, Mr X repeated this pattern in his relationship with both Miss N and her father by withdrawing and distancing himself from the relationship when he did not meet with the approval of her father, or when conflict had occurred between himself and Miss N's father (as described by Mr X in interviews, see quotes below).

Mr X stated that he had asked the maternal grandfather if he could borrow his truck to go to work and then used the truck to also help some people move house. The maternal grandfather was unhappy about this and as a result "[they] fought and then he wanted nothing else to do with me...my mother and him had a relationship but he would not talk to me." Mr X also stated that "three months before I was arrested, our engagement was called off because...the experiences that I'd been through [his crimes] had made lose respect for older people and their wishes which caused me to argue with my [future] father-in-law...and as a result, the engagement had to be called off."

In terms of coping skills, there appears to be a limited capacity to deal with conflict and stress in the family system, specifically on the maternal side. This is evidenced in the genogram and information obtained from interviews with father X, mother X and Mr X (see chapter 6) which demonstrates the maternal grandfather's alcohol use, mother X's history of sedative use, father X's and Mr X's smoking habits as well as Mr X's own coping strategy of

criminal behaviour, which he describes as “an addiction.” It would also appear that violence as a coping strategy or means to achieve one’s ends is present in the system as evidenced by mother X’s disciplining of Mr X when he was a young boy. Mr X stated that

there were good times [at home] but everything revolved around my studies...and it was very difficult for me at that stage – I couldn’t understand why my mother had to be so strict...ultimately, I was actually quite scared of my mother...she raised me and if I did something wrong she would give me a hiding...like when I couldn’t remember my work properly.

In terms of patterns of success and failure, it would appear that siblings on the maternal and paternal sides of the family system have managed to achieve considerable success in comparison to the X nuclear family. Father X refers to his sisters as “high society”, while mother X has a brother who is has successful antique business. This may have contributed to pressure on father X to achieve comparable success, which may have sparked his business venture in 1982. His subsequent failure in this venture may have placed increased strain on his family and consequently, increased pressure on Mr X, as the only child, to succeed where his father had failed. Mr X stated that “it [the failure of father X’s business venture] was a big setback for them [father and mother X] and I could see it in my dad - he wasn’t very happy and he was a bit down.”

As demonstrated in the genogram, there is a pattern of considerable physical movement or general restlessness within the family system. This is reflected mostly in the second generation, where siblings have moved to different areas and changed residence a number of times. This includes father X and mother X who have moved in search of business opportunity (the Cape Province in 1982), as well as around the eastern Gauteng Province; the maternal siblings live in Kwazulu-Natal Province and the Northern Cape Province

respectively; and the paternal siblings live in the Northern Province and the Free State Province respectively.

Mr X seems to have repeated this pattern in his own life, actively pursuing jobs that involved a large degree of travel, and enjoying moving around. Considerable movement also characterized his criminal behaviour, namely serial murder, with the murders comprising his series taking place across the Gauteng Province. Mr X stated that “I enjoyed seeing new places and enjoyed new experiences and discovering new things - it was great for me to see new places.”

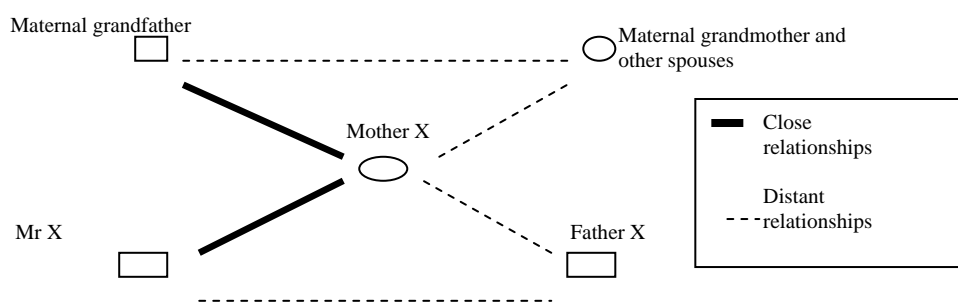
There seems to be a repeated pattern of marital functioning in the genogram in the sense that there is no indication of family break up or marital splitting throughout the system, regardless of the issues of conflict and emotional distance between members. Marriages in this family system seem to end only if the other spouse dies. For example, although the maternal grandfather remarried twice, he only remarried after the death of his spouses. The traditional and conservative Protestant ethic of “till death do us part” seems a strong principle in the family belief system. Despite the apparent emotional distance between father X and mother X (as indicated by Mr X’s description of the marital relationship as well as clinical observations of the researcher, see chapter 6), they may have felt greater pressure to make the marriage work or stay together due to the absence of any other marital failure in the family system. This may have contributed towards anxiety within their own nuclear family system, which could have found an outlet in a number of ways, some of which (while achieving system objectives such as homeostasis) may have impacted negatively on individuals within the system and those (such as the victims of Mr X) outside of the system.

- Patterns of relationship.

With respect to patterns of relationships, there appear to be two significant patterns that are repeated across generations in the family system of Mr X. These are a close parent-child relationship with the isolation of the other parent and the emotional distance and isolation of father X.

Within the family system, specifically with respect to the maternal side of the system, there appears to be a repeated pattern of lack of emotional investment in the spousal relationship, and close emotional attachment with a child across the maternal second and third generations. With the maternal grandfather, frequent remarriages and a rapid cycling of spouses may reflect a lack of adaptability or flexibility in the family system that necessitated the introduction of replacements or temporary members to maintain stability within the system. The first instance of this pattern therefore occurs between mother X and her father (the maternal grandfather), with mother X's mother, and then each of the subsequent spouses becoming isolated.

Figure 5. Pattern of Relationships in X Family System



This pattern is then repeated with respect to mother X, Mr X and father X, with mother X and Mr X forming a close partnership to the exclusion and isolation of father X. Mr X stated

that “my mother raised me...my father just provided for us...he was a very quiet person and he was just busy with his things - I can't say much about him because he wasn't very active in my life.”

Father X's emotional distancing and isolation also appears to be repeated across generations and instances. Firstly, he distances himself from his own family of origin (as reported by father X, see chapter 6), and then with respect to his own nuclear family (as described by Mr X in the above quote). This pattern seems to have been carried over to Mr X, who is emotionally distant and isolated from any social groups of which he is a part, as well as from his father (as indicated in the above quotes). This may be another indication of the limited adaptability and rigidity of the system, which possibly made it difficult for members to expand the number of groupings of which they were a part.

In terms of Mr X's own development of ways of relating to others as well as his family, the above two patterns may have contributed towards a conflicting role for Mr X within the family system. On the one hand, his mother would have been drawing him closer and developing a close emotional relationship with him (whether harmonious or conflictual), and on the other hand, his father would have been passing on a pattern of relating to others which entailed emotional distance from the family or other social system of which he was a part. Mr X may have experienced considerable anxiety and forged a compromise in the sense that his emotional closeness to both his mother and maternal grandfather was paired with emotional distance and isolation from any other familial or social setting of which he was a part. Mr X stated that

On my father's side, I didn't know my grandparents but on my mother's side, I knew my grandfather well. There were good times with my grandfather...he read to me and we would discuss things, make jokes – he was there for me when I needed him...he really showed his love for me.

Mother X also confirmed this relationship in her interview (see chapter 6).

- Summary of pattern repetition across generation.

In terms of the third category, pattern repetition across generations, the genogram demonstrates a number of patterns of functioning that are repeated across generations. These include emotional distance and cutting off as a means of dealing with confrontation; diminished coping skills with stress and anxiety; the distribution of success and failure; movement; and the upholding of marriage despite relative emotional poverty.

The genogram also reveals a number of patterns of relationship that are repeated across generations. These include a close parent-child relationship with the isolation of the other parent and the emotional distance and isolation of father X. Notably, these patterns appear to predominate from the maternal side of the family system, and have influenced Mr X's functioning and relationship styles, as well as his criminal behaviour.

• Category four: life events and family functioning.

- Coincidental events
- Impact of life changes, transitions and traumas
- Anniversary reactions
- Summary of life events and family functioning

- Coincidental events.

There are a number of coincidental events that appear to emerge from the genogram, mostly from the maternal side of the family system. These can be arranged chronologically into three

significant clusters, namely a first cluster (1964-1966), a second cluster (1975-1980) and a third cluster (1987-1989).

The first large cluster of co-occurring life events spanned from 1964-1966. As can be seen in the genogram, in 1964, father and mother X were married. One year later, in 1965, the maternal grandmother died, and the following year, in 1966, Mr X was born. It would appear that the system would only allow a new member to move in when another had left (as also indicated possibly by the maternal grandfather's relationship history).

The second cluster of co-occurring life events spanned from 1975-1980. As can be seen in the genogram, the second wife of the maternal grandfather died in 1975. At the same time, Mr X developed meningitis and failed the school year. He had learning difficulties for the remainder of his primary school career, resulting in increased supervision of his learning and harsh discipline from his mother. Mr X stated that "it all revolved around my studies – what I should have been studying but it was very difficult for me at that stage...if I didn't know my work properly, there would be an outburst and I would get a hiding."

As indicated by the genogram, in 1978, Mr X started stealing from his mother's handbag and engaging in other instances of petty theft as well as housebreaking. He was caught housebreaking by his parents in 1979. In 1980, Mr X reported that his mother stopped physically disciplining Mr X and changed her attitude towards him, to one that was more loving and affectionate. He could not provide a reason for this but claims that it may have been because she felt alone and rejected by him and that their relationship had deteriorated. Mr X stated that "later it got better and I could learn by myself, in high school because those things [strictness and hiding] happened in primary school...my mother surely realized that I was moving away from her and then she tried to show me that she loved me..."

The third cluster of co-occurring life events spanned from 1987-1989. As indicated in the genogram, in 1987, Mr X completed his compulsory national service. In that year, Mr X also

had an argument with his maternal grandfather that resulted in a cut-off and rupture of the relationship between the two of them. Mr X also met Miss N, his first girlfriend, in 1987. One year later, in 1988, Mr X's maternal grandfather married for the third time. The maternal grandfather also died in that year. The following year, in 1989, Mr X lost his job with the anti-hijack section of the police force and was demoted to normal police duty, due to aggressive outbursts on duty. In 1989, Mr X committed his first rape and murder in the eastern part of Gauteng Province.

The following are a number of other events that appear to coincide on the genogram and in the family history:

- mother X's cessation of her work as a nurse the year after her father married his second wife (1971);
- mother X's resumption of work, as a chef at a retirement home, after Mr X commenced his compulsory national service in 1987. At this time, the X family also took in foreign male students as lodgers; and
- mother X's heart attacks after Mr X's arrest. The first heart attack took place in 1993 after Mr X's arrest; the second in 1996, after receiving hate mail and recently, she suffered a "nervous breakdown" or "exhaustion" (as stated by mother X, see chapter 6, p. 212) in 2003 after a television programme was screened detailing Mr X's case.

- Impact of life changes, transitions and traumas.

On examining the above coincidences and clusters, a number of observations can be made concerning the impact that these appear to have had on the family system. Firstly, the death of the maternal grandmother and the subsequent birth of Mr X, may have meant that he inherited her particular role within the family system.

The co-occurrence of the death of the maternal grandmother (1965) a year after the marriage of father X and mother X (1964) may signal that the introduction of father X into the family system and possible withdrawal of mother X from involvement in emotional processes with the spousal coupling of her parents (the maternal grandparents), may contributed significant strain on this relationship. As will be discussed in more detail later, the maternal grandmother's death may signify an overload in this part of the system.

Throughout the clusters, it appears that the maternal grandfather made considerable impact upon the family system, specifically in relation to the various remarriages and deaths that occurred on this side of the system. After the death of her mother (1965), mother X stated that she involved herself more in looking after her father, withdrawing from her own family (namely, Mr X and father X). Consequently, when her father remarried, it may have freed her up to pay more attention to her own family. Mother X stated that the decision underlying her stopping work in 1971 was in order to take care of Mr X. However, this may have followed her possibly having less obligations with respect to caring for her father, who was no longer alone after having remarried.

When the maternal grandfather's second wife died in 1975, mother X may have withdrawn from her nuclear family again to take care of her father. However, this time, Mr X's illness and learning problems may have prevented her from doing so to the extent that she had the first time. In this way, mother X may have faced considerable strain or anxiety due to the demands placed on her by both Mr X and her own father, which may have contributed towards her short-temperedness and harsh attitude towards Mr X. Mr X's acting out in terms of his early petty theft and housebreaking may also signify attempts to draw mother X to the nuclear family. This behaviour may also be a response to the various transitions and emotional pressures within the family system.

With respect to the third cluster, Mr X's escalation in criminal activity to rape and murder (1989) can be seen as a possible response to the changes in the system that saw his maternal grandfather die without having resolved the differences between the two of them, as well as his demotion at work (which occurred together with the collapse of his relationship with his maternal grandfather). The additional pressure as a result of his relationship with Miss N's father (and his expectations for his daughter's relationship) may also have placed considerable stress on Mr X. In this cluster, Mr X's lack of ability to deal with conflict is also evident.

The close, fused relationship between Mr X and his mother can also be seen in the co-occurrence of life events, namely with mother X's deterioration in health linked to anxiety over Mr X's crimes. In this sense, it would appear that she has shouldered the majority of the emotional strain with regard to Mr X's crimes, in comparison to father X.

Father X's distance and underinvolvement in the system is evident from the fact that he appears to have had a different role in the system, in comparison to other male figures such as the maternal grandfather, and Miss N's father. His underinvolvement in the system may have freed up space for other members to take on roles and functions within the system that may have traditionally been associated with the paternal membership position. It would appear that the maternal grandfather was possibly able to involve himself more in the X nuclear family system due to the underinvolvement of father X, specifically with regards to emotional bonding with Mr X. This is evident in the statements of mother X and Mr X, as seen in chapter 6. Additionally, mother X may also have involved herself more with Mr X as a result of father X's underinvolvement and take on more of distance may have also allowed mother X to develop a closer relationship with Mr X, and assume additional roles within the system.

- Anniversary reactions.

There appears to have been an anniversary reaction with respect to life stages. This reaction concerns the stage at which members in the nuclear family system are expected to start families of their own and leave their family of origin.

Within the nuclear family system, father X was married and starting a family of his own by the age of 26 (as derived from the genogram and interview data, see chapter 6). Consequently, as Mr X approached this age, he may have felt increased pressure to start his own family from the family system and societal system. However, at the same time, the system did not allow him to move on. His attempts to continue the tradition can be seen in the way that he started making wedding plans with Miss N in 1992 (when Mr X was also 26). However, in contrast with his father, Mr X would have had considerably less social and interpersonal capability to achieve this, and was additionally very fused in his relationship with his mother and his nuclear family system, in a closed system.

Within this family system, adult children appear to distance themselves emotionally from the nuclear family of origin (specifically on the paternal side) when they form their own families. Mr X made plans to get married to Miss N and start his own family, thus leaving the household, may have represented a challenge to the homeostasis of the closed system may have contributed towards increased anxiety within the system, as well as pressure on Mr X, who would have been in the ambivalent position of feeling pressure to start his own family system (from his paternal side), and also pressure not to leave the nuclear system. Often, when a closed system's homeostasis is challenged, a symptom presents itself (see chapter 4). Mr X's criminal behaviour, as symptom, may have provided a necessary outlet for system anxiety that prevented the escalation of anxiety levels beyond the capacity of the system, as well as a means to manage his ambivalent position within the system. Once this symptom provided positive feedback to the system with regards to management of anxiety levels and

homeostasis, it may have become a strategy that was used more often by the system in order to achieve these ends. In this way, Mr X's serial crimes may be seen as a possible technique used by the system at times when homeostasis became threatened or anxiety escalated.

Additionally, Mr X's criminal behaviour in the form of entering into other people's homes or lives may reflect a testing of the boundaries of his own system, and the extent to which this system would be flexible enough to permit such movement. It may also reflect a fascination on the part of Mr X with the lives of others on account of the lack of development that characterized his social understanding within his own system (which was closed, with no contact with family or friends).

- Summary of life events and family functioning.

In terms of category four, life events and family functioning, the genogram of Mr X revealed three clusters of co-occurring events in the family system. These were all in relation to events from the maternal side of the system, and had to do mostly with changes to the system in the form of loss and separation (as discussed in the previous section).

With respect to the impact of these life events on the family system, implications included the possible assumption of the role of the maternal grandmother in the family system by mother X; mother X's close relationship and caretaking of her father and the resulting tension between her involvement with her father and her own nuclear family; and Mr X's crimes being an outlet for the considerable pressure placed on him within the family system and the anxiety and loss reactions that he may have felt.

With regard to anniversary reactions, it was found that Mr X may have experienced considerable pressure to start his own nuclear family at the same age as his father and yet was in an ambivalent position due to the pressure from his mother to remain in the nuclear family system.

- **Category five: relational patterns and triads.**

- Triads: parent-child triads
- Triads: couples
- Triads: multigenerational
- Triads: relationships outside of the family
- Triads: other
- Summary of relational patterns and triads

A number of relationship triads are evident in the genogram of Mr X. The most significant triads with respect to the current analysis will now be discussed according to the particular types highlighted in McGoldrick and Gerson (1985). Triangular patterns and structural configurations in the family system will be further elaborated upon in later discussion.

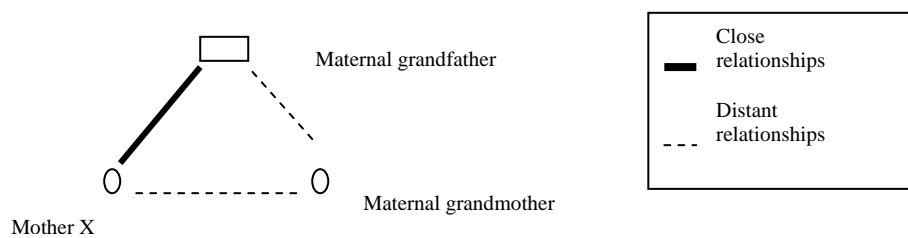
- **Triads: parent-child triads.**

There appear to be three significant parent-child triads, namely:

- between the maternal grandfather, mother X and the maternal grandmother (parent-child triad one);
- between father X, mother X and Mr X (parent-child triad two); and
- between Mr X and Miss N, and Miss N's father (parent-child triad three);

Figure 6.

Parent-Child Triad One

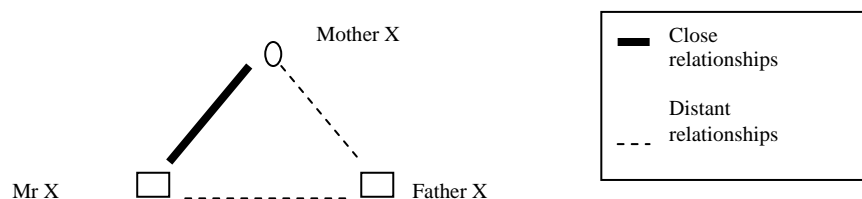


The first significant parent-child triad appears to involve the maternal grandfather, mother X and the maternal grandmother. This triad is characterized by a close relationship between mother X and her father, and a more distant relationship with the third member of the triad, originally the maternal grandmother. After the death of the maternal grandmother, this position was occupied by each subsequent spouse of the maternal grandfather (as well as father X forming couples triad four). As discussed previously, it would appear that mother X had to perform dual roles of daughter and maternal grandmother before the maternal grandfather's second marriage.

The above triad appears to have simultaneously involved the isolation of the third member, and an increase in the emotional closeness between the other two members, namely mother X and her father. It would appear that the position made more available by the withdrawal or isolation of one member, allowed the remaining two members to become closer, or one of these members to occupy the functions or roles partially vacated by the absent or isolated member. This emotional closeness can be seen in the way that mother X looked after her father when her mother died, and after that, when he was left alone after the death of his second wife. Her father's alcohol use may also have drawn mother X closer to him in terms of taking responsibility for his well being (discussed further under couples triad three). Mr X stated that "there were also bad times with my grandfather...he drank and then got aggressive...and a person doesn't enjoy seeing how a drunk person reacts...a drunk person doesn't always realize what they are doing."

Figure 7.

Parent-Child Triad Two

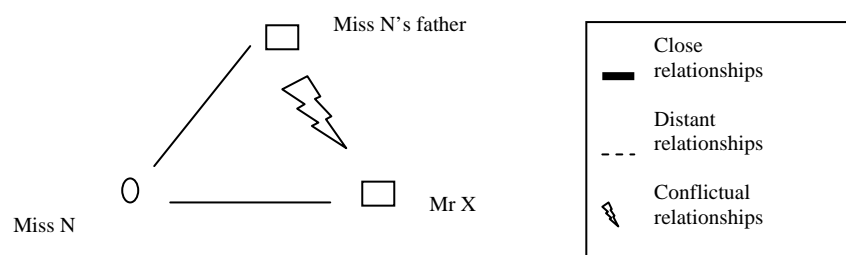


The second significant parent-child triad involves father X, mother X and Mr X. In much the same way as the above triad involved a close relationship between a parent and child to the exclusion of the other parent, this triad involves a close emotional relationship between mother X and Mr X, and isolation of father X (the inverse of the previous triangle). Mr X's relationship with father X is evidenced in the above quotes. His relationship with his mother was not close in the traditional sense of a loving, caring relationship but did appear to involve a considerable emotional investment or enmeshment on the part of both members in terms of the conflict and contest for power over self-definition inherent in this relationship. This is evidenced by the way that mother X suffered significant physical illness at the time of Mr X's arrest and at various points throughout his incarceration (see figure 2).

It is not uncommon to see a repetition of triads across generations within a family system (Bowen, 1978). One might predict that if Mr X had started his own family, he may have repeated a similar triangular relationship, with Mr X or wife of Mr X possibly developing a close relationship with one of his children, to the exclusion of his spouse.

Figure 8.

Parent-Child Triad Three



The third significant triad involving a parent and child appears to be that between Mr X, Miss N and Miss N's father. In this triad, the relationship between Mr X and his future father-

in-law appears to have been conflictual, while Miss N appears to have had a close relationship with both Mr X and her father. Miss N's learning difficulties and slight mental impairment may have contributed to her father's strong role as caretaker over her within and outside of their family. This may be seen in him assuming responsibility for the decision-making on her part regarding the wedding arrangements, as well as taking charge of the financial arrangements to provide for Miss N and Mr X's living arrangements once married (as stated by mother X in chapter 6). This also appears to resemble parent-child triad one, specifically with reference to mother X's relationship with her father. This resemblance and potential repetition of the above triad in the subsequent generation (in line with homeostasis) may have evoked feelings of resentment in Mr X as he periodically may have occupied the position of distanced or isolated member when Miss N was close to her father.

Despite this possible resentment, Mr X may also have been caught in the ambivalent position of wanting to assert himself and take the position of the dominant male of the triad, and yet may have felt constrained by the particular societal system he was simultaneously a part of with its emphasis on respect for one's elders. In this sense, it would appear that Mr X was caught in a double bind position. One might also hypothesize that Miss N may have suffered some degree of physical or psychological symptoms as a result of being the third member in the centre of the conflicting pair. Mother X stated that "Miss N was a lovely child...she went to school at [name omitted] and it's for people that are slow at learning...she had that little problem but she was good at needlework."

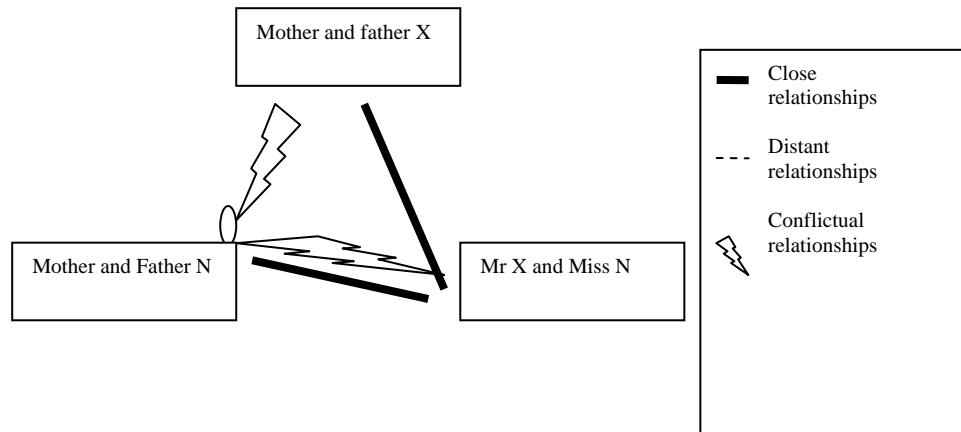
- Triads: couples.

The genogram appears to demonstrate one significant triad involving couples in the family system, namely:

- o between the X family, Miss N's parents and Mr X and Miss N (couples triad one);

Figure 9.

Couples Triad One



The first significant couple triad involves mother and father X (as one unit), Mr X and Miss N's parents (as one unit), and Mr X and Miss N (as one unit). In much the same way as Miss N's learning difficulties and slight mental impairment may have contributed towards her father taking a role of caretaker towards her, Mr X's similar learning difficulties as well as his status as an only child (also the case with Miss N) may have also contributed towards his parents being over-responsible towards him too. The conflict between Mr X and father N may have resulted in mother and father X being drawn in on Mr X's side in disputes concerning the relationship between Miss N and Mr X, as well as the wedding arrangements. This triad consequently consists of a conflictual relationship between both Mr X and his parents and Miss N's parents, and a united, close relationship between Mr X and his parents. As a result, conflict with the parents of Miss N served to push Mr X and his parents (specifically his mother) closer together, and thus possibly further the stability and rigidity of the X family system, by strengthening the relationships between members.

- Triads: multigenerational triads.

Whereas previous triad types have involved members from different generations within the family system, these members have usually been from two successive generations within the

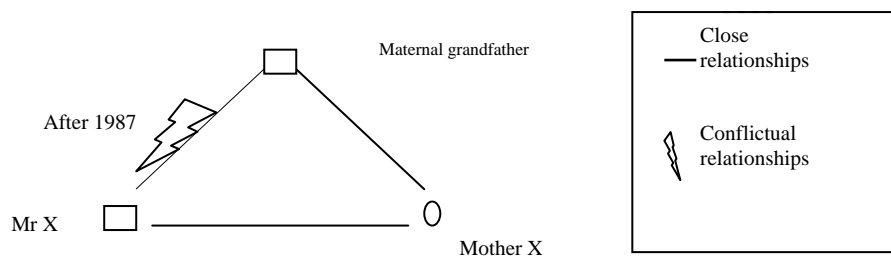
family system. Multigenerational triad patterns will examine relationships between members from three different generational tiers.

The genogram demonstrates three significant multigenerational triads in the family system, namely:

- between Mr X, the maternal grandfather and mother X (multigenerational triad one);
- between father X, Mr X and the maternal grandfather (multigenerational triad two); and
- between father X, mother X and the maternal grandfather (multigenerational triad three).

Figure 10.

Multigenerational Triad One

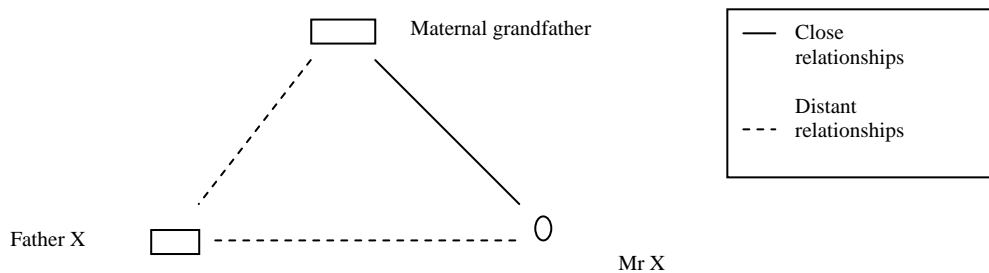


The first important multi-generational triad involves Mr X, his maternal grandfather and mother X. In Mr X's early youth up until his late adolescence, this triad consisted of a close relationship between all three members of the triad. When Mr X and his grandfather had an argument in 1987, there was a breakdown in their relationship. The triad changed to a conflictual, cut-off relationship between Mr X and his maternal grandfather, and a close relationship between mother X and both Mr X and her father. The breakdown of the relationship between Mr X and his maternal grandfather would appear to have strengthened

the relationships between mother X and both her father and Mr X. However, this breakdown did have considerable ramifications within the triad, evidenced in Mr X's employment, relationship and behavioural problems that followed.

Figure 11.

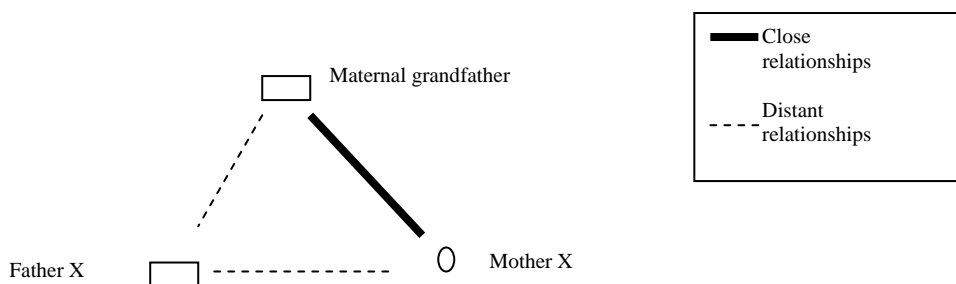
Multigenerational Triad Two



The above triad would have further distanced father X within the family system, as can be seen in the second multigenerational triad, involving father X, Mr X and his maternal grandfather. In this triad, there was a close relationship between Mr X and his maternal grandfather, with emotionally distant relationships between Mr X and his father, as well as father X and his father-in-law. Father X may have been displaced as the primary male figure with which Mr X would have identified growing up, resulting in a greater identification with his maternal grandfather in terms of male gender role. This configuration may have also contributed towards the alienation of father X further from his wife, and the nuclear family unit.

Figure 12.

Multigenerational Triad Three



This triad involves a close relationship between mother X and the paternal grandfather, and the isolation of father X.

- Triads: relationships outside the family.

The X nuclear family system is particularly closed and consequently, relationships with others outside of the family system do not feature frequently in the genogram. Emotional processes within systems will be discussed in greater detail further on. However, it is important to note that there is one triad involving a relationship with others outside of the family system, namely the family of Mr B, a work colleague of father X (as seen in figure 2). The emotional distance and isolation of father X within the nuclear family system, may have contributed towards him forming close attachments to other entities (such as pastimes, his job, or other people) outside of the system. This can be seen in father X's dedication to his work as well as his fondness for his friend Mr B and his wife and children. In comparison, Mr X's and his mother's lack of relationships with others outside of the system can be explained by the extent to which they were emotionally involved in triads and relationships within the family system (and consequently emotionally isolated from individuals outside of the system). Father X stated that "it's almost 53 years that we worked together...we know each other well." This was one of the few areas that father X commented on throughout the entire interview.

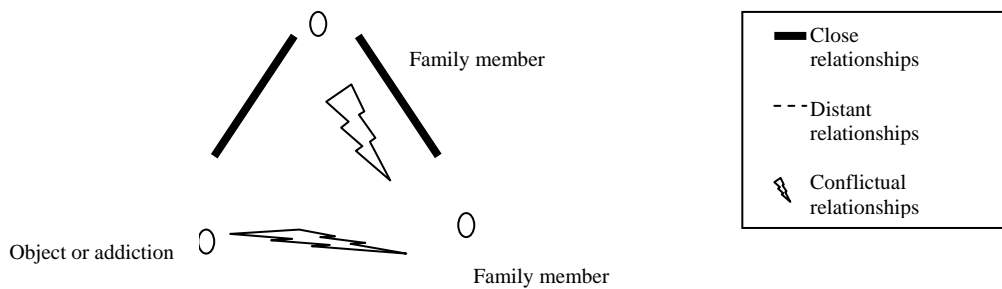
- Triads: other.

It is important to mention the last type of triadic relationship in the family system that involved a member and another entity, and another member of the family system. There are two instances of this type of triad in the family system, namely:

- o between the maternal grandfather, his alcoholism and significant others; and
- o between Mr X, his criminal behaviour and significant others.

Figure 13.

Triad: Other



This triad involves relationships between two individuals and a third inanimate entity, such as an addiction. Two such triads emerge from this family system. The first instance involves the maternal grandfather, his alcoholism and mother X (as well as other significant individuals in his life). This triad consists of a close relationship between the maternal grandfather and his addiction, an antagonistic relationship between mother X and the addiction, and an ambivalent, close relationship between mother X and her father. It would appear that each time the maternal grandfather engaged in his addictive behaviour more frequently, thereby introducing an external entity into the system (in the form of alcohol), the larger external family system drew upon resources in the X nuclear family system (in the form of mother X who was pulled closer to her father and would take responsibility for him and care for him) in order to maintain stability and to reinforce the rigid, closed boundaries of the system. This addictive behaviour may have been essential for maintaining homeostasis within the system through absorbing excess anxiety in the system but paradoxically also threatened the system by virtue of making its boundaries more diffuse. This pattern may also have been repeated with any of the wives of the maternal grandfather. In the absence of any new member to take the place of mother X in the X nuclear family system during these occasions, the X family system may have pulled mother X back after a time in order to

maintain its own homeostasis. This pattern and “recycling” of members between extended and nuclear family systems may have been repeated on a number of occasions in line with maintaining stability in the entire family system (both extended and nuclear together).

The second instance of this type of triad involves, once again, a repetition of the above. This triad involves Mr X, his addiction (namely, his criminal behaviour) and mother X (or other significant individuals). In the same way, that the maternal grandfather’s alcoholism served to bring mother X closer to him, Mr X’s petty theft and housebreaking functioned similarly in the sense that after he was caught in 1979, his mother became less harsh towards him and more loving. One may argue that his subsequent criminal behaviour and serial murder may have been attempts to elicit care taking or responsibility taking on the part of another. This may be another example of a faulty strategy or solution developed by the system to maintain homeostasis and rigid system boundaries. One may additionally hypothesize that this was finally satisfied when he was arrested and the Department of Correctional Services took permanent responsibility (resulting in a cessation of the problematic behaviour). Mr X stated that

initially I would steal money to escape from the strictness at home...but at a later stage, it wasn’t necessary to escape anymore because, like I said, my mother changed and the strictness disappeared...but it became a habit, because you got a benefit out of it which was the money...it was like a drug that you get addicted to...and it got bigger and bigger...and your mind gets corrupted and you do bigger crime- I could have gone on to rob banks but I didn’t go that route.

- Summary of relational patterns and triads.

In terms of category five, relational patterns and triads, the genogram demonstrates a number of triads. However, only those significant to the current analysis were selected for study. With

respect to parent-child triads, three significant triads emerged from the genogram. These involved the maternal grandfather, mother X and the maternal grandmother (parent-child triad one); father X, mother X and Mr X (parent-child triad two); and Mr X, Miss N, and Miss N's father (parent-child triad three). These triads show a repeated pattern of a close relationship between a parent and child, and exclusion of the other parent. Once again, these triads demonstrated the strong impact of the maternal side of the extended family system on the nuclear family system.

With respect to triads involving couples, one significant triad emerged from the genogram, namely between mother and father X, Miss N's parents and Mr X and Miss N (couples triad one). The triad demonstrated the role and impact of Miss N and her family on the family system.

With respect to multigenerational triads, three significant triads emerged from the genogram. These were Mr X, the maternal grandfather and mother X (multigenerational triad one); father X, Mr X and the maternal grandfather (multigenerational triad two); and father X and mother X and the maternal grandfather (multigenerational triad three). The multigenerational triad pattern indicated the considerable influence of the maternal side of the extended family system, as well as the isolation of father X from the nuclear family system.

With respect to triads involving relationships outside of the family system, there is one significant triad in the genogram between father X and the family of a work colleague, Mr B. This demonstrated the considerable isolation of father X from the nuclear family system and his investment in relationships outside of the family.

Finally, the role played by addiction in the family system was demonstrated by the triadic form involving a member, another entity, and another member of the family system (triad: other).

- **Category six: family balance and imbalance.**

- Family structure
- Roles
- Level and style of functioning
- Resources
- Summary of family balance and imbalance

This section will examine the extent to which the genogram appears to have certain aspects represented or distributed in unequal proportions across it as a whole. In this sense, areas in which the family system may be imbalanced will be demonstrated and possible functions served by such imbalances discussed accordingly. The discussion will examine imbalances in four main areas, namely: structure, roles, level and style of functioning, and resources.

- Family structure.

The genogram reflects two main imbalances with regards to the structure of the family system, namely:

- number of offspring; and
- remarriages.

The first imbalance occurs in relation to the number of offspring of the second and third generations. This has been discussed in the section on family structure (category one); consequently only points pertaining to the impact of this structural factor on balance in the family system will be discussed here. The siblings of both father X and mother X have all had more than one child each, and these children (that is, members of the third generation) have all gone on to have children of their own. In this way, they have successfully continued the extended family system.

Conversely, father X and mother X are the only couple to have had only one child, namely Mr X. Additionally, due to his particular life circumstances and experiences, Mr X has not gone on to have children of his own. Consequently, the larger family system has not been extended, sustained or perpetuated in any way along the branch of the system managed by father and mother X. One may argue that Mr X's crimes, and the "infertility" of this part of the family system may reflect a breakdown in the family system at this point, or may serve a purpose within the family system as a whole. This will be explored further below. However, this imbalance in family structure may have contributed towards pressure on Mr X to perpetuate the system, and a greater level of urgency to marry Miss N and start his own family. Any obstacles to this, like interference on the part of her father, for example, may have contributed towards stress and anxiety in Mr X, and possibly formed part of patterns involving an outlet for anxiety in the system along more indirect lines, for example, in the form of Mr X's criminal behaviour. This possible tentative solution may have become a further problem for the system, in that in doing what seemed logically right with regards to maintaining homeostasis, the system may have contributed towards its eventual downfall.

The second imbalance in the family structure involves the spousal relationships within the family system. On examining the genogram, it is evident that there are no instances of divorce throughout the family system. In fact, it appears that when members of this family (extended and nuclear) get married, the spouses do not ever separate. This may have been influenced by possible supra-systemic cultural prescriptions of the time, namely that divorce was a less acceptable option than possibly might be the case in more current times. The notable exception to this, however, is the maternal grandfather. He is the sole instance in the system where a change in spouse has taken place (to be exact, three changes). These changes have all taken place due to the deaths of the spouses in question. As a result of the multiple spouses of the maternal grandfather in comparison to the remainder of the family system, there is an

imbalance with regard to marriage in the system. This has also been discussed in family structure; therefore only points pertaining to balance in the family system will be discussed.

Two developments in the system appear to have been possible, both of which are supported by the genogram and interview information. Firstly, the notable absence of divorce or separation in the system may point to a possible family belief system that prescribed the unacceptability of divorce in the system and their inability to resolve interpersonal issues. Accordingly, spousal conflict would have to have been endured, whether by open conflict; avoidance or displacement. This would have placed greater stress on couples in the family system, specifically on weaker spouses in the spousal pair (if avoided) or children in the system (if displaced). In a family system in which divorce or separation was prohibited, Mr X's break up with Miss N may have signified a transgression of a family rule. As a result, his feelings of failure and rejection in relation to Miss N and her family may have been intensified by feelings of failure and rejection in relation to his own family system.

Secondly, the imbalance in the system involving the remarriages of the maternal grandfather, may have necessitated an imperative in the system to balance this out at another level in order to maintain homeostasis. Given the appearance of the genogram, as well as his identification with his grandfather when growing up, Mr X may have taken on this imperative within the system. This may explain the split with Miss N as well as the nature of his criminal behaviour (namely, the rape and murder of a series of women). Thus, the imbalance appears to have been addressed at both explicit (Miss N) and covert (criminal behaviour) levels.

- Roles.

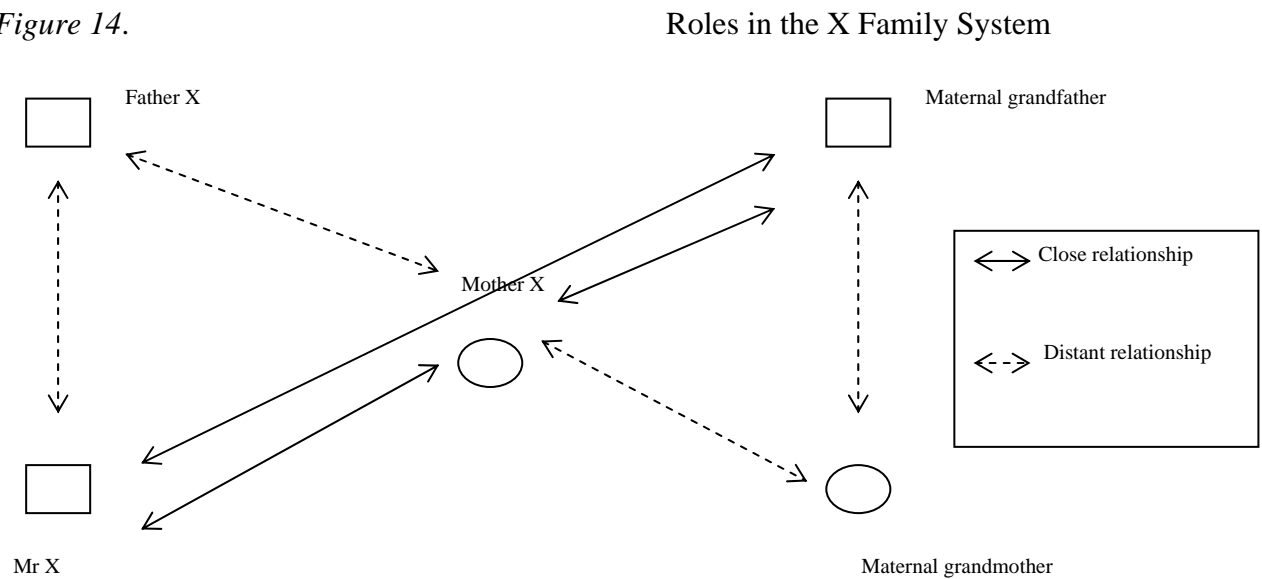
The genogram and interview information reveals that role allocation in both nuclear and extended family systems is not balanced, with certain members taking on multiple roles, and other members performing fewer roles. These members are:

- o Father X;
- o Mother X; and
- o the maternal grandfather.

In comparison to father X, whose sole role within the system appears to have been as the breadwinner or provider for the nuclear family system, mother X appears to have been responsible for raising Mr X as a mother, looking after the household as wife, as well as taking care of her father, as daughter in the extended family system. Father X's isolation from both his family of origin, as well as his own nuclear family, meant that he may have faced less responsibility for roles such as son, father and husband. In terms of the latter two roles, his responsibility was narrowly defined in terms of financial caretaking or provision, with little emotional caretaking or physical affection on his part (see above quotes) as well as little input into the manner in which Mr X was raised. Mr X may have looked outside the family system to someone else, such as his maternal grandfather for the qualities that his father lacked. Mr X stated that "he [the maternal grandfather] showed me that he was worried about me- the one day I hurt my foot...and he took me to the doctor and helped me...so he showed me that he was a good person and showed me love."

Mother X may have faced considerable strain given the demands of her multiple roles as mother, wife and daughter. Additionally, this strain may have been intensified by the fact that two of these roles positioned her between two systems, each of which tended towards eliciting her exclusive membership. This may be illustrated by a triad (figure 14) that appears to have existed between mother X, her father and Mr X, involving the isolation of father X and the spousal relationship between father and mother X and her role as wife being more about the pragmatics of running the household and caring for the children than about emotional support or interaction.

Figure 14.



The above triadic relationships (figure 14), as well as father X's narrowly defined role as father, may have contributed to the maternal grandfather performing numerous roles as husband, father, grandfather and "surrogate father" to Mr X (see above quote). His involvement in a triad with his daughter and grand-son, as well as his dual role as grandfather and surrogate father may have isolated him emotionally from his other children and respective spouses, and the three members of this part of the triad may have increased their mutual interdependence. Mother X's siblings may have felt resentment towards her due to her "privileged" position in relation to the maternal grandfather, and isolation from the nuclear family units of these siblings may have increased further.

The above is supported when one contrasts the quote above concerning the paternal grandfather and a quote concerning father X where Mr X stated "he [father X] only did things if I asked him to take me somewhere or for something, then he did it...but there wasn't a bond between us where we would talk, talk about personal issues, we didn't play together."

- Level and style of functioning.

In terms of level and style of functioning, the genogram and interview data reveals imbalances in these main areas:

- o emotional style;
- o over- and under-functioning;
- o gender roles; and
- o success and failure.

With regard to emotional style, it would appear that father X's role was to contribute little to the nuclear family with respect to emotional content. He is isolated and distant and plays a very pragmatic role as father (namely, providing financial support but no physical affection). Mother X, conversely, invests her attachments and relationships with considerable emotional content. This may be in terms of positive emotion such as affection (as can be seen in relation to her father and Mr X from 1980); or negative emotional content such as harshness or anger (as can be seen in the way that she raised Mr X until 1981). In order to address the imbalance resulting from father X's emotional distance, her emotional investment may have been of a higher intensity. For example, her punishment and strictness is described both Mr X and herself as excessive. Additionally, the maternal grandfather may also have been enlisted to address the imbalance as can be seen by his relationship with Mr X (especially as he was growing up) which involved considerable physical affection and emotion which was absent from father X. Mother X stated that "I was very strict- he couldn't lie to me...maybe I was too strict...I've blamed myself over this- that maybe this caused everything..."

The genogram and interview information reflects that mother X appears to have taken a particularly active and over-responsible role in many of the relationships in which she was involved. Many of the other individuals involved in these relationships took a more passive stance with regards to making an effort to fulfill the requirements of that particular

relationship, as well as developing skills towards interpersonal functioning in general. In this regard, additional strain may have been placed on mother X which may have increased her general anxiety and stress levels. This additional anxiety may have expressed itself via physical complaints or behavioural problems (as seen in the genogram).

For example, in the spousal relationship, mother X appears to have done most of the work to maintain the relationship as well as the various duties of the spousal couple such as parenting and the running of the nuclear family. On account of the resulting additional strain, she may have been harsher in her treatment of Mr X.

Mother X stated that

he's [father X] an introvert with a good sense of humour but he's very good...he's also very direct- I tend to hold things back to keep the peace or try to protect a person to keep the peace but Mr X and his father are more direct...but mothers always have a soft spot, you know, so I think many women have a soft spot.

Additionally, mother X may have experienced further responsibility (and stress) in her relationship with her father. The maternal grandfather may have been used to taking a more passive role in his relationships with his first wife and daughter and may have inadequately developed his capacity for taking responsibility for himself (as can also be seen in his alcoholism). This may be illustrated by the process whereby mother X would take care of him and become more involved with the maternal grandfather when his wife died.

Mother X appears to have carried the majority of the responsibility in this relationship as well, resulting in greater strain, and possibly greater harshness in her relationship with her son. She may also have resented having to play the role of wife or caretaker to her father; however, the maternal grandfather fulfilled an important role in the family system as "father" to Mr X. This may be seen as another double bind in the family system with regards to mother

X and may have been particularly prevalent when father X was more unavailable than usual to perform the role of father. The above may have also been worsened by the fact that throughout the genogram, there does not appear to be any evidence of attempts on other members' part to address the imbalance resulting from an outnumbering of under-functioners to over-functioners in the family system.

Given the tendency of patterns to repeat themselves in systems (as discussed above), it is not surprising that mother X appears to have repeated this tendency to over-function and be over-responsible in her relationship with Mr X. This may explain Mr X's general under-functioning, specifically with regards to emotional experiences. This under-functioning and little experience of dealing with emotional relationships in extra-familial contexts (due to the apparent closed nature of the family system), may have contributed to Mr X possibly being overwhelmed by exposure to emotionally intense situations outside of the nuclear family system.

The above would also explain the style in which Mr X committed his rapes. Mr X's modus operandi with respect to the rapes that he committed attempted to mimic consensual sexual intercourse. Frequently, he would smoke a cigarette with his victim after having raped her, and he would attempt to "take care" of his victim by allowing her to take a bath and making conversation with her. In this way, one could argue that he was attempting to balance his under-responsibility and under-functioning in his relationships within his nuclear family system, in his interactions outside of the system. The murders committed by Mr X may also have possibly been a way in which he attempted to end or avoid emotions that were too difficult to deal with. Mr X described the second rape-

while I was standing in the doorway I told her I wouldn't shoot and that everything would be alright...I had sex with her and she asked me some questions like if I wanted a drink or a cigarette or if I wanted to talk about anything...then I went out.

Mr X also describes the fourth rape-

then I had intercourse with her and when we were finished I saw the cigarettes on the bedside table and I gave her a cigarette and I lit one for myself also and smoked...then she asked me if she could go to the toilet and when she went to the toilet I told her to take a bath.

Mr X's under-functioning in his family emotional relationships would also explain his confusion and inability to deal with emotional (conflict or otherwise) aspects of his relationship with Miss N.

In terms of gender roles, there appears to have been an imbalance on the maternal side of the family system, specifically after the death of the maternal grandmother. As the only female child, mother X may have been used to taking care of the traditionally female duties in the household, together with her mother. However, with the death of her mother, and her father being left alone, she may have taken over this role in the family, taking on her mother's responsibilities. She appears to have had dual roles as mother and wife after getting married to father X. This may have contributed to a complex pattern of movement between nuclear and extended family systems as the maternal grandfather introduced new members in the form of his subsequent spouses who would have challenged mother X for her role as "wife" in her family of origin. This may have contributed towards the subsequent wives of the maternal grandfather being made to feel superfluous, alternating with possible loss of power and control for mother X due to other individuals assuming her role in her family of origin. Given that father X also performed a dual role as father to both mother X and Mr X, each time he got remarried may have also threatened his availability to perform the role of father to Mr X.

In order to maintain homeostasis, the maternal grandfather may have also moved between extended and nuclear family systems.

Growing up with a dominant female figure such as mother X, and in the absence of any female siblings to possibly dilute such a figure or provide alternate types of gender representations, Mr X might have grown up with certain expectations of females. These expectations might have seen women as overly responsible; overwhelming; dominant; and, given father X's isolation and his grandfather's alcoholism, may have made him fear his ability to develop, maintain and sustain his own identity as a male, with a female. Consequently, the female gender may have appeared threatening, which would explain his choice of a partner such as Miss N, who appeared to be the antithesis of mother X by virtue of her submissiveness and under-responsibility in relation to her own nuclear family, specifically her parents. This may also reflect an attempt on the part of the system to introduce female gender representatives that would balance and compliment existing females (such as mother X). Mr X stated that "I don't hate women...I'm an introvert, not an extrovert and my relationships with women- there weren't many girls in my life and I didn't date many girls so maybe that had an influence on things."

Within the family system, women, specifically those who were not of the dominant type such as mother X, like the spouses of his maternal grandfather, for example, may also have been seen as dispensable or replaceable, given the manner in which the maternal grandfather replaced his wives soon after their expiry. This may explain Mr X's treatment of women in his criminal behaviour, namely, as objects that he could destroy or violate. Additionally, this may have been another attempt to introduce female influence that balanced or complimented existing females such as mother X in the family system.

The genogram and interview data appear to demonstrate a repeated pattern of failure in a male in each successive generation. In the first generation, this position is filled by the

maternal grandfather, in terms of his alcoholism, as well as his repeated failed attempts at a sustained marriage.

In the second generation, this position appears to be filled by father X in relation to his siblings, as well as those of mother X. His sisters are reported to have succeeded materially and financially in life so that they are “high society”; the remaining members of his generation in the genogram have also had more success in terms of their fertility in the family system, producing numerous offspring to carry on the system, in comparison to his solitary effort; and, his wife runs the household. Additionally, the one attempt that he did make to start a business (1982) and advance himself ended in failure after a year.

In the third generation, so as to maintain the balance of success and failure in the system, Mr X appears to have filled this position. This can be seen in terms of his relationship failure; inability to further his line via producing a child; and his criminal behaviour. When the maternal grandfather died, there would have been an imbalance between success and failure in the family system (in favour of the former). Consequently, the principle of homeostasis (discussed further on in greater detail) would have dictated that this imbalance needed to be addressed. Mr X’s commencement of his murder series one year after his grandfather’s death may indicate an attempt to fill his grandfather’s vacated position as a failure in the system, and consequently, to balance the successes within the system.

During the same period of time (approximately, 1988-1992), the degree of success in the family system, as well as in parallel family systems such as that of Mr B, would have been increasing as members of the third generation such as Mr X’s cousins and the children of Mr B, started their own families and careers (as can be seen in the genogram). Mr B was a work colleague and one of the few acquaintances that were permitted to remain on the periphery of the X family system consistently for a number of years (see chapter 6). Although there appears to have been little interaction in terms of visits to each other’s houses or play between

Mr X and the B children (that is, direct involvement and exchange of members between systems), both father X and mother X appeared to have kept a running, peripheral interest in the lives of the B family members, which also appears to have been reciprocated. Mother X stated that “they [Mr B and his wife] are very good to us – even their children are very good to us – they are married...have teenage children that are in high school.” Interestingly, this pattern may mimic that of Mr X’s housebreaking – as a vehicle whereby members of the X family system could observe how other, possibly more open, family systems operate.

In order to maintain balance in the family system, either another position of “failed member” would have to have been created, or the member filling this position would have to have increased their degree of failure accordingly. Mr X’s escalated frequency of criminal behaviour, notably between 1991 and 1992, where he committed up to three rapes and two murders over the period of three months, would indicate the latter approach was taken to maintain balance in the system.

- Resources.

In terms of the balance of resources in the family system, the genogram and interview data indicate three main areas of disparity, namely:

- o extended family;
- o social support; and
- o coping skills.

In terms of extended family, it would appear that father X did not draw on any resources from his extended family and was isolated and detached from his extended family system. Mother X, conversely, was detached from her siblings; however, she remained closely attached to her father until his death in 1988. Mother X appears to have had more extended family resources available to her than father X. Father X may have felt pressure to fuse or integrate himself

more into mother X's side of the family system. Given the nature of the spousal relationship, namely conflict-avoidant, as well as father X's interpersonal style (as discussed in chapter 6), it would appear that he avoided conflict arising from pressure to conform to mother X's side of the family system by isolating himself and distancing himself further. With the resulting emotional distance, mother X may have drawn further on the emotional resources and support in her extended family network to balance the resulting disparity.

Lacking a diversified and substantial extended family network from which to draw resources, Mr X may also looked towards mother X's side of the system, and his maternal grandfather for any resources that he required (and could not obtain from other sources, such as the nuclear family or community, for example). The maternal grandfather may have felt greater strain resulting in symptomatic behaviour such as alcoholism, and use of his respective spousal relationships to deal with his anxiety.

In terms of social support, the X nuclear family appears to have had little resources. As a closed system, the X nuclear family tended to look within the boundaries of the system for support resources. A number of members were forced to play multiple support roles within the system (for example, mother X, and the maternal grandfather, as discussed above) and exhibited behavioural problems such as alcoholism (the maternal grandfather) or criminal behaviour (Mr X); premature deaths such as in the case of the spouses of the maternal grandfather; and physical illness such as the heart condition of mother X.

As is typical with closed systems, the system started to become dysfunctional due to a lack of new input. Problems or stress may have been ignored or avoided (as indicated by mother X in the interview, see chapter 6), and as a result not expressed openly in the system to prevent the system from collapsing and this pattern of interaction may have led to the development of certain problems or symptoms in members of the family such as Mr X in the

form of his criminal behaviour. The implications of such processes will be discussed in further explanations.

There appears to be a considerable lack of coping skill resources within the nuclear family together with a multigenerational pattern of avoidance, both of which appear to have been encouraged by the closedness of the system, keeping the system in a dysfunctional homeostasis. This is evident in the maternal grandfather's alcoholism; mother X's physical illness; and father X's isolation and emotional cutting-off. Mr X appears to have perpetuated this pattern and does not appear to have developed appropriate and beneficial ways of dealing with stressful situations and conflict. This is evident in his emotional cutting off and distancing from Miss N's family after experiencing conflict with her father, as well as his use of criminal behaviour to deal with stress.

- Summary of family balance and imbalance.

In terms of category six, family balance and imbalance, the genogram revealed a number of areas of imbalance in the family system. With respect to structural imbalances, these occurred in the areas of number of offspring and remarriages. Both of these aspects have been discussed previously in the section on family structure; however, these aspects were examined in the present section in terms of their impact on balance in the family system.

With respect to roles, the genogram demonstrated that both mother X and the maternal grandfather played multiple roles in the family system, whereas father X played a lesser role in both the nuclear and extended family systems. Once again, the considerable impact of the maternal side of the family system was noted, together with the isolation and detachedness of father X from the nuclear and extended family systems.

With respect to level and style of functioning, four main areas were discussed. These were emotional style; over- and under-functioning; gender; and success and failure in the

family system. It was found that there was an imbalance between the emotional investment of father X and that of mother X, the maternal grandfather and Mr X in the nuclear family system; that mother X was over-responsible with respect to her father, Mr X and father X; that Mr X was exposed to very particular and extreme typifications of the female gender and that this may have impacted upon his criminal behaviour and victim choice; and that there was a considerable imbalance between success and failure in the family system, notably with the nuclear family system accounting for the failures in the system together with the maternal grandfather.

With respect to resources, imbalances were found in the genogram in the areas of extended family, social support and coping skills. It was found that the nuclear family system was particularly low on extended family resources due to its isolation from other systems. This also applied to social support. Finally, coping skills resources were found to be lacking in the nuclear family system, as well as in the maternal grandfather. As can be seen in the above sections, the X family genogram reveals a number of significant structural configurations and processes in the family system. These will be elaborated upon further and used to support themes that emerged in the content analysis of the study data.

7.1.2 Thematic content analysis.

The above body of data was then analysed using the content analysis method and the resulting themes will now be elaborated upon in terms of the family systems theoretical framework discussed in the methodology section (chapter 5), namely in terms of emotional process, multigenerational patterns and relationship patterns.

- **Themes relating to emotional processes in the X family system.**

In terms of emotional process, the following themes emerge, namely:

- low levels of differentiation in the nuclear family system (Theme one);
- fears of loss of self due to extremely fused relationships (Theme two);
- emotional cut-offs as
 - a result of isolation of members excluded from fused relationships between other members, and
 - as a conflict and anxiety management strategy (Theme three);
 - and
- high anxiety amongst members involved in fused relationships (Theme four).
- **Low levels of differentiation in the nuclear family system (Theme one).**

The X nuclear family system demonstrates a considerably low level of differentiation. This may reflect a multigenerational pattern of low differentiation in the larger system, together with a decrement in levels of differentiation with each subsequent generation. There also appears to be a low level of spousal differentiation.

The low level of differentiation at higher tiers of the family system can be seen specifically on the maternal side of the extended family system. This is observable in the first generation with the maternal grandfather's alcoholism. This low level of differentiation was passed on to mother X. This is evident in her close attachment to both Mr X and her father, and her high levels of anxiety and emotionality. Her sibling position as only daughter may have contributed towards a more fused and enmeshed relationship with her family system.

On the paternal side of the extended family system, father X's isolation and distance from his family of origin may reflect a pattern of low levels of differentiation on his part. The fact that his siblings isolated themselves in the same way once they had formed their own nuclear

families, may indicate that his family of origin was also of a low differentiation level. His isolation from his family of origin may have contributed towards an initial fusion or enmeshment with his nuclear family. However, this appears to have changed quite soon as this relationship may have threatened to overwhelm and challenge homeostatic patterns from his family of origin as well as his self-identity, and he may have repeated his coping response of distancing and isolation, this time in relation to mother X and Mr X.

Spouses will frequently choose individuals of similar levels of enmeshment with regards to their families of origin. This can be seen with respect to both father and mother X, as well as Mr X's choice of Miss N, who was also very enmeshed with her nuclear family. As a result, there does not appear to have been any input into the family system that could have forced an increment in differentiation, or a challenge to the pattern of enmeshment. In this way, homeostasis appears to have been preserved in the X family system.

Mr X may have perpetuated multigenerational patterns of enmeshment, fluctuating between very close fused relationships (such as that with mother X and his maternal grandfather) and isolated and cut-off relationships (such as those outside of the family system and his relationship with father X).

The overload of anxiety that accompanies enmeshed relationships appears to have resulted in a combination of spousal dysfunction and projection on to the child in the X nuclear family as attempts to manage anxiety in the family system. These two aspects will now be discussed briefly.

In the X nuclear family, marital conflict does not appear to have occurred between father and mother X. Father X avoided conflict with his wife (and, in general) by isolating himself emotionally. This was observed by the author in the interview with father and mother X where any disagreement or potential conflict was avoided by mother X deferring to father X. For example, the following sequence occurred over recollections of Mr X's arrest.

Mother X: 'Mr X was there in the room and naturally they put him in chains and-'

Father X: 'No he was still free...'

Mother X: 'No, weren't there chains on his hands and feet?'

Father X: 'No...'

Mother X (not convinced): 'Mmm and the media...'

Another example of avoidance of conflict is also indicated in mother X's hiding of the anonymous videotape sent to their house (see chapter 6).

Usually, open conflict in the spousal relationship absorbs a large amount of the anxiety present in the family system. However, conflict avoidance on the part of father X and mother X, may have necessitated that one spouse adapt and surrender themselves to the dominance of the other in the relationship, in order to preserve homeostasis. This appears to have been mother X in the current example.

Mother X may have been used to playing an adaptive role in her relationships with men due to being the only female in her family of origin. She appears to have repeated this role in her own nuclear family. In the adaptive position, mother X appears to have been responsible for managing a large amount of the anxiety in the spousal sub-system and may have attempted to achieve this via symptoms such as heart attacks, anxiety and physical violence towards Mr X.

Periodically, however, the system resources available to mother X, from which she would have been able to draw to perform her dual adaptive roles in both her relationship with her spouse, and her relationship with her father (discussed below), may have been depleted. The breakdown of the spousal relationship or separation of father X from mother X would have threatened family rules and the supra-system's rules against such occurrences (discussed above), as well as the homeostasis of the larger system. Mother X's symptoms (such as anxiety or physical ailments) may have drawn necessary resources to the system in the form of assistance from representatives from other systems (such as doctors from the larger supra-system) as well as within the family system (for example, father X may have involved himself more with the nuclear family at these times), which allowed her to go on performing the dual roles and maintaining homeostasis.

Additionally, spousal conflict may have been avoided in a faulty attempt to not put further strain on the system and to maintain homeostasis. Paradoxically, avoidance of open conflict contributed further to strain and anxiety in the spousal sub-system. However, in order to successfully avoid conflict, especially when system resources were limited, the spousal sub-system may have adopted a strategy of projection onto Mr X in accordance with systemic principles of homeostasis and stability. The effects of this projection will be discussed in the following section on family projection process.

As a result of the overburdening of the adaptive spouse, namely mother X, in the marital relationship, a proportion of the anxiety in the family system would have periodically needed to be dealt with to prevent open conflict between the spouses and breakdown of the family system. Consequently, this surplus anxiety was projected onto Mr X. Mr X's selection as a target for spousal projection appears to have been based on a number of factors, namely, his status as only child as well as his close relationship with mother X.

A significant instance of projection occurred in 1978 (as indicated in figure 2), when Mr X developed meningitis and learning difficulties. Significantly, it was also at this time that mother X was faced with additional caretaking duties in relation to her father (the maternal grandfather) who had been widowed that year. She may have been taxed in terms of her ability to manage the anxiety in the nuclear family system and marital relationship and surplus anxiety from the spousal sub-system may have been projected onto Mr X. Importantly, this episode was followed by the start of his criminal behaviour in the following year, when he began stealing from his mother's bag and breaking into houses. This may also signify the start of an important role for Mr X within the nuclear system, as a member of the system who assisted in the management of surplus anxiety. Mr X's criminal behaviour may also have reflected a repeated pattern of coping that he learnt from mother X – namely, that when mother X appeared to be over-burdened, she may have developed symptoms to attract further resources to the system, specifically in the form of father X's greater involvement at these times. Mr X's symptoms may have signified a means to draw mother X back into the nuclear system at times when it appeared that she was more involved with the external family system or her role as “wife” to the maternal grandfather. In this way, mother X would have also avoided confrontation with the maternal grandfather.

The death of the maternal grandfather's second wife may also have resulted in increased levels of general anxiety in the family system due to the loss of a member and the necessitated response of the system in line with principles of homeostasis. Such increased levels in general anxiety would have also contributed to the higher levels of anxiety in the nuclear family system.

It would appear that the above pattern and arrangement remained constant for some period of time in the family system until there was an escalation in 1987 which resulted in Mr

X's argument and distancing from his grandfather, his demotion at work and the first rape and murder in 1989 (as indicated in Figure 2).

A number of new developments may have increased the level of anxiety in the system, namely the introduction of Miss N, as well as the maternal grandfather's new spouse to the family system. Given that the X family system is a very closed system, the introduction of new members from outside the system would have been a source of increased stress as the system attempted to maintain stability and homeostasis. Increased stress in the system would have resulted in a greater demand on the system to process this stress in some manner. Mr X may have been a more frequent target for projection and he may have attempted more drastic solutions to cope in this role within the system, as possibly reflected in his escalated criminal behaviour and distancing from his grandfather, repeating multigenerational coping strategies from both mother X's (addictive behaviour) and father X's (distancing and isolation) sides of the family system.

o **Fears of loss of self due to extremely fused relationships (Theme two).**

In the nuclear family system of Mr X, there was extreme progressive segregation or isolation between the dyad of mother and son (namely, Mr X and mother X) and father (father X). As discussed previously, father X was isolated and emotionally detached in the system.

Conversely, there was extreme centralization or fusion between mother, son and grandfather (namely, mother X, Mr X and the maternal grandfather). This fusion revolved around the maternal grandfather as dominant member. As a result, this threesome functioned as an alternative fused nuclear cluster, to varying degrees of intensity across time.

The intense fusion that operated within the centralized threesome meant that the members would have been considerably isolated from individuals outside of the cluster. This can be

seen in Mr X's emotional distance from his father as well as persons outside of the family system. Mother X stated that

he [Mr X] didn't have one specific friend, he was an introvert...like his father...he was very quiet, didn't talk much...he read and he loved animals a lot...he didn't have any specific hobbies that I can remember...like the movies.

When his grandfather died in 1987, there would have been considerable anxiety about loss of self and identity in both Mr X and his mother due to the dominant role played by the grandfather in the fused triad. Mr X engaged in greater acting out and antisocial behaviour in an attempt at self definition (as discussed in previous sections), possibly attempting to recruit other members, in the form of the murder and rape victims into the position and role vacated by the maternal grandfather. Alternatively, perhaps Mr X attempted to take the role of his grandfather and the crime victims served as replacements for the position and role left by Mr X. It would appear that mother X also attempted to rectify the imbalance created by the loss of the maternal grandfather by becoming more enmeshed with Mr X (thereby possibly intensifying his need for independent self assertion and antisocial behaviour).

Mr X's low level of differentiation, and tendency towards fusion in some of his close relationships with family members and Miss N, the fear of self-annihilation or being overwhelmed by the other may have been a considerable factor in Mr X's close relationships (such as those with his mother and grandfather). He may have staged attempts, at various points in his life, to differentiate himself from the family system, and thereby prove that his self had not been completely annihilated through fusion with his mother or the family system. For example, it appears that he attempted to do this by achieving physical distance from his family via his occupation. Additionally, Mr X may avoid close relationships with individuals outside of the family system due to fears of being overwhelmed due to the considerable

potential for fusion and loss of identity experienced by him in interpersonal relationships.

This avoidance can be seen in the descriptions of both the psychiatrist and psychologist (see chapter 6) as well as the interviewer's own clinical observations (see chapter 6).

However, it was via his criminal behaviour (such as the petty theft and housebreaking of his early youth and later, the murders and rapes) that he appears to have gained the greatest self-confirmation as well as outlet for the high levels of anxiety he would have experienced due to low levels of differentiation.

Mr X stated that

I started stealing when I was in about standard five [grade 7], because I felt that the circumstances at home were too strict and I wanted to escape from the strictness, and the only way was to escape from the house for a bit longer...I used the money that I stole to play pinball and *pacman* at the corner *kafee* [convenience store] when they sent me to buy bread – that way I could stay away from the house.

The intensity of fused relationships in the X family system appeared also to function to prevent the movement of members away from the system, and to ensure that the system (specifically the nuclear family system) remained considerably rigid and closed to outsiders, in line with systemic principles of homeostasis. This theme can be seen with regards to both mother X and Mr X. After the death of the maternal grandmother, mother X distanced herself from the nuclear family in order to care for her father. Soon afterwards, Mr X developed meningitis, and later, learning difficulties as a result of this illness. Mother X, consequently, was forced to return to her nuclear family to look after Mr X.

One could argue that Mr X's choice of work, namely, in the strict, controlling environment of the police force may have constituted an involvement with another system

that resembled the family system which he had at home, thus continuing the trend and defeating attempts on the part of Mr X to change or move away from his family system.

With respect to Mr X, his attempts to form his own family with Miss N and distance himself from his own nuclear family resulted in a number of events which pulled him back into the family system to preserve homeostasis and the closed nature of the system. This included a demotion at work that resulted in conflict with Miss N's father and the end of their relationship, as well as an escalation in his criminal behaviour that ultimately resulted in his incarceration. System imperatives also appear to have made Mr X's attempts to move forward through his remaining life stages, and become independent of his family difficult. This can also be seen in the way that Mr X moved home during this period, ostensibly to avoid being caught, but, in terms of the family system, to preserve homeostasis. Mr X stated that "[after murdering the third murder victim] I decided that problems would just get worse here, so I decided that, no, I must go back to [place of residence], so I moved out [of work accommodation]...and moved back home."

o **Emotional cut-offs (theme three).**

As stated in above, emotional cutting off between family members would appear to occur as:

- a result of isolation of members excluded from fused relationships between other members; and
- as a conflict and anxiety management strategy.

There are three significant instances of emotional cut-off in the X family system, namely:

- Father X and the family system (nuclear and extended);
- Mr X and the maternal grandfather; and
- the maternal grandfather and his spouses.

The first instance is father X. Father X's original nuclear family system may have developed patterns of distancing and isolation in order to cope with possible low levels of differentiation and enmeshed relationships. Father X appears to have repeated this pattern by cutting himself off from his extended family and forming a nuclear family of his own. However, his fears of self-annihilation in close emotional relationships and need for the system to maintain homeostasis saw him repeat the above coping patterns in his nuclear family as well and investing himself in a more fused relationship with his work, which may have been less threatening. This is evident in that the only time throughout the family history where father X is reported to have been openly affected emotionally was when his business failed in 1982, resulting in a period of depression (see above quotes); and that his closest emotional relationship appears to be with a work colleague and his family, namely Mr B and his wife. As discussed previously, his emotional isolation from his family was accompanied by a closer relationship between Mr X and his mother, and Mr X and his grandfather.

The second instance of emotional cutting off is when Mr X had a disagreement with his grandfather in 1987. This disagreement is the first (and last) instance of conflict between Mr X and his grandfather. It may be that the argument, at base, concerned dominant and adaptive positions in the relationship. Throughout his life, Mr X took the adaptive role in his relationship with his grandfather. However, by refusing to give in to his accusations concerning the borrowing of the motor vehicle, Mr X was challenging for the dominant position in the relationship; as well as challenging the multigenerational pattern of avoiding conflict that appears to have characterized the family system.

Given the threat that Mr X's challenge provided to the family system with regards to homeostasis, it would appear that the only way that the system could deal with such challenges was via creating distance between Mr X and the maternal grandfather until another member (that is, mother X) intervened to recreate a non-confrontational relationship style via

organizing a reconciliation between Mr X and the maternal grandfather. Despite the fact that this reconciliation was unsuccessful, it still functioned to preserve homeostasis by circumventing a confrontation between the two and thus preserving the multigenerational pattern. The impact of this cutting off (and the death of his grandfather the following year) on Mr X coincided with his subsequent problems at work and escalation of criminal activity.

Finally, other examples of cutting-off in the system include the deaths of the spouses of the maternal grandfather. It is significant that all of his wives died in close succession, possibly revealing the great need of the maternal grandfather for adaptive partners to assist in the absorption of the considerable undifferentiation and anxiety in the system. The extent of spousal dysfunction can be evidenced by their deaths soon after their introduction into the system, with fusion, enmeshment and possible loss of self in the spousal relationship, and excessive isolation from the maternal grandfather when he moved away from the spousal subsystem into the nuclear family of mother X, in his role as surrogate father to Mr X.

As discussed previously, this may have impacted upon Mr X's attitude towards women and his criminal behaviour. As much as he was a target for projection of surplus anxiety in the nuclear family system, he lacked external relationships in which he could work through some of this anxiety, or a level of differentiation which would have enabled him to work through this anxiety, due to his emotional isolation from the outside world and fusion with the nuclear family system. Consequently, the women that he selected as victims may have functioned as a means by which to release this anxiety as well as avoid developing physical symptoms of his own, in much the same way as the spouses of his maternal grandfather may have functioned for his grandfather (namely, to absorb surplus anxiety). In this way, this pattern may have served as a concrete way of maintaining the system by replacing missing role players. Mr X stated that "I didn't feel physically different on the days that I committed the murders...I just

felt an urge to go out, maybe it was for the adrenalin rush...and the sense of accomplishment you felt afterwards.”

o **High anxiety amongst members involved in fused relationships (theme four).**

After the death of his maternal grandfather in 1988, mother X may have been left with a surplus of undifferentiation which normally would have been absorbed in her relationship with her father, in accordance with systemic principles of wholeness and homeostasis. This undifferentiation may have been channeled into her only other close, fused relationship with Mr X, who may have escalated his attempts to differentiate himself. This may be reflected in the increase in severity that characterized his crimes during this period with Mr X committing rape and murder for the first time in 1989.

It is important to examine how Mr X's antisocial and criminal behaviour fitted into the homeostatic processes of the family system, especially with regard to the management of high anxiety in the system. Mr X's antisocial behaviour does not appear to have received negative feedback from the family system at any point. From early puberty, his petty theft and housebreaking went unnoticed and unpunished. As discussed in the previous section on Bowen's theory, this behaviour may have served as an outlet for residual anxiety and undifferentiation in the system. As a result, the behaviour in question would have received positive feedback due to the beneficial effects such behaviour would have had on the system as a means towards homeostasis. When Mr X was caught housebreaking when he was in Standard five [grade seven], he received a hiding and the incident was forgotten. Additionally, this event resulted in further positive feedback in the sense that his mother became less punitive towards him afterwards. Mr X stated that

in the beginning, you're a bit scared that you'll be caught- I was caught once [housebreaking when he was in standard five] but it just made me more careful...when

I was caught, I got the hiding of my life but it didn't solve what I was doing...the hiding...or threats to take me to the police...it didn't help to solve the problem, it just made me more careful because they didn't focus on the problem or try to get me help...

He also stated "...like I said, my mother had changed by then, so it wasn't necessary for me to escape anymore, the strictness wasn't there anymore..." Paradoxically, the change in his mother's attitude may have intensified his antisocial behaviour in an attempt to maintain homeostasis, by attempting to restore continuity to their relationship. In other words, he would use more of the same in an attempt to elicit the punishment that he was used to from her. The more that this did not occur, the greater the escalation in his criminal behaviour. Mr X stated that

it was a while after that [getting a hiding] that I started stealing again...I knew what I was doing was wrong but it felt as if I could do nothing about it, or didn't want to do anything to stop it because I benefited from it...I could get money and spend it on what I wanted...and I kept on doing it until it got bigger and bigger...my mind got corrupt and you do bigger crime...

As discussed previously, Mr X's antisocial behaviour may have served as a means by which he could assert himself independently of the enmeshed relationships within the family system. As he grew older, and threatened to distance from the family by forming his own family with Miss N, and developing greater independence with regard to his work, homeostatic pressure for stability and fusion would have increased, resulting in greater fears of self-annihilation in fused relationships, and consequently, an escalation in antisocial behaviour as an outlet for the increased anxiety. Mr X stated that "I went out with her [Miss N] for two years and I was

engaged to her for two years...I was arrested three months after we'd called off the engagement and three months before we would've got married."

Mr X's escalation in antisocial behaviour, especially after his grandfather's death when he committed the first murder and rape, can be understood with reference to the family system's need for a "bad guy". As discussed previously, father and mother X appear to have been unable to adequately manage high levels of differentiation in the system, and yet unable to accept responsibility for the consequences of their failed attempts at managing these aspects of the family system. This was evident in the author's clinical observations (see chapter 6) as well as in the interview content (see chapter 6). Consequently, the family system may have required a bad guy member to function as scapegoat by accepting blame, and consequently protecting father and mother X from taking legitimate responsibility in the system, and around which they could triangulate (discussed further) to prevent the spousal relationship from splitting up.

It would appear that on account of his alcoholism, and breach of family rule around marital success, the maternal grandfather fulfilled this role for the family system. However, when he died, the systemic principle of homeostasis may have necessitated that a new member would have to take on this role to prevent a loss of stability in the system. Mr X took on this role – firstly, by ending his relationship with his fiancée, thereby also breaking a family rule; and secondly, by escalating his antisocial behaviour to a point where his role as "bad guy" was legitimated by outside societal systems such as the justice system, and media.

- **Themes relating to multigenerational patterns in the X family system.**

In terms of multigenerational patterns, the following theme emerged, namely:

- weak generational boundaries and poorly defined subsystems (Theme five), in terms of

- parental subsystem;
- spousal subsystem; and
- sibling subsystem (of father X and mother X).

Multigenerational transmission of low levels of differentiation may also be considered a theme of multigenerational processes. However, this has already been discussed as part of theme one.

o **Weak generational boundaries and poorly defined subsystems (theme five).**

The X family system appears to have been characterized by poorly distinguished generational tiers. This can be seen predominantly with respect to the maternal side of the family system, where the maternal grandfather and mother X appeared to increasingly move between the first and second generational tiers of the family system. This pattern appears to have been repeated with regards to the parental subsystem in the nuclear family.

The parental subsystem of the X nuclear family frequently appeared to consist of mother X and her father rather than father and mother X. In this regard, there appear to have been weak boundaries between the grandparental and parental subsystems. There also appears to have been considerable movement between child and parent subsystems in mother X's family of origin, where she frequently took on the role of "mother" or caregiver to her father, as opposed to her natural role as daughter or child. She may have struggled to develop a sense of independence or responsibility with regard to personal decision-making. This can be seen in mother X's inability to deal with life stress or stressful situations in her own life, and dependence on father X.

Despite the considerable permeability in her own parental/child subsystems, within the nuclear family, it would appear that boundaries between Mr X, as child, and mother X, father X and the maternal grandfather (as the parental subsystem) were more rigid. Given this, one

would expect Mr X to have developed relative independence and autonomy, at the expense of feeling cared for or nurtured. However, this configuration appears to have been complicated by the intensely fused (albeit conflictual) relationship between mother X and Mr X. Mr X may never have felt the sense of autonomy that would be expected given the rigid boundaries between child/parental subsystems, but he may have felt the neglect or lack of warmth that would have accompanied such a configuration. Interestingly, when Mr X was in high school, it would appear that mother X attempted to make the boundaries between parental/child subsystems more diffuse. This may have accompanied the increasing distance of both father X and her father (due to his marriages). At first Mr X resisted, but he may have been further pulled in which may explain the conflict that subsequently arose between himself and his maternal grandfather. Additionally, this may have further strengthened his need to act independently or autonomously in other areas of his life (such as symbolized by his criminal behaviour).

The diffuse boundaries between parental and grandparental subsystems may also have contributed to confusion around issues of discipline and executive style. Mr X may have grown up with conflicting ideas surrounding male authority figures which he would have experienced on the one hand as nurturing and caring (as exemplified by his maternal grandfather), and on the other, as distant and aloof (father X).

Additionally, despite the diffuse nature of boundaries of subsystems within the X family system, the system itself appears to have had very rigid boundaries with regard to external systems or subsystems. The X family system appears to have defended its autonomy from the surrounding social or other system/s and thus limited options for looking to areas outside the family system to supplement coping resources or for alternate forms of assistance in times of need. This can also be seen in mother X's behaviour with regards to finding out possible motivations behind the behaviour of Mr X. Despite professing a desire to find out why Mr X

acted in the way that he did, mother X has made no effort to contact the prison psychologist or any other possible sources of information outside of the X family system or the immediate surroundings. In this way, it is possible to see the degree to which the X family system's rules against turning outside for support are present. This was further supported by the guarded and defensive behaviour of father X during the interview.

Due to considerably closed boundaries, the family system may have had to bear considerable strain as a result of having to deal with its own problems via the limited resources within the system. Additionally, it would appear that within the family system, there were certain alliances that were less exclusive than others, and consequently, certain members were more accessible than others with regard to support, assistance and guidance. It would appear that father X was particularly inaccessible, while the maternal grandfather was very accessible, and thus frequently called upon by the nuclear family system for support (namely, by mother X and Mr X). When the maternal grandfather died, the nuclear family system would have been considerably depleted in terms of helping resources and had to manage increased strain. Mr X's escalation in criminal behaviour may have been a response to such an occurrence (namely, after the death of the maternal grandfather) and his arrest appears to have allowed the system to become even more closed and self-reliant.

The interactional style between mother X and father X in the parental subsystem can be viewed as a repetition of their interactional style in the spousal subsystem. It would appear that for the most part of their marriage, father X was distant, isolated and uninvolved in the marriage, other than in relation to his primary role as financial breadwinner. Mother X may have looked to her father as well as Mr X for the emotional support lacking from the spousal subsystem. Alternatively, or additionally, father X may have further distanced or isolated himself from the spousal subsystem as he viewed other family members taking on this function. The spousal subsystem in the maternal first generation (that is, involving mother X's

father and his different wives) appears to demonstrate a similar pattern, with a close relationship between parent and child, and the isolation of the spouse. Consequently, the repetition of this pattern in the second generation may have been a way of the system maintaining homeostasis. Mr X stated that “my mother raised me...my father just provided for us...he was a very quiet person and he was just busy with his things.”

In terms of the sibling subsystems of father X and mother X, it would appear that father X was quite isolated and cut off from his siblings. This may have contributed towards the development of a pattern of interactional style that involved him behaving in a more introverted and distant manner when with others, thereby possibly limiting the possibility of new members being attracted into a closed and rigid family system. This was further supported in the clinical observations during the interview with him as well as mother X's description of him as “an introvert...he doesn't speak for no reason, he's quiet but when he's with his friends, everyone talks.” Additionally, he may have failed to assimilate principles of emotional interaction and connection within a system, and focused more on the practical duties and roles involved in a sibling and family subsystem, explaining his emotional detachment from his own nuclear family system.

Mother X, conversely appears to have been well integrated with her siblings in the sibling subsystem on the maternal side of the extended family system. However, as discussed above, boundaries between parental and sibling subsystems may have been diffuse, specifically with respect to mother X who took on a parental role in relation to her father on a number of occasions. Additionally, within her sibling subsystem it would appear that responsibilities and roles were defined largely along normative gender lines, with mother X taking on a traditionally female household role within the family.

- **Themes relating to relationship patterns in the X family system.**

Relationship patterns will be discussed with respect to the following themes, namely:

- the use of triads and triangulation to form coalitions between members of the family system (Theme six); and
- themes of power implicit in the way that relationships are structured in terms of these coalitions and interactional patterns (Theme seven).

- **Triads (theme six).**

As discussed above, in the interpretation of the genogram, it would appear that a number of significant triads emerge. These will now be discussed in more elaborate detail, specifically with regard to their function within the family system. Additionally, it is important to note that many of the triads below are indicative of weak generational hierarchies and sub-system boundaries as discussed previously.

Figure 10. Multigenerational Triad One

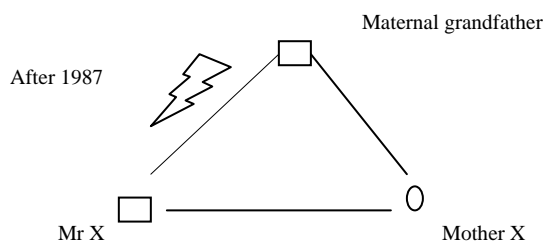
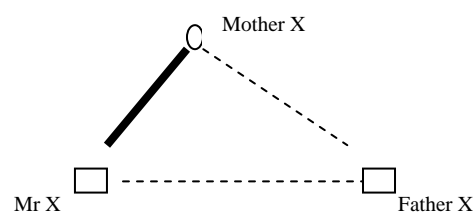


Figure 7. Parent-Child Triad Two



Within the family system, it would appear that the triad between mother X, Mr X and his maternal grandfather, and the triad between father X, Mr X and mother X, served to manage the emotional content of the system as well as the role of father with respect to Mr X. Father X's emotional isolation from his family appears to have accompanied closer relationships

between mother X and Mr X, as well as mother X and her father. Due to the circularity of causality in systems, the closer relationships in the triad between mother X, Mr X and the maternal grandfather, and the emotional isolation of father X would have mutually impacted on each other – for example, father X may have grown more isolated as the other three members became closer, which may have further increased the closeness between the three members, and in turn, further increased father X's isolation.

Multigenerational triad one can also be classified as a nexus of warring triads, with shifting coalitions (Haley, 1970; Jackson, 1957; Minuchin, 1974). This is because there appears to have been a covert competition between all three members for the position of least responsibility. The member around which triangulation took place, as either scapegoat or victim, appears to have changed frequently, together with shifting coalitions between members. A coalition between two members may have made it necessary for the third member to look for alliances outside of the triad. The maternal grandfather may have used his addiction to alcohol, as well as his wives, as alliances; Mr X appears to have used his addiction and work (and later, relationship with Miss N); and mother X appears to have used her work (to a lesser degree though given that she was the member most frequently involved in a coalition).

Parent-child triad two can be classified as a balanced, perverse triad (Haley, 1970; Jackson, 1957; Minuchin, 1974). This is because it involved a covert coalition between Mr X and his mother, and an isolation of his father. During times of stress, however, this formation changed to a detouring-attacking arrangement, involving scapegoating or punishment of Mr X, in order to prevent conflict between father and mother X from emerging into the open. An example of this is when Mr X developed learning problems in primary school, possibly as a symptom whose function was to draw attention and prevent imbalance. At this time, the nuclear family system was under considerable stress due to the death of the maternal

grandfather's second wife. By triangulating around Mr X and his learning difficulties (which were treated as an affront to be punished, as opposed to with pity or sympathy), the couple avoided possible conflict, and possibly was forced to assume a more direct role as parents by virtue of helping Mr X to overcome his difficulty.

Additionally, Mr X appears to be repeating a pattern implicit in the above triads, namely a close relationship or coalition with a female and antagonistic or distant relationship in relation to another male in the life of this female. This seems evident in his relationships since he has been in prison where he has corresponded on numerous occasions with female prisoners at other prisons. Many of these females have been or are involved in abusive relationships with another male, thus enabling the triangular pattern above to repeat itself.

Figure 11. Multigenerational Triad Two

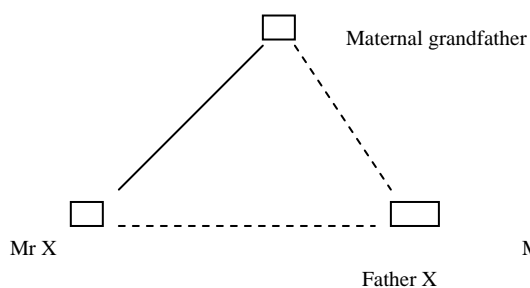
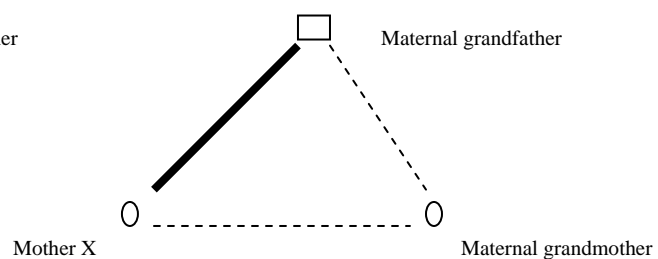


Figure 6. Parent-Child Triad One



The emotional isolation and lack of physical affection and interaction of father X as father in the family system, appears to have been accompanied by Mr X attaching himself emotionally to his maternal grandfather, who appears to have fulfilled the requirements of the father role more completely in relation to Mr X (see above quotes). Mr X may have identified more with his grandfather with regards to gender roles in terms of the emotional processing component of masculinity, whereas he identified with the material, pragmatic aspects of this

role that his father portrayed (namely, hard worker and financial provider). Mr X may have found himself in a position within the system where his identification with his father and grandfather served to increase the presence and importance of that member in the family system. This position may have placed him ambivalently, with considerable pressure to “side” with either his father or his grandfather, thus entrenching their position further in the system. Mr X may have attempted to resolve this ambivalence by identifying partly with his father and partly with his grandfather. This may possibly be evident in a number of Mr X’s characteristics. For example, he appears to have lacked the ability to effectively deal with emotions (such as stress and anxiety) due to his grandfather’s deficit in this area, as seen in his alcoholism, which may explain his similar use of addictive behaviour (crime, in his case) to deal with stress. Additionally, Mr X appears to have adopted the strategy of isolation, avoidance and cutting off used by his father as a means of dealing with conflict. This can be seen in Mr X’s emotional detachment towards violence, as well as the rapes and murders that he had committed. Mr X stated that

[after raping the fourth rape victim] I saw her climbing towards the bathroom window and I knew that she would scream so I told her that she should climb down, then I just aimed the weapon at her and I shot her and then I went back [to the barracks] and I decided that problems would just get worse here, so I decided that, no, I must go back to [his parents’ home], so I moved out of [where he had been living] and moved back home.

When asked what he felt with regards to the crimes and his victims, Mr X stated

it’s now in the past and I can’t do anything more- once I’ve done my sentence, I’ve paid for what I did – but okay, you’ve never finished paying because the stigma stays

with you everywhere you go for the rest of your life but it's not something that I'm going to let affect me, that's all I can say.

Mr X also stated that "I got a hiding on the back of my head or on the bottom [when I was young] and it was difficult for me and sometimes I wished that I was dead...and then it was like I went dead inside and switched off and then I started stealing."

Figure 8. Parent-Child Triad Three

Triad Three

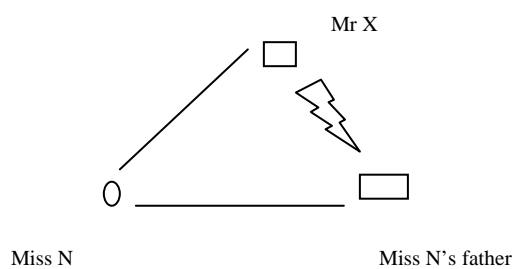
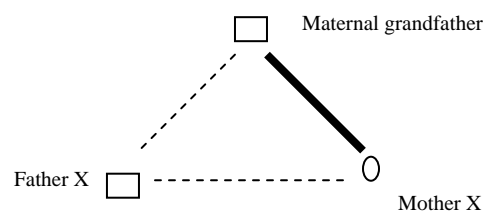


Figure 12. Multigenerational



The triad between Miss N, Mr X and Miss N's father appears to replicate a similar triad between father X, mother X and the maternal grandfather, with Mr X identifying with his father's position. The triangular pattern in question is focused triangulation, with the two males in the triad arguing over the third member or female. The female member appears to lose independence and responsibility within the triad, and the conflict between the two males drives each closer to the female member. In the case of the first instance of this triad (father X, mother X and the maternal grandfather), the close relationship between mother X and her father accompanied the isolation of father X who may have emotionally distanced himself to avoid the resulting conflict, but cut-off emotionally from the maternal grandfather. In the second instance, Mr X appears to repeat this pattern by distancing himself from Miss N and

her father. In parent-child triad three the repetition of the perverse triad formation can also be seen in the sense that Miss N and her father forged a closer relationship, to the exclusion of Mr X.

Mr X stated that

after I was arrested, she broke off the engagement and said that she could not go on with the relationship...I accepted it- I couldn't expect her to stand by me...and her father prohibited her from having any contact with me, I think she's still at home...I tried to phone her at one stage but I didn't speak to her- just to hear her voice but I realized that it was more painful for me than for her so I stopped doing it.

Figure 12. Multigenerational Triad Three

Triad One

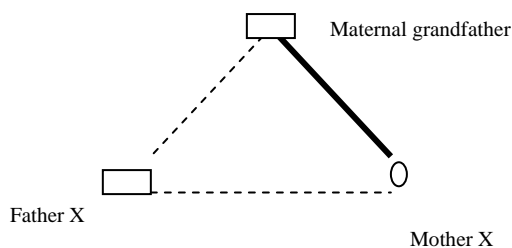
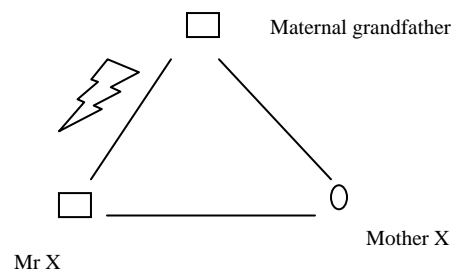
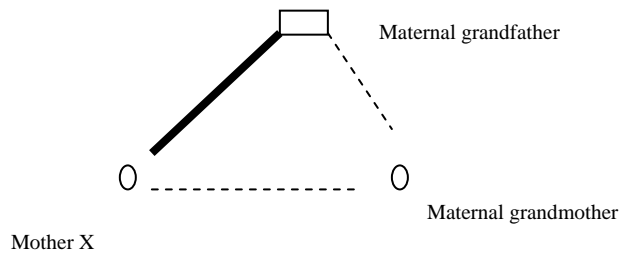
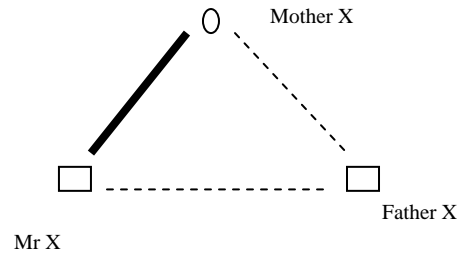


Figure 10. Multigenerational



Mr X's identification with his father's position had implications for his position in the triad between himself, his mother and grandfather. It appears to have been accompanied by conflict between Mr X and his maternal grandfather, as can be seen in 1987, the same year that Mr X started going out with Miss N. Mr X appears to have adopted the same strategy as father X in relation to his maternal grandfather, namely emotional cutting off and distance. However, he seems to have had fewer options in terms of dissipating undifferentiation, resulting in his behavioural problems (demoted 1989 and first murder in 1989).

Figure 6. Parent-Child Triad One*Figure 7. Parent-Child Triad Two*

There also appears to be a parent-child triangular pattern that is repeated across generations on the maternal side of the family system. This pattern involves a focused triangulation with a parent-child coalition against the other parent. In the first instance of this pattern, mother X and her father (the maternal grandfather) formed a coalition or close relationship that excluded the maternal grandmother as well as each of the subsequent spouses of the maternal grandfather. As will be discussed below, the degree of isolation and emotional cut-off of the excluded parent/spouse can be seen in the premature death of these individuals (as indicated in the genogram, chapter 6).

In the second instance, mother X formed a coalition with Mr X, excluding father X. In this way, mother X identified with her father's position, and Mr X identified with mother X's position in the first instance, and the repetition of this pattern across generations served to increase the degree of fusion in the triad that existed between mother X, Mr X and his maternal grandfather, due to their respective identifications in the multigenerational parent-child triads. Fusion appears to have increased and the maternal grandfather appears to have taken on an increasing role in defining the collective identity of the fused triad, as well as of each of the respective members. In line with the principles of differentiation and fusion, the

proportion of the fused identity that could be influenced by a member of the triad would have decreased with each subsequent generation, and Mr X would have had the least say, increasing feelings of self-annihilation and impotence within the family system.

For example, after having the argument with the maternal grandfather, Mr X was persuaded by mother X to make peace with the maternal grandfather. The hierarchy within the fused triad and family system is thus evident. Mr X stated that

then there was a fight over it [the use of the maternal grandfather's car] and then he didn't want to have anything to do with me but then he pulled my mother into it- they still had a relationship but he didn't speak to me- then when he got married and my mother said that I should come with and speak to him and try to make peace.

The effect of the death of the maternal grandfather had on this triad and the respective members will be examined further in discussions of the family emotional processes below.

o **Triangulation in the family system (theme six).**

Given the imminent threats of total fusion and isolation posed by the above processes that were present in the family system, triangulation may have been necessary as a means to prevent system collapse. This seems to have been used in the following areas:

- o to prevent the collapse of the spousal relationship between father and mother X;
- o to preserve the fused triangular relationship between mother X, Mr X and the maternal grandfather; and
- o to cope with the effects of Mr X removal from the system when arrested.

With respect to the nuclear family system of Mr X, father X and mother X, total isolation and cut off of father X appears to have been prevented via triangulation around Mr X, who acted

as an intermediary between the spousal dyad of father and mother X. By presenting with learning problems as well as his antisocial behaviour, Mr X was able to function as a scapegoat for the nuclear family system, and thereby prevent the collapse of the system via a split between the spousal pair. This intermediary role as scapegoat continued after his imprisonment, enabling father and mother X to continue a pseudo-relationship through avoiding conflict within their own relationship by focusing on Mr X. Mother X stated that

I don't get a chance to speak to him [Mr X] in private when we visit him [in the prison] and I don't handle that very well I have a good husband though who takes me for coffee after we've finished visiting him [Mr X] because it really upsets one- you don't understand why he did it.

In the same interview, mother X also stated "he's our son and we must be his family to him and support him where we can and not cast him away."

With respect to the fused centralized threesome of Mr X, mother X and the maternal grandfather, total fusion and system collapse seems to have been prevented by triangulating around various external parties. These included the alcoholism of the maternal grandfather, as well as his various spouses; and the antisocial behaviour of Mr X. Mr X's relationship with Miss N also constituted an attempt to prevent total fusion (in much the same way as the various spouses of the maternal grandfather served to do). However, the attempt with Miss N was unsuccessful as Mr X was faced with another fused system in the form of Miss N's family, and faced the choice of either being assimilated into such a system (further losing self) or remaining an outsider (and consequently a threat to the homeostasis of that system).

After Mr X's arrest and imprisonment, the loss of two important members of the family system (and fused threesome) would have placed considerable strain on mother X (who may have feared self-annihilation in the absence of the members with whom she had fused within

the system) as well as the relationship between father and mother X due to the loss of an intermediary in the form of Mr X around which they could triangulate. The considerable threat of system collapse that resulted may have contributed towards mother X interacting with persons outside of the family system. Such persons included her psychologist, medical practitioner and work colleagues. This, in turn, may have allowed for absorption of some of the anxiety in the system, and introduction of alternative third members for other triangulation processes. An example of such a process would be the alliance between mother X and her psychologist in order to scapegoat Mr X. Mother X stated that

people at work always ask how it's going with Mr X...they are actually very loving towards me, I can't complain about that...Mrs A (name withheld for anonymity and confidentiality), one of the officials [at work] always stands by me, she spoke kindly with me about the phone calls [abusive phone calls received after the screening of the television documentary] and that sort of thing.

Mother X also stated that

[her psychologist] told me, no, it always happens that the mother blames herself for these things...he told me that Mr X was 25 when this happened and that he was old already and that something else must have happened...our dominee and parish also pray for us a lot...it gives us a bit of strength...also the students that stayed with us and that have moved away [phoned us] and gave us support.

In order to maintain stability, it is essential that Mr X remain in the role of the scapegoat, thus cementing the relationship between father X and mother X (thereby preventing the collapse of the system and transgression of family rule), as well as to allow them to continue being pseudo- and non-responsible in relation to the family system. Mr X may have replaced his

maternal grandfather in this position, that is, as someone to care for or look after (specifically in terms of mother X's role in the system). One might hypothesize that grandchildren would have taken on this role if there were any.

This role serves the additional purpose of validating Mr X's membership within the system, thus preventing his total isolation and system collapse as a result. The quotes below demonstrate how he exonerates mother X and his family from any blame for his actions, and positions this indirectly on himself. Mr X stated that "...my mother changed and the strictness wasn't there any more. She allowed me to decide how to study and do my schoolwork and if I needed help I could go to her...so it wasn't necessary for me to steal anymore but it became a habit." He also stated that "[my family] new nothing about it [the crimes] and they took it very badly...and to allow your parents to go through that process is not nice."

o **Power and interactional patterns (theme seven).**

In terms of coalitions and alliances, the previous section can be referred to for a discussion of how coalitions and alliances in the X family system manifest themselves in the various triads that occur in the system. Suffice to say, the main coalitions in the X family system appear to be between:

- mother X and the maternal grandfather;
- Mr X and mother X; and
- Mr X and the maternal grandfather.

As discussed previously, many of these coalitions occur across generations and diffuse parent-child subsystem boundaries. With regards to interactional patterns, these can be discussed with reference to the pattern of symmetrical and complementary relationships in the family system.

- Symmetrical and complementary relationships.

There are four main complementary relationships within the family system, namely:

- a. between father X and mother X;
- b. between mother X and her father;
- c. between Mr X and mother X; and
- d. between Mr X and his grandfather.

Mr X occupied the one-down position in all of his relationships. In addition, given that these relationships were all fused, this meant that the other party in each of the relationships was dominant, and assumed responsibility for defining the identity of the fused pseudo-self between the two individuals. Given that he had no close relationships with anyone outside of the family system, he may have struggled to find legitimate alternative avenues through which to achieve some sense of independent self, and allay the anxiety surrounding self-annihilation, until he discovered that his antisocial behaviour provided a suitable vehicle with which to achieve this and allow him to be in a one-up position without endangering his family system.

This can be seen in the manner that Mr X describes the way that his early crimes gave him freedom and financial independence in terms of getting out of the house, as well as being able to choose how he would spend the money that he had stolen (see above quotes).

Additionally, Mr X stated that

you could say that I led two lives, what people saw was a very sweet little boy and what came out was the monster and I take it as part of the ugly person and it doesn't bother me because it's in the past now...and it wasn't just my parents who were surprised [at finding out about the 'second Mr X'], there were many other people who were shocked, who knew me...

Mr X's argument with his maternal grandfather constituted a challenge to the relationship status quo. By contesting his grandfather's authority, Mr X risked challenging for the one-up position in the relationship. The relationship broke down, ending in disconfirmation of Mr X by his grandfather. This disconfirmation would have intensified feelings of self-annihilation and non-existence that would have intensified the need to assert himself and validate his existence. His antisocial behaviour escalated soon after this conflict and the first rape and murder was committed. Mr X stated that "it [the argument with the maternal grandfather] was never made right so it's like it basically never happened...and after he slammed the door in my face I went back to try and talk to him but he wasn't at home...but while we were on a good foot, he was alright..."

If one examines the genogram, it is evident that the complementary relationship patterns alternate with each generation. Father X and mother X occupied the one down position in relation to their parents; father X and mother X then assumed the one up position in relation to Mr X; and if Mr X had gone on to produce a family of his own, one could predict that he would have assumed the one up position in relation to his wife and child. However, Mr X was not able to form his own family, and lacked siblings or peers with which to try out a one up complementary position. He appears to have used his crimes to achieve this as can be seen in his one up position in his relationship with his victims.

Disconfirmation reactions are present in relation to Mr X throughout the family system. Initially, father X's lack of involvement with Mr X, emotional withdrawal and lack of physical affection towards him would have negated Mr X's status as son or as an individual who required emotional warmth and affection. Conversely, mother X would have validated this part of Mr X and nurtured him along these lines. Mr X developed a more fused relationship with his mother. However, he would have felt ambivalently about his emotions and expressing this side of himself. It is evident that he felt more comfortable in

demonstrating emotions towards women than men. This is based on the author's observations in interviews as well as Mr X's interaction with his victims.

Further disconfirmation occurred when he experienced learning problems as a result of his meningitis when he was eight years old. His mother's harsh discipline and punishment of Mr X when he struggled to complete his homework correctly communicated that he was not acceptable if he was less than perfect. This situation was repeated later in life when Miss N's father refused to accept Mr X into his family until he had completed his sergeant's exams.

These examples of disconfirmation reactions in Mr X's relationships serve to illustrate the extent to which Mr X was made to feel non-existent, and expendable in the family system on a repeated basis. These reactions, together with his one-down position in the significant, fused complementary relationships he was part of, may have contributed towards considerable anxiety in Mr X concerning self-annihilation and non-existence. He appears to have found a means by which to assert himself and absorb some of the anxiety that he experienced, via his antisocial behaviour that allowed him to communicate his independence and existence outside of the family system.

Finally, it would appear that Mr X, as the only child, mediated the complementary relationship between his parents. His symptomatic behaviour when younger can be seen as a manner in which he prevented father X from possessing too much power in the relationship by acting out in a manner that only mother X was able to remedy (that is, requiring emotional support) thus increasing her importance in the family system. This would have also occurred when father X's business failed when Mr X was a teenager, thus possibly circumventing the necessity for Mr X to act out in this instance.

- **Summary of themes.**

There appear to be a number of themes in the X family system, with respect to emotional process, multigenerational patterns and relationships. It would appear that processes and relationships in the family system are characterized by high levels of anxiety due to the low levels of differentiation in family members, and the X family system as whole (themes one and four). These factors also appear to influence the nature of interactions between family members and other systems (theme six), as well as the extent to which this interaction took place (themes three and six).

Weak boundaries between subsystems as well as poor hierarchical distinctions between generations (theme six) may have contributed to feelings of confusion with regard to roles and responsibilities within the family system, as well as possibly increasing levels of undifferentiation in the system and subsystems. Fears of loss of self due to higher levels of differentiation, unclear roles and fused relationships (theme two) may have contributed to emotional distancing, cutting off (theme three) or deviant, alternative or dysfunctional behaviour in order to assert the self (theme four). Additionally, coalitions and interactional power struggles may have developed (theme eight) in order to compensate for lack of structural hierarchy and as a means of repeating previous triangular relationships (theme eight) in previous generations as a means to maintain family system homeostasis.

Mr X's criminal behaviour appears to serve a function within all of these themes as has been reflected in the discussion above. Primarily, however, it would appear that the predominant role functions may have been concerned with:

- maintaining system homeostasis through serving as a means to liberate excess system undifferentiation or anxiety;
- achieving homeostasis through repetition of relationship patterns at higher levels; and

- serving as a means via which the X family system could maintain rigid, closed boundaries, preserve the spousal subsystem, and prevent interference from outsiders or other systems.

These are only a sample of possible functions that have been discussed in the above results, and many more may emerge from alternative perspectives on the data or repeated analysis in subsequent study. The sample highlighted in this discussion reflects those suggestions that the researcher feels are most strongly supported by the data. These will be addressed further in Chapter 8.

7.2 DISCUSSION OF RESULT OF CASE STUDY TWO – MR Y AND HIS FAMILY

As discussed in the previous chapter (chapter 6), the clinical observations of Mr Y, the genogram and the interviews conducted yielded considerable information concerning the family system of Mr Y. This information was supplemented with interviews with the prison psychologist of the prison where Mr Y is being held, as well as Mr Y's cellmate, Mr Z. The psychological assessment report for Mr Y's trial as well as an episode of a television documentary were also consulted as secondary sources of information. Discussion of the results will now involve an interpretation of the data provided by the genogram in accordance with the method outlined by McGoldrick and Gerson (1985), followed by a discussion of the thematic content analysis applied to interview data.

7.2.1 Genogram interpretation

The genogram will now be interpreted with respect to the six categories outlined in the methodology section (chapter 5), namely:

- Family structure;
- Life cycle fit;
- Pattern repetition across generations;
- Life events and family functioning;
- Relational patterns and triads; and
- Family balance and imbalance (McGoldrick & Gerson, 1985).

Each section will commence by outlining the main aspects applicable to the section found in the genogram, and then will elaborate upon each aspect in greater detail in terms of how it relates to the family system.

- **Category one: family structure.**

- **- Nuclear family.**

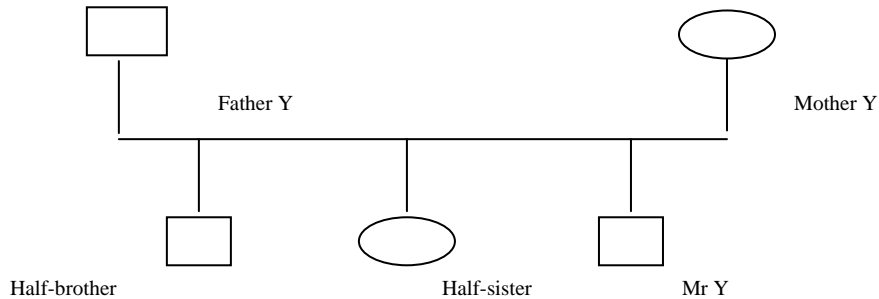
There appear to be three significant households in the nuclear family system of Mr Y. In chronological order, these are:

- household one (the remarried family form) consisting of mother Y, father Y, Mr Y and his two half-siblings;
- household two (the single parent family form) consisting of mother Y, Mr Y and his two half-siblings; and
- household three (the remarried family form) consisting of mother Y, Mr Y and his stepfather.

The first configuration of the immediate family system of Mr Y appears to take the remarried family form. The members of this household include Mr Y, mother Y, father Y, and the two children of mother Y from a previous marriage (the half-brother and half-sister of Mr Y). This household ended when father Y was executed in 1963.

Figure 15.

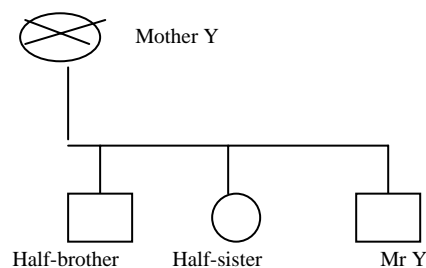
Household One for Mr Y



The second configuration of the immediate family system of Mr Y takes the single parent family form. The members of this household include Mr Y, mother Y and the two half-siblings. This configuration occurred as a result of the death of father Y and lasted until mother Y's remarriage to Mr Y's stepfather. During this time, both the half-brother and half-sister left the household to start their own families.

Figure 16.

Household Two for Mr Y

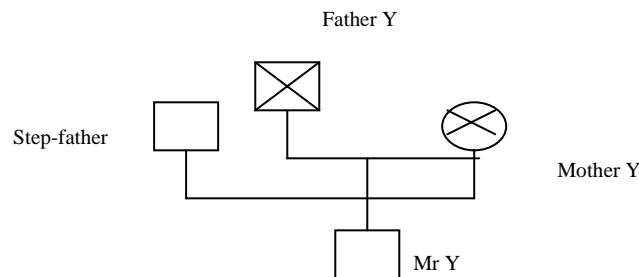


The third configuration of the immediate family system of Mr Y takes the remarried family form. The members of this household include Mr Y, mother Y and her third husband

(Mr Y's step-father). This configuration lasted until Mr Y left the household in 1981 after returning from compulsory national service.

Figure 17.

Household Three for Mr Y



The remaining portions of the extended family system, specifically on the paternal side, take a nuclear family form. On the maternal side, however, there are two significant configurations, namely:

- o the foster family of mother Y; and
- o the first marriage household of mother Y.

Mother Y was orphaned at an early age and taken into several foster homes throughout her early life. Her final set of foster parents expelled her from the house when she was 17. Mr Y stated that she was forced to live on the streets for two years before meeting her first husband. Mr Y stated that “she [mother Y] was an orphan...she had one set of foster parents who apparently kicked her out of the house...and she was a young girl of about 17, 18.”

The first marriage household of mother Y took the nuclear family form and consisted of mother Y, her first husband and their two children. Mr Y was not able to recall why the marriage ended but stated that mother Y's first husband was a sailor. Consequently, there appear to be a variety of household types in the family system of Mr Y. Most of these appear to be on the maternal side of the family system.

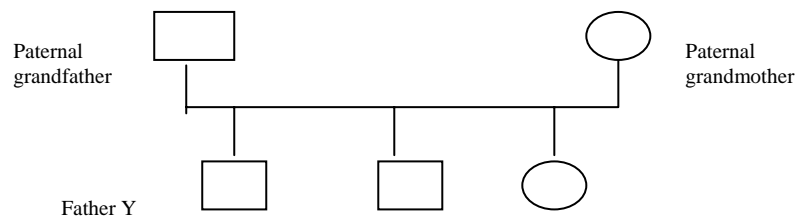
- Sibling constellation.

The genogram (figure 3) yields the following information concerning the sibling position of the members of the nuclear family:

- o father Y was the eldest of three siblings, and the oldest male, with a younger brother and sister [figure 18];
- o mother Y was an orphan and only child in her family of origin, and may have occupied various sibling positions in her respective foster families; and
- o Mr Y occupied two sibling positions in the various households of which he was a part. These were:
 - youngest of three siblings, with an older half-brother and half-sister (in households one and two); and
 - only child (in household three).
 -

Figure 18.

Father Y's Sibling Constellation



According to Mr Y, father Y had two siblings: one younger brother, and one younger sister. Mr Y also described his father as the favourite of the family and stated that the family had high expectations of him. Mr Y also stated that father Y's siblings continued to think fondly of him after his death. The younger sister was married with children of her own. The younger brother also started a family of his own but died of cirrhosis due to his addiction to

alcohol. Mr Y stated that “from what I used to hear from my grandfather, grandmother and so on...was that he [father Y] was...the apple of everybody’s eye” and then “there was an aunt, an uncle...and they all stayed in the same area...all of them used to *pot* [drink]...my uncle actually died of liver cirrhosis.”

Mr Y’s last contact with the paternal side of the family system was when he was 18 years of age (1979). Mr Y claimed that he always felt different from the paternal grandparents and siblings. There is an air of superiority and contempt in his attitude towards his aunt, uncle and grandparents on the paternal side of the system. Mr Y stated that

that’s why I say that I don’t fit in with my family at all...totally, totally, totally an outsider...I don’t think like them, I don’t act like them, I never lived like them outside...your average, low class, white characters are raw and mostly uneducated...common is the right word...it was something I couldn’t stand.

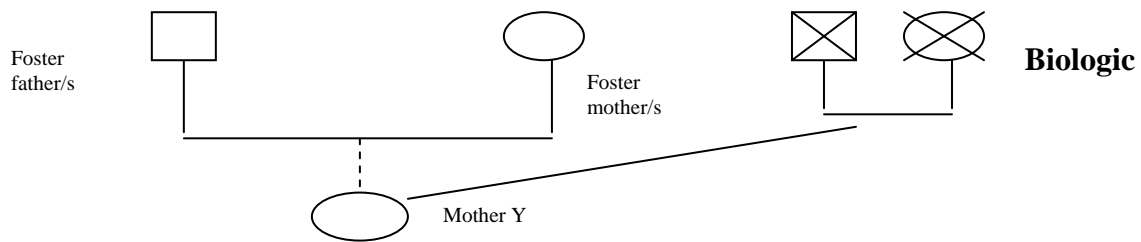
As the eldest son, father Y may have felt considerable pressure to live up to the expectations of his family. Given that the paternal side of the family system was financially poor and of a low socio-economic status, these expectations may have been particularly intense. The death of father Y may have placed considerable pressure on the extended paternal family system to find a replacement for the role of fulfilling the expectations of the family. The alcohol abuse and premature death as a result of cirrhosis on the part of the remaining male child in the paternal side of the family system, may reflect the intensity of these expectations in the absence of father Y. One may hypothesize that these expectations extended to Mr Y in the absence of father Y, and then father Y’s younger brother.

Given that father Y had a younger sister, he may have been used to taking an authoritative role in relation to the women in his life, and may have assumed a protective role in relation to other women in his life. Additionally, given that his brother was younger than him, he may

have been quite assertive around other males and assumed a role of leadership or dominance around other men, especially those younger than him.

Figure 19.

Mother Y's Sibling Constellation



Mother Y was an only child. She was orphaned when very young and spent most of her life in foster homes. She may have been exposed to many different sibling constellations, and have had to adapt to her position in the various foster family systems. Due to the fact that mother Y is deceased and could not be interviewed, little information is available concerning the sibling constellations of the various foster families. Mr Y could also provide no information in this regard. Mr Y stated that “she [mother Y] probably felt shy about her circumstances...because she hardly ever spoke about her childhood...very little information from her...once she left them [her foster parents] she never had any further contact with her foster parents.”

The orphaning of mother Y at a very young age, with no biological siblings to share the loss with, may have contributed towards considerable feelings of insecurity and abandonment in mother Y. Her movement through a number of foster homes may have left mother Y with little sense of permanency or consistency, as well as personal shame and low self-esteem as stated by Mr Y in the quote above. With little information on the nature of the foster homes

that mother Y lived in, it is difficult to state the implications that the sibling constellations may have had on her.

The instability of sibling constellation in the early life of mother Y may have made her uncertain of her place or position with peers of her own age, younger and older peers. This may also explain her reluctance to socialize with others, and insecurity around people outside of the family system. Mr Y stated that “I think my mom was embarrassed due to the fact that she could not get on with people at all, she didn’t like people that much...she could never have, like, have a discussion with the next-door neighbour or anything like that, no way...”

- Implications of respective sibling positions of father Y and mother Y for their spousal relationship.

Father Y may have been used to taking a protective role in relation to the women in his life.

Mother Y may have been attracted to individuals that she felt could take care of her, given her experiences of being orphaned and her movement between foster homes. The spousal compatibility between these two individuals may have been high. Mr Y confirmed this when he stated that “I think my mother was not very happy most of her life, you see the only person she truly loved was my father...and she was happy.”

In much the same way as mother Y, Mr Y was exposed to different sibling constellations in the various households of which he was a part. This is one of many similarities possibly contributing towards a strong identification between Mr Y and mother. The two positions occupied by Mr Y in the sibling constellation appear to be:

- o the youngest child position (see figures 15 and 16); and
- o the only child position (see figure 17).

Although Mr Y was born into a family system where there were two older siblings already resulting in him occupying the youngest child position, he appears to have assumed the functional position of only child. This was on the basis of:

- o the considerable age difference between his half-siblings and himself, namely 10 years from his older half-brother and eight years in the case of his older half-sister. McGoldrick and Gerson (1985) stated that in cases where there is a considerable age gap between older siblings and a younger child, that younger child tends to take on the position of a functional only child;
- o mother Y's own attitude towards Mr Y. According to Mr Y, Mother Y seems to have treated Mr Y as if he was her only child, and this appears to have intensified when the two half-siblings left the household and nuclear family system at a later point, when Mr Y was eight years old. Mother Y may also have viewed her second marriage as an opportunity to start over, and may have possibly favoured Mr Y over his half-siblings. Additionally, in terms of the nuclear family system, namely father Y, mother Y, and Mr Y, Mr Y was the only child of father Y, and may have been treated in that light by father Y; and
- o finally, Mr Y's own attitude to his position in the family system appears to indicate an identification with the position of only child (as discussed in chapter 6).

Mr Y stated that "from childhood, I was always sort of like left out- they [the step-siblings] were much older than me, I mean, when I was seven years old, my brother was 15...my sister was only two years younger than him. I mean, there's a gap and it's also like it's not their father...so we were never close." In addition to occupying the functional position of only child in the households where there were other siblings present (namely, households one and

two), Mr Y was the only child in the nuclear family system from midway through the time period of household two and then for the duration of household three.

Mr Y's position as functional only child and preferential treatment in the households where there were other siblings present may have contributed towards his feelings of superiority and being special within the family system. Additionally, Mr Y was named after his father. He may have identified with father Y, as well as the family program for him to follow in his father's footsteps. This can be seen in his fascination with the supernatural and occult, as well as his criminal behaviour. The family program and identification with his father may also have coincided with considerable pressure on Mr Y to fulfill the expectations that had been placed on his father once father Y was deceased. This may also contribute towards understandings of Mr Y's assumption of a position of responsibility (thereby identifying with father Y's role) in relation to mother Y once father Y was deceased.

Additionally, his position as favoured child as well as the considerable amount of time that he spent as the only child in a single parent family system, and then a remarried family system where mother Y was particularly isolated from the external world, may have contributed towards the close relationship between Mr Y and mother Y. Mr Y's position as the only child in family systems that were relatively closed and lacked peers of his own age (as well as any other outsiders) to whom he could relate or with which he could communicate, may also reflect the closed nature of the nuclear family system of which he was a part.

Mr Y's independence and early development of adult-like behaviour may also be attributable to his position as only child (Toman, 1961).

- Unusual family configurations.

The genogram demonstrates three significant unusual structural configurations in the Y family system, namely in terms of:

- o number of households on the maternal side;
- o premature or early deaths; and
- o alcohol and other substance abuse.

The genogram demonstrates a greater number of households on the maternal side of the family system than on the paternal side of the family system. This configuration is both in terms of mother Y's exposure to numerous households during her youth as a foster child, and in terms of her attempts in later life to start a family of her own (which involved three different households). She may have been continuing with the same pattern she learnt in her youth, thus maintaining homeostasis. This may have impacted upon Mr Y's life in the sense that there is a repetition of this pattern in his own life with respect to the numerous serious relationships in which he was involved.

This structural aspect of the family system may also indicate that mother Y may have had trouble in her relationships with significant others, and her ability to successfully resolve conflict in these relationships as well as possibly indicating an inability to negotiate commitment successfully. This may have been passed on to Mr Y also as can be seen in his particular difficulties in his own relationships around trust, commitment and conflict.

The genogram indicates a number of premature or early deaths in the Y family system. These include the paternal uncle of Mr Y, father Y, and mother Y. Given that initially Mr Y received the death penalty for his crimes, he would also have followed this pattern in the family system. Premature or early death in a family system is frequently associated with high levels of stress, undifferentiation and anxiety in that system (Bowen, 1978). This will be discussed further in the section on emotional processes in the family system. However, the change in Mr Y's sentence may have provoked symptomatic behaviour or changes in the system to maintain the homeostasis that might have been triggered as a result of Mr Y's failure to follow in his father's footsteps and fulfill his role in the family system.

The information from the genogram highlights a number of instances of alcohol and substance abuse. These concern Mr Y's paternal uncle (who died of cirrhosis due to alcohol abuse), mother Y (dependency on Grand-Pa® headache powders), and Mr Y's step-father (alcohol abuse). Once again, the presence of a number of instances of alcohol and substance abuse in the family system may indicate an inadequate coping mechanism for high levels of stress and anxiety in the Y family system. Also significant is the fact that Mr Y did not follow this pattern. As a result he may have needed other outlets for anxiety that he experienced within the family system and this may have been one of the functions of his criminal behaviour.

- Summary of family structure.

The first category, family structure yielded the following notable aspects of the family system of Mr Y. In terms of household composition, three significant households emerged in the nuclear family system. These were the remarried family household (household one, into which Mr Y was born); single parent family household (household two, after the death of Mr Y's father); and the remarried family household (household three). Other significant households included the foster family household of mother Y and the first marriage family household of mother Y.

In terms of the sibling constellation of Mr Y, the Y nuclear family system consisted of an eldest, favourite child (father Y) together with an orphan (mother Y) as parents and a functional only child (Mr Y). Despite having two half-siblings from mother Y's previous marriage, Mr Y seems to have held the role of favoured child in the family. Mother Y had no other children with father Y (or with her third husband, Mr Y's step-father). As a result, Mr Y was made to feel special and superior to those around him, especially given that he was named after father Y. However, this position would also have placed a large degree of

pressure on him to assume the father role once father Y passed away and to follow in the footsteps of father Y after his death. Mr Y's sibling position as favourite son and functional only child would also have contributed to him identifying strongly with father Y.

Additionally, in terms of the implications of Mr Y's sibling constellation, the large age gap between himself and his half-siblings, together with his position as functional only child, may have resulted in his diminished ability to relate to others.

In terms of unusual family configurations, the genogram (figure 3) revealed a greater number of households on the maternal side of the family system; alcohol or substance abuse; and premature or early death. These areas all may be evidence of faulty coping mechanisms in response to the high levels of stress and anxiety in the family system, as well as possibly faulty conflict resolution strategies in relationships. The number of households on the maternal side may also have influenced Mr Y's own relationship history, namely in that he appears to have continued his mother's tradition of multiple serious adult relationships in his own life. In much the same way, Mr Y recounts his mother having truly loved his father, just as he recounts having truly loved his co-accused, Mr H.

- **Category two: life cycle fit.**

The genogram and interview data revealed the following significant areas in the life cycle of the Y family system, namely:

- non-normative stages;
- relationship history; and
- relationships between individuals at different stages in their life cycle.

- Non-normative stages.

There are four significant non-normative life cycle events in the family system of Mr Y, namely:

- o the early pregnancy of mother Y;
- o the lack of an available father figure in Mr Y's early life;
- o the lack of socialisation during Mr Y's adolescence; and
- o Mr Y's academic performance.

Mother Y was pregnant with her first child at the age of 18. Given her experiences as a foster child and the pressure that this may have placed on her to become independent and to grow up quickly in order to take care of herself, she may have had little time to experience and enjoy her youth. The early pregnancy might have ruled out any possibility of enjoying her youth in her early adult years and coincided with mother Y's entry onto a marriage that eventually failed. Additionally, her commitments and obligations as a parent may have prevented her from finding a job or developing skills that may have made her more independent in later life. Additionally, she was dependent on others (such as her spouses, or the state welfare department) for her financial well-being. Mr Y stated that "they were very, very, very, very poor...and since she was born, she went through hardship all the way...she [mother Y] didn't have any skills whatsoever...she wasn't going to be able to get a job anywhere and she was a little bit too old" and then "[her intelligence was] basic, very average...she couldn't understand one word of my schoolwork."

The early death of father Y meant that Mr Y lost his father at the age of two years . Additionally, mother Y isolated herself from any extended family on the maternal or paternal side of the family system at this time and attempted to care for her children on her own for a period of ten years. While Mr Y's half-brother was living in the household, Mr Y may have had an older male to identify with as a father figure. However, mother Y's emotional distance

from her two older children, together with the family system programme for Mr Y to follow in father Y's footsteps, would have meant that identification with the elder half-brother would have been weak at best. Due to the older age of the brother, he may have initially become the parentified child, however, he later left the household (1969). Systemically, this may have constituted another "loss" or psychological divorce in the system, continuing the patterns of change, possibly thus resulting in Mr Y moving into the parentified child position to maintain homeostasis until he, too, left the household.

Mr Y appears to have assumed the role of father or husband (or the parentified child position) for a large period of his early development (namely, the years two until twelve). This, together with mother Y's underparenting, would explain why he felt that he was independent and learnt to take care of himself quite early in his life. Mr Y may have perceived his stepfather as a rival to his position as head of the household when mother Y remarried in 1973. This may have been exacerbated by the youth of the stepfather, who was considerably younger than mother Y. This pattern can also be seen to have been repeated in Mr Y's later life where his early parentification may have been carried through to his relationship with his co-accused, Mr H (also considerably younger than Mr Y) where Mr Y felt an extreme sense of responsibility for caring for Mr H. Mr Y stated that "she [mother Y] wasn't very worried about my schoolwork and stuff like that because there they [mother Y and Mr Y's step-father] left me to go on my own...there was none of that support coming from them, so I mostly learnt from a young age to operate on my own."

The closed nature of the Y nuclear family system (specifically after the death of father Y) may be seen by virtue of mother Y's fear of outsiders and prohibition of any visitors to the family home, and the close, closed relationship between her and Mr Y. Mr Y may never have achieved the developmental objectives of adolescence, namely the development of social skills and close relationships with others outside of the family system. In much the same way,

this pattern may have been repeated in Mr Y's relationship with his co-accused, Mr H in that Mr Y could not tolerate the presence of another individual in their closed relationship system. This can be seen in Mr Y's murder of the first victim, a runaway who initially accompanied Mr H when he left to meet up with Mr Y at the start of their flight from authority. Even Mr Y's cannibalism of this victim may be seen as a systemic effort to deal with an outsider to the system by going to the extreme of making him part of that system by eating him (and thus controlling his influence on the system).

Mr Y stated that

I wasn't allowed to have friends at home- I could go and visit them...their houses were much better...I think my mom was embarrassed due to the fact that she could not get on with people...people of her own age group and all that kind of stuff...I actually inherited a similar condition as hers...I don't particularly like having people around me...I never encouraged people to come and visit me.

Finally, in terms of non-normative events within the context of the family system, Mr Y's achievement of a Matric [high school] certificate made him different from the other members of the family system in the sense that nobody else had achieved this. This event coincided with Mr Y's feelings of superiority in relation to the other members of the family system, as well as his feelings of being different. Mr Y stated that "I was the only one that made Matric...I lived in a higher bracket than my entire family."

- Relationship history and relationships between individuals at different stages of their life cycle.

In terms of life cycle fit, there appears to be a struggle on the part of mother Y to establish long-lasting relationships with significant individuals in her life. This can be seen in her

movement through numerous foster homes as well as her involvement in three marriages in later life. This also may explain her intense emotional investment in the adult relationships that she experienced. The fact that these later relationships also did not last very long could explain her close attachment to Mr Y when he was born, and the role of protector and caregiver that Mr Y assumed in relation to his mother from a very young age. Mr Y appears to have repeated this relationship pattern with many of the significant individuals in his adult life. This will be explored further in the section on emotional processes in the family system.

In the extended Y family system, there appear to be two instances of relationships between people at different life stages in their life cycle, namely between:

- o mother Y and Mr Y's step-father; and
- o Mr Y and Mr H.

In the case of mother Y and Mr Y's stepfather, Mr Y stated that there was a thirteen year age difference between the two. Given the ages at which they got married (as seen on the genogram, figure 3), Mr Y's stepfather may have been looking to start his adult life whereas mother Y would have been looking at settling down and moving into later adulthood.

Their relationship may have been quite incompatible and complicated by Mr Y's rivalry with his stepfather. Additionally, Mr Y's stepfather, as the youngest of the spousal couple, may have been unable or unwilling to perform the role of caretaker that mother Y may have required. She may have moved closer to Mr Y, who had been performing this role up until that point. Further conflict may have ensued between mother Y and Mr Y's stepfather. Mr Y's stepfather may also have looked outside the family system, after a period of marriage, for a partner closer to his own age, who could fulfill his requirements. Mr Y stated that "the things he did, the way he treated me and my mother...left a lasting impression...he was a creep towards my mother...he made her feel worse about herself than she usually did...it's that typical scenario of the abusive husband" and, after mother Y died, "I found that he's got

another woman there, living there, with her two children and everything...then I found out that he was seeing this woman long time already...on the side.”

Mr Y appears to have repeated this relationship pattern of mother Y, namely in that he chose a partner 12 years his junior in Mr H. Mr Y, at 29 years of age, may have been looking for a more serious relationship, whereas Mr H, at 15, may have been looking for someone who could look after him. Mr Y fulfilled this role for Mr H, and vice versa (in a manner which will be discussed further). These two may have been compatible for the time period in which they were together. One might hypothesize that as they approached further life cycle stages, this compatibility may have weakened, as may have occurred with mother Y and Mr Y's stepfather. Thus, the systemic pattern appears to have been repeated.

This pattern may have been further repeated with respect to Mr Y's feelings of jealousy and rivalry towards the first murder victim (Mr H's runaway companion) as well as other men that attempted to approach Mr H such as the attempted murder victim and third murder victim, who both made sexual advances towards Mr H, which repeated Mr Y's feelings of rivalry towards his step-father. Mr Y stated that “I felt so protective about him...I became the father, mother, the brother, the lover, everything to him [Mr H].” This may be another indication of the extent to which Mr Y was fused with mother Y, as well as the rigidity of his role as caretaker, which he assumed in relation to a younger partner.

- Summary of category two: life cycle events.

The second category, life cycle events revealed three main areas that had considerable impact upon the family system. These were non-normative stages, relationship history and relationships between individuals at different points in their life cycle.

In terms of non-normative stages, there appear to be four significant non-normative life cycle events. These are the early pregnancy of mother Y; the lack of an available father

figure in Mr Y's early life; the lack of socialization during Mr Y's adolescence; and Mr Y's academic performance. These events may illuminate some of Mr Y's attitudes to other persons outside of the family system, as well as his independence and early maturity, and rigid role as caregiver and protector that persisted with him through later life. They may also further illuminate characteristics such as mother Y's neediness and close relationship with Mr Y.

In terms of relationship history, there appears to be a repetition of systemic relationship patterns in mother Y and Mr Y. The relationship history of mother Y may contribute towards understandings of her neediness, close relationship with Mr Y, mistrust of individuals outside of the family system, and general insecurity. The repetition of this pattern in Mr Y may point towards his identification with mother Y.

In terms of relationships between individuals at different stages in the life cycle, there seems to be a repetition of systemic relationship patterns in mother Y and Mr Y. This area indicated a possible incompatibility between mother Y and Mr Y's stepfather, as well as the compatibility of Mr Y and Mr H. Once again, the repetition of patterns may be indicative of identification between Mr Y and mother Y. However, Mr Y's role in these relationships may point towards his identification with mother Y.

- **Category three: pattern repetition across generations.**

Discussion of pattern repetition across generations as seen in the genogram (Figure 3) of the Y family system will proceed with regards to:

- o patterns of functioning;
- o patterns of relationship; and
- o patterns of structure.

- Patterns of functioning.

In terms of patterns of functioning, the genogram (figure 3) demonstrates the following patterns being repeated across generations in the Y family system:

- o substance and alcohol abuse;
- o violence as a means of dealing with conflict or problem-solving;
- o difficulties in sustaining intimate relationships with significant others;
- o dependence on the supernatural and occult; and
- o failure.

The genogram demonstrated a number of examples of substance abuse in members of the Y family system. These occur at the second tier of the family system, in Mr Y's paternal uncle who abused alcohol and died of liver cirrhosis as a result; Mr Y's step-father who also abused alcohol; and in mother Y who was addicted to Grand-Pa® headache powders. Additionally, Mr Y stated that most of the paternal side of the family system used to consume large amounts of alcohol on regular occasions (see above quote).

In the third tier of the family system, this pattern of substance use does not appear to have been repeated in Mr Y. He may have found other ways to relieve stress or deal with problems such as violence or aggression towards others. However, despite this behaviour constituting a new coping method, this appears to have been as dysfunctional as previous methods adopted in the family system, and thus repeated the systemic pattern of faulty coping strategies. Mr Y stated that "I'm not a drug user...I'm a beer drinker basically...I'm an occasional drinker", and, in relation to his ability to cope with stress and problems, Mr Y stated that "the problem is, if someone irritates me [in prison] and I couldn't get away from that person, I'd wait until he sleeps...and then I'd probably kill him because at that point in time, in my mind I would have decided that the only way to get rid of this problem is to get rid of him."

The repetition of this pattern of substance and alcohol use may indicate that there was a lack of coping skills in the family system passed on from one generation to the next, with members using alcohol or other substances in order to deal with high anxiety or stress in the family system. Additionally, there appears to be a susceptibility to addiction within the family system, specifically when such behaviour results in an improvement in the family system or subjective state, possibly by temporarily reducing stress or anxiety as mentioned above. In this way, Mr Y may have compensated for his lack of coping skills, and reluctance to use substances to deal with this, by using violence to solve his problems, and may have become “addicted” to murder as a result, with the positive feedback (or rather lack of negative feedback) that he received as a result, reinforcing this pattern of murder.

Several members in the family system appear to have used violence as a means to solve problems or to deal with conflict. These members are father Y (who murdered his employer) and Mr Y’s stepfather (who physically abused mother Y) in the second tier of the family system, and Mr Y in the third tier of the family system. Importantly, father Y’s violent behaviour was criminal and resulted in the death of his employer – this pattern was repeated in Mr Y whose violent behaviour resulted in the deaths of three people. Mr Y stated that “my step-father was a bit of a boozier, then sometimes he’d have his freak out sessions, and then me and my mother would have to run.”

Once again, this repeated dysfunctional pattern may indicate a lack of skills in the family system to deal with conflict or to problem solve in a constructive manner. This lack of skills appears to have been passed down from one generation in the Y family system to the next. Additionally, the level of violent behaviour appears to have escalated from one generation to the next, as can be seen in the way that Mr Y engaged in more widespread and extensive criminal behaviour (with three murder victims) than father Y (with one murder victim). This

escalation in violent behaviour may have been in response to increasing feelings of isolation on the part of Mr Y.

The family system also seems to reflect a repeated difficulty in sustaining intimate relationships with significant others in mother Y (in the second tier) and Mr Y (in the third tier). Both individuals appear to have had a number of relationships in adulthood that failed to last for any considerable amount of time. Additionally, a pattern of forming a close emotional attachment to one individual and isolation from persons outside of the immediate nuclear family system is present in both of these individuals. This specific pattern of functioning appears to have been passed down from mother Y to Mr Y.

Both mother Y and Mr Y may have developed a significant mistrust of individuals around them and attempted to prevent anyone from entering their personal space thus creating a closed system. This can be seen in the way that mother Y would not allow anyone to visit the household, and in how Mr Y adopted the same attitude when he had his own home later on, only allowing those with whom he had a close intimate relationship to visit him at home. Ultimately, this pattern appears to have escalated to the point where Mr Y's world shrunk to rigidly including himself and Mr H (his gay partner) exclusively and being closed to any outsiders. This can again be seen with respect to the first murder victim, where the system of Mr Y and Mr H could not allow for another who had to be removed from the system as a result, yet at the same time, included via cannibalism.

Mr Y stated that

I think that's why I also only choose one friend and go out with them, you know, I'll spend all my energy – love and affection on that one person...this friend usually turns out to be a lover' and 'I lived basically on my own, when I left home...I was very happy, I don't need someone at home to come home to...the home was a sanctuary...a

person that I would allow into my home is a person I would have a sexual relationship with...but I would never encourage someone that I just knew as a friend to come visit.

The genogram and interview data showed that a number of members of the family system believed in the supernatural and occult, mostly on the paternal side of the family system. These members included the paternal aunt (who claimed that she could see father Y after he died); mother Y (who claimed to see poltergeists); and Mr Y. Mr Y stated that he had discovered the occult at the age of 15 and had continued to use the occult throughout his life to advance his own standing in relation to others. Mr Y stated that 'I was involved since about the age of fifteen with the occult.' Mr Y also stated that "Yes, I used it [the occult] and I think that's what actually gave us the edge on the fact that nobody could sense any danger when we were around...you can influence events around you, you can change it so it's in your favour" and that "my mother told me that, on my father's side of the family, they all had certain abilities, paranormal abilities...you see, my aunt could see my father, he apparently sat there and spoke to her then after his death."

This pattern appears to serve a number of functions in the family system. Firstly, this may have been another manner of dealing with the lack of coping skills in the family system. The use of the supernatural to communicate with father Y after his death may have allowed members in the system, specifically on the paternal side, to cope with the loss of a member. Additionally, Mr Y's discovery of the occult came at a time when the stepfather had started physically abusing mother Y, and consequently may have constituted a means by which Mr Y could have coped with the higher levels of stress and anxiety in the family system, in the absence of other coping skills. Mr Y stated that "my step-father was drunk the one night and he decided to park the car in front of the house instead of in the garage...so round about 10

o'clock...I went into the garage and I sat there and drew a circle...placed candles...not knowing what I was doing actually and it [the occult] just started coming.”

Secondly, the passing on of these “powers” from mother Y to Mr Y may have served to further strengthen their relationship, and to confirm Mr Y’s role as superior or different within the family system. Paradoxically, other than mother Y, this pattern was prevalent mostly on the paternal side of the family system. This pattern may have linked Mr Y to the paternal side of the system, despite his attempts to differentiate from it.

Finally, given what has been discussed previously in relation to mother Y’s locus of control and feelings of powerlessness as a result of her history of abandonment, this may have been a means by which she could rationalize the various events and experiences in her life.

The genogram (figure 3) seems to reflect a repeated pattern of failure in the Y family system across generations. Additionally, this repetition seems to have escalated as reflected by the extent of failure in the successive generation. In the second tier of the family system, there were two instances of failure, namely in father Y’s criminal behaviour and death penalty, and in mother Y’s relationships. In the third tier, there is a repetition of both of these patterns of failure in Mr Y, namely in his own criminal behaviour and death penalty, as well as his failed relationships. Additionally, Mr Y’s failure repeats the failure of father Y to fulfill the expectations of the family system, specifically on the paternal side.

This repeated pattern of failure may reflect two possibilities. Firstly, this pattern may serve a particular function within the family system in maintaining stability or homeostasis, which would explain why it is repeated across successive generations. Secondly, this pattern may reflect a deviation-amplification measure in the family system as a means of destroying the system in question. Both of these possibilities will be discussed and evaluated further in the sections on homeostasis and emotional processes in the family system.

- Patterns of relationships.

With respect to patterns of relationships, there appear to be two significant patterns that are repeated across generations in the family system of Mr Y. These are:

- o closeness with one person and isolation from others; and
- o isolation from the extended family system.

There is a repetition of this pattern of relationships across the second and third generations, namely from mother Y to Mr Y. Mother Y appears to have had a history of forming close attachments to one person and then attempting to fuse with this individual, isolating the dyad from other persons or individuals outside of the closed/fused dyad. These attempts can be seen in the genogram. This may have been a repetition of patterns of relationships developed during her early experience as an orphan and being moved from one foster home to another. This pattern seems to have been passed on to Mr Y who repeated it in his relationships with his first lover, Mr C, and then Ms T, and finally, most intensely with Mr H. This pattern may also explain the intensity with which Mr Y viewed persons outside of his fused dyad with Mr H as a threat and his need to protect the relationship at all costs. As with the violent behaviour above, there appears to have been an escalation in the intensity of the emotional investment in the dyadic relationship from one generation (namely, mother Y) to the next (namely, Mr Y).

The second relationship pattern that appears to have been repeated across generations in the family system is one of isolation from the extended family system. As with the first pattern, this pattern appears to have been passed on from mother Y to Mr Y. With mother Y, there is no relationship between her and an extended family system; her biological parents were deceased; there seems to have been inconsistent foster parentage; and an abrupt end to her relationship with her foster parents. With Mr Y, a similar pattern emerges in the way that he first emotionally isolated himself from the paternal side of the family system and then physically moved away from the paternal members of the extended family system.

This pattern of isolation from the extended family system appears to have intensified the relationships in the nuclear family system, as well as the relationship dyads that mother Y or Mr Y were a part of. Additionally, this pattern of isolation appears to have also been repeated in relation to the larger societal supra-system by virtue of Mr Y's sexual orientation as a homosexual as well as more recently, within the correctional and prison system amongst criminals as a person who has committed serial murder and who has engaged in cannibalism. It would appear that there is a consistent pattern of isolation from other systems with respect to Mr Y, which he may have inherited from his mother. The emotional content of the relationships in which Mr Y was involved may also have been heightened. This will be discussed further in the section on emotional processes in the family system.

- Patterns of structure.

With respect to repeated structural patterns, there appears to be one significant structural pattern that is repeated across generations in the family system of Mr Y. This is the pattern of multiple households, and can be seen in all three tiers of the family system, specifically on the maternal side of the family system.

In relation to the first tier of the family system, the genogram and interview data evidenced how mother Y lived in many different households while growing up as a result of her status as an orphan and foster child. In her adult life, in relation to the second tier of the family system, there seems to be a repetition of this structural pattern with mother Y living in four different households, in terms of geographical location and membership. In terms of the third tier of the family system, there is further repetition of this structural pattern with Mr Y, who lived in three different households growing up, and then as an adult lived in at least three different households over time. Mr Y stated that "my mother was married before, and she had two kids with this guy and then divorced him and then she got married to my father...she had

to basically look after three kids for several years until I was 12 years old and she met my step-father and then we moved.”

The effects of this repeated structural pattern may be evident in less dependency on the household as the emotional or psychological seat of the home and source of security, and greater dependency on a person/s with which one had a close emotional relationship. In light of the instability and lack of consistency in households or homes in the early youth of mother Y, she may have learnt to rely more on herself as well as a close emotional attachment to another person for a sense of security. This can be seen in the intensity of her relationship with father Y, and then later, with Mr Y. This strategy was passed on to Mr Y and can be seen in his relationship with his first lover, Mr C, and then Mr H. Mr Y stated that “...I also only choose one friend and go out with them...you know, I’ll spend all my energy, love and affection on that one person.”

Mr Y also stated that

I don’t ask for much in life, I don’t need much in life- I’m used to being a loner, that’s why I can concentrate all my energies and my emotions on one person- I can’t share it among several people...oddly enough...I realized that I’m more sociable with other people, just for the sake of the person that I’m involved with...otherwise I wouldn’t speak to those people, I have no desire to- now that’s typical antisocial behaviour but to me it’s normal because that’s the way I was outside- I’ve been totally on my own.

- Summary of category three: pattern repetition across generations.

In terms of the third category, pattern repetition across generations, the genogram (figure 3) demonstrates a number of patterns of functioning that are repeated across generations. These include substance and alcohol abuse; violence as a means of dealing with conflict or problem

solving; difficulties in sustaining intimate relationships with significant others; dependence on the supernatural and occult; and failure.

These repeated patterns of functioning appear to indicate a lack of coping skills, as well as a lack of ability to deal with conflict or to problem solve effectively in the family system. The family system appears to compensate via substance abuse and violence to achieve these ends. Mr Y's criminal behaviour was shown to be one such means of dealing with this shortage of skills in the family system.

In terms of patterns of relationships, the genogram and interview data revealed two significant patterns, namely, closeness with one person and isolation from others and isolation from the extended family system. These patterns occurred originally in mother Y and were repeated in Mr Y. This served to bring these two individuals closer together, and intensified in their repetition, escalating as in the case of the violent behaviour example above.

Finally, there was a repeated structural pattern in terms of multiple households. As with the above, this occurred first in mother Y and was passed on to Mr Y. Together with the above, these repeated patterns may shed some light on Mr Y's protectiveness of his relationship with significant others and his intense mistrust of outsiders and potential threats to this relationship.

- **Category four: life event and family functioning.**

Discussion of life events and family functioning as seen in the genogram of the Y family system will proceed with regards to:

- o coincidences of life events;
- o impact of life change, transitions and traumas; and
- o anniversary reactions.

- Coincidences of life events.

There are a number of co-occurring events that emerge from the genogram and which centre on certain key events in the family system of Mr Y. These can be arranged chronologically into five significant clusters, namely:

- o first cluster (1961);
- o second cluster (1963);
- o third cluster (1973);
- o fourth cluster (1983); and
- o fifth cluster (1989).

The first cluster appears to centre on the birth of Mr Y and start of the Y nuclear family system of Mr Y, father Y and mother Y. Prior to this, mother Y had divorced her first husband in 1960. Mr Y also stated that mother Y had told him that she was bitten by a “poltergeist” when 8 months pregnant with him in 1961, and that his heart stopped beating for 8 minutes when she was giving birth to him.

The second cluster of events appears to centre on the death of father Y. Prior to this, father Y had murdered his employer in a dispute in 1962 and was sentenced to death in 1963. After this, mother Y looked after her three children on her own and formed the single parent household (figure 16). In 1965, according to his mother, Mr Y had another supernatural experience when his mother and half-siblings found him suspended in the air in a corner of his room. Mr Y was never told the truth about the circumstances surrounding father Y’s death until he was 21 years of age.

The third cluster of events appears to centre on the marriage of mother Y to her third husband, Mr Y’s stepfather. Prior to this, both Mr Y’s half-brother and half-sister had left home (1969 and 1971, respectively). In 1973, Mr Y also discovered his sexual orientation,

namely homosexual, and started judo in 1974. In 1975, he was caught shoplifting and fined. In 1976, Mr Y discovered the occult and started bodybuilding in 1978.

The fourth cluster appears to centre on the death of mother Y. Prior to this, Mr Y had completed his compulsory national service (1978-1980). He also left home in 1980. In 1981, Mr Y was caught and fined for fraud. In 1981, Mr Y started working as a policeman in the railway police, as well as the anti-hijack division of the police force. In 1982, Mr Y found out the truth about the circumstances surrounding the death of father Y from mother Y. After the death of mother Y in 1983, Mr Y cut off contact with his stepfather and a year later, 1984, was the last time that he saw his half-siblings. In 1984, he suffered from depression and in 1985, Mr Y was fined for possession of pornography.

The fifth cluster appears to center around Mr Y's introduction to Mr H and the start of their relationship. Prior to this, Mr Y had lost his job as a policeman on account of his sexual orientation in 1987. Mr Y's relationship with his first lover, Mr C, ended in 1989. Mr Y moved to Kwazulu-Natal Province in 1989 and also got a job as a bouncer at a gay nightclub in this year. In the same year, Mr Y started a relationship with a woman, Ms T, which he ended after he met Mr H in the same year. In 1992, Mr Y had to serve a three month prison sentence for having committed an indecent act with a minor boy under the age of 19. Later that same year, Mr Y ran away with Mr H and committed the first murder. The remaining two murders were also committed in 1992 and he was arrested in the same year. In 1993, Mr Y was sentenced to death for his crimes.

- Impact of life change, transitions and traumas.

The above co-occurrences and clusters will now be examined with respect to the impact that these appear to have had on the family system.

The key event in the first cluster appears to have been the birth of Mr Y and formation of the Y nuclear family system. This event in the family system may have introduced new hope and potential for the success and advancement of the extended family system and for members of the Y nuclear family system respectively.

For father Y, and the paternal side of the Y family system, the birth of Mr Y may have signified the birth of an heir to the role of father Y in that family system. Given that father Y had the role of favourite child in his own family of origin and carried the hopes of that family for success and achievement, Mr Y may have been viewed as part of that achievement. Additionally, given that Mr Y was named after his father, it follows that his role within the Y family system may have been to follow in the footsteps of his father, and the paternal side of the Y family system.

For mother Y, the birth of Mr Y may also have been treated with much hope and expectation. Given the failures that she had encountered in previous relationships, namely, those with her foster parents and with her first husband, her marriage to father Y may have signified a new beginning. Mr Y stated that his father had been the most significant of all of mother Y's partners, and was the one for whom she cared the most. Mother Y may have treated Mr Y, as a product of this relationship, as special as well and his half-brother and half-sister from the previous marriage may have been excluded from the new nuclear family system. Mr Y stated that "I think my mother was not very happy most of her life, you see the only person she truly loved was my father...and she was happy" and that "we [Mr Y and his mother] used to talk- I was like a friend as well and that kind of thing."

The short period of time between the first and second marriages of mother Y may have meant that she did not have enough time to process the emotional material that remained from her first marriage before she started her new relationship. Additionally, the failure of her first marriage may have signified a possible repetition of patterns of abandonment from her youth.

Many of these fears and anxieties may have followed her into the new family system that she formed with father Y, and may explain the intensity of her fusion with both Mr Y and father Y. These will be elaborated upon in the later section on emotional processes in the nuclear family system.

Lastly, mother Y's attribution of supernatural elements to the birth of Mr Y may have signified another attempt to make his birth special and to flag Mr Y as significant and different within the family system. This supernatural label may also have signified an unsuccessful attempt on mother Y's part to alter the systemic pattern of loss or failure in the Y family system (in much the same way as has been shown by Selvini-Palazzoli *et al.* (1978) to occur with psychotic families). This, together with the family programme for him to follow in the footsteps of father Y, would have placed considerable pressure on Mr Y to live up to the expectations of other members of the family system, specifically on the paternal side of the family system.

Mr Y stated that

another odd thing happened, I don't know whether that would have had an effect on my psyche or not...when my mother was in labour with me, before I popped out...my heart apparently stopped for 8 minutes...and apparently, the way she told me, she ripped the oxygen mask off and my heart started beating- so I was basically clinically dead, I would have been brain dead- now I don't know if something happened...caused some future reaction you understand but it's difficult to determine...she [mother Y] said when the doctors told this to her- eight minutes, she was freaking out because the doctors were telling her this child is dead...I had this weird idea- it sounds ridiculous- that during the time period when my heart stopped, the soul that was in there, was kicked out and another one was stuck in there- that's

me. Maybe I was born- someone made a balls up somewhere along the line, that when I came, someone put the wrong card in the wrong spot there and then I got popped onto the scene and I wasn't supposed to be born.

The key event in the second cluster appears to have been the death of father Y. The impact of this event on the Y family system may have been an increase in anxiety in the nuclear and extended family system (specifically the paternal side of the system) due to fears of system failure as a result of the loss of the member who had been assigned the responsibility of system success, namely father Y; an attempt on the part of the system to find a suitable replacement; and the distancing of mother Y from the extended family system.

The death of father Y would have also possibly resulted in a vacancy in the family system with respect to the role of father Y for both the extended family system as well as for the nuclear family system. In the absence of other suitable substitutes, Mr Y may have taken on both of these roles. Initially Mr Y's paternal uncle may have also been turned to for this purpose. However, he may have been unable to withstand this pressure as can be seen in his alcohol abuse and early death from liver cirrhosis (1966). The next available male in the family system may have been turned to, namely Mr Y. Also, the fact that Mr Y was named after his father may have increased the likelihood of his selection for this purpose further.

In terms of father Y's role in the nuclear family system, mother Y may have turned to Mr Y to take over from his father as caretaker and protector. The dyad of mother Y and Mr Y may have become closer and more fused. This may have been further intensified by the fears and anxieties of mother Y. Having lost another significant person in her life unexpectedly, and not having ever dealt with her anxiety surrounding this issue, she may have attempted to fuse even more completely with the remaining significant person in her life, namely Mr Y, in an attempt to prevent the loss of another significant individual in her life.

Mother Y may have also feared that she would lose Mr Y to the extended family system, namely to the parental side of the extended family system, as a result of their need for a male heir to the role of father Y. This may explain mother Y's distancing from the extended family network after the death of father Y (and especially after the death of Mr Y's paternal uncle). This may also explain Mr Y's own distancing from the paternal side of the family system. Mr Y stated that

No, I didn't want to [be a part of the family]...ja, I didn't like them- their whole lifestyle and stuff- didn't fit in there and I always felt the outsider...I just simply did not fit in- I couldn't handle it...I was young, about 10 years old when I knew I didn't like this [his extended family]...I'm not like that- I couldn't stand my grandfather, when I was five years old, I couldn't stand my grandfather- I couldn't let him touch me, I'd freak out.'

The key event in the third cluster may have been the marriage of mother Y to her third husband (Mr Y's step-father). The impact of this event on the family system appears to have been the reorganisation of the nuclear family system to accommodate a new member. This may have been accompanied by considerable resistance, specifically on the part of Mr Y, as his assumed parentified role was usurped. The departure of two members of the family system (namely, Mr Y's two half-siblings) as well as mother Y's financial concerns, and fears of losing Mr Y as he grew up and made attempts to start his own family, may have necessitated the introduction of another member or partner with whom mother Y could form a relationship.

The introduction of a possible replacement seems to have been accompanied by a number of reactions in Mr Y. It may be the case that Mr Y felt challenged in his role as caretaker and protector of mother Y (parentified role) as well as the primary male in the nuclear family

system, when his stepfather arrived. He may have acted out in an attempt to assert himself in the nuclear family system, as can be seen in his criminal behaviour and conflict with his stepfather. This acting out may also have been a means of dealing with the considerable pressure he may have felt in terms of his loyalty to the memory of his father, and the fulfillment of the role that he had inherited in the family system after the death of father Y. Mr Y's need to feel special and powerful within the family system may explain his involvement in sports such as martial arts and bodybuilding, as well as the occult. This will be discussed further in the section on emotional processes in the family system. Mr Y stated that

she met this guy [the step-father] and we moved to [Eastern Johannesburg] because he worked on the mines...and I think that's where things started going wrong- well, in my mind it was wrong...he used to drink a lot, typical abusive parent scenario- you know, he'd chase us around with an axe and things like that...but from my mother's side, she looked after me very well...he was very abusive towards her...most of the time, he's get drunk at the local hotel- probably lost a fight there or whatever and then he'd come home and take it out.'

Mr Y also stated that "I was 13 years old, started judo till about 17, started bodybuilding."

Further, he said that

I just felt that, you know, I must no longer stay there because I knew that I was getting to a point in my life where I was going to kill this guy [his step-father]...by then [18 years of age] I already weighed more than him...I had been training for a year...two years and then I went to the army and I came out of the army and it was such a nice- I had the means [to kill the step-father].

The key event in the fourth cluster appears to be the death of mother Y. The impact that this event appears to have had on the Y family system was the collapse of the nuclear family system and the complete isolation and emotional distancing of Mr Y from the extended family system. Mr Y appears to have involved himself more in his work, and relationships with significant others, such as Mr C. Mr Y stated that “I joined the railway police at that time period and it was 6 months later that my mother died...that sort of knocked me and for a year I just went on the pot, fights in bars, stuff like that...I was involved with a guy [Mr C]...it was substantial.”

The key event in the fifth cluster appears to be Mr Y's introduction to Mr H and the start of their relationship. The impact that this event had was that Mr Y appears to have repeated the relationship pattern of the fused dyad and isolation that he had experienced with mother Y, and ultimately, completed his identification with father Y, including an escalation in violent behaviour. Mr Y stated that “I knew this was trouble...but I just went into it...two days after I met him, he knocks on the door of my flat, open the door, there he's standing with these big blue eyes, he says, ‘Can I stay?’ Bam, that's it...couldn't see it coming, I'm bugged...”

- Anniversary reactions.

There appears to be one significant anniversary reaction in the genogram of Mr Y. This took place in 1989 when Mr Y was close to the same age as his father had been when he murdered his employer and was sentenced to death. As has been discussed in previous sections, there appears to have been a lot of pressure on Mr Y within the extended and nuclear family system to fill the role vacated by father Y after his death in 1963 at the age of 27. As Mr Y approached the same age as his father had been when he was sentenced to death, he may have felt an inevitability that his life would take the same course, in line with the systemic pattern.

The supernatural and occult theme in the family system may have functioned to accentuated this belief on the part of Mr Y. Although not mentioned by Mr Y in the interviews conducted for the present study, the psychologist's report that stemmed from his evaluation after being arrested in 1991, makes mention of certain details in this regard. According to the report by the clinical psychologist for sentencing assessment,

he [Mr Y] was melodramatically informed by his mother that when his father was hanged for murder when he himself was 18 months old, he screamed terribly as his father's spirit passed into him...and was informed that he grew up to resemble his father exactly in physical appearance. He 'knew' he was doomed to follow in his father's murderous footsteps and dreaded the age of 27, when his father was hanged.

There may have been intense pressure within the family system for Mr Y to commit crime in the same manner as his father and also be sentenced to death as a result of a particular function that such an event would serve for the system as a whole. This will be discussed further in forthcoming sections.

Mr Y's start of a relationship with Mr H may have been similarly influenced by the fact that he was a similar age (namely, in his late twenties) as father Y had been when he had married mother Y (as can be seen on the genogram, figure 3). These two aspects, namely the criminal behaviour and relationship, appear to indicate the extent to which Mr Y appears to have identified with father Y in the family system.

- Summary of category four: life events and family functioning.

In terms of category four, life events and family functioning, the genogram of Mr Y seems to reveal five clusters of co-occurring events in the family system. These clusters appear to

centre around the following events: the birth of Mr Y (1961); the death of father Y (1963); the marriage of mother Y to her third husband (1973); the death of mother Y (1983) and the start of the relationship between Mr Y and Mr H (1989).

The implication and impact of these coinciding life events for the family system concerned the family programme for Mr Y and his assumption of his father's role in the family system; the greater fusion of the nuclear family dyad of Mr Y and his mother and their increased isolation from the extended family system; the intense rivalry that developed between Mr Y and his step-father; and the repetition of the relationship pattern between mother Y and father Y, and mother Y and Mr Y, in the relationship between Mr Y and Mr H.

In terms of anniversary reactions, the genogram appears to demonstrate one significant anniversary reaction in the family system of Mr Y. This involved the age at which father Y had been sentenced to death for murder. The implications of this anniversary reaction were a consolidation of Mr Y's identification with his father and assumption of his role in the family system, as well as a possible catalyst with regards to Mr Y's criminal behaviour and failure in the family system.

- **Category five: relational patterns and triads.**

A number of triads are evident in the genogram of Mr Y. The most significant triads with respect to the current analysis will now be discussed according to the particular types highlighted in McGoldrick and Gerson (1985). Triad patterns and structural configurations in the family system will be further elaborated upon in the section.

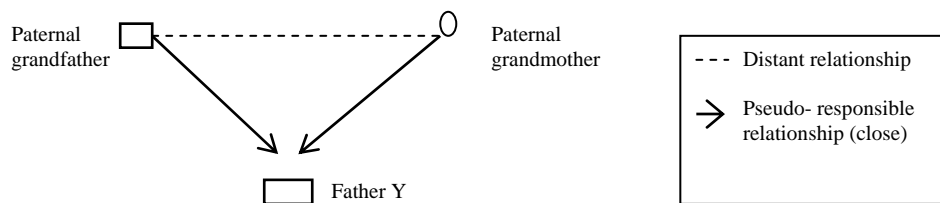
- Parent-child triads.

There are two significant parent-child triads, and one supplementary parent-child triad in the genogram of Mr Y, namely:

- o between father Y and the paternal grandparents (parent-child triad one);
- o between father Y, mother Y and Mr Y (parent-child triad two); and
- o between Mr H and his parents (parent-child triad three – supplementary).

Figure 20.

Parent-Child Triad One



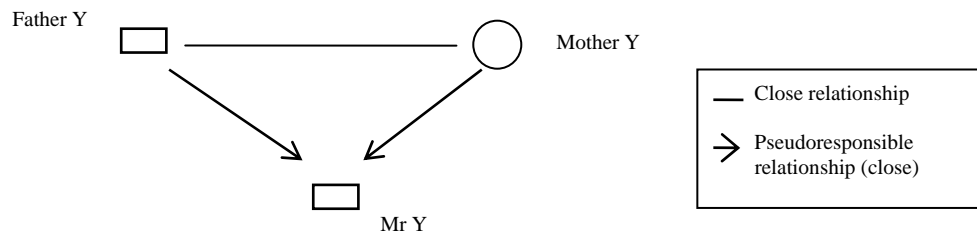
The first significant parent-child triad occurs between father Y and his parents (the paternal grandparents). As discussed previously, father Y was idolised greatly by his parents and much was expected from him in terms of success for the family. This parent-child triad appears to have involved a focusing on the child as the object of the parents' interest, and may have served to distract the parents from any conflicts that were present in the spousal relationship.

Father Y may have felt considerable pressure to fulfill the expectations of his family, in terms of a role in the family system, specifically from his parents (as seen in the quote above referring to father Y as the apple of his parents' eyes by Mr Y). Additionally, by placing their hopes in the hands of father Y and displacing their own responsibility for the success of the

family, it may have also assisted the parents from avoiding their own personal failures to elevate the status of the family.

Figure 21.

Parent-Child Triad Two



The second significant parent-child triad involved father Y, mother Y and Mr Y. After the death of father Y, a similar pattern as in parent-child triad one emerged, namely, in that Mr Y appears to have become the focus of the ambitions of both mother Y and father Y. Although deceased, father Y continued to exert his influence on the family system, and this particular triad, via his memory which was maintained by mother Y, as well as the extended family on the paternal side of the family system.

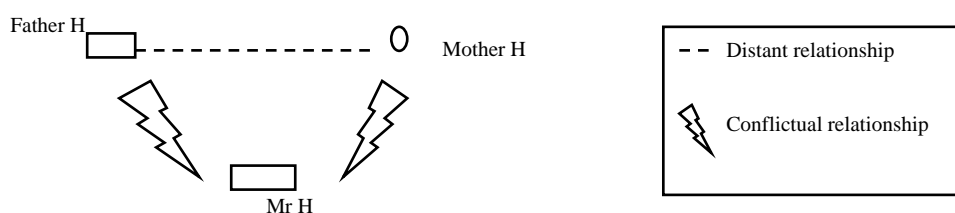
Mr Y may have felt systemic pressure to live up to the expectations of mother Y as well as to make his father proud and to succeed where father Y had failed. Additionally, Mr Y appears to have moved closer to his mother. Mother Y may have possessed details and memories about his father that Mr Y would not have been privy to, due to him being too young to remember – he was two years old when his father died (as indicated by the psychologist's report above, section). This closeness may have further intensified the pressure on Mr Y to fulfill the expectations of his mother due to fears of disappointing her and failing in terms of his role in the system. For example, Mr Y continued to attend school and complete his Matric [grade 12] in order to please his mother, despite the fact that his activities were not

monitored nor supervised by her. This aspect becomes even more significant when fusion and undifferentiation in the relationship are explored in the later section on emotional processes in the family system. Mr Y stated that “she [mother Y] made sure that I get my school clothes and whatever I need for school...but when I’m out of the house and go to school, I’m alone...I could’ve dropped out, I could’ve- for all they know, I could’ve walked away...what kept me going is the fact that my mother...okay, it probably would’ve broken her heart.”

Additionally, with the death of father Y, mother Y appears to have concentrated all of her attention on Mr Y with a fused dyadic relationship developing between the two of them. This fused relationship appears to have repeatedly functioned in opposition to a third member, with outsiders perceived as threats as part of a systemic pattern aimed at sustaining the close relationship between Mr Y and his mother and preventing a possible break-down in the fused relationship. This can be seen in Mr Y’s conflict with, and mother Y’s distance from Mr Y’s stepfather, as well as the negativity towards the paternal side of the extended family that emerged after father Y’s death (this will be discussed further under multi-generational triads).

Figure 22.

Parent-Child Triad Three - Supplementary



The third supplementary parent-child triad involves Mr H, Mr H’s father and Mr H’s mother. According to Mr Y, Mr H was the black sheep of the H family and was regularly intimidated and bullied by the other members of his family. It would appear that Mr H may

have functioned as a member around which father H and mother H could triangulate and thereby avoid conflict in their own relationship. This possibility seems to be supported by behavioural problems in Mr H such as early promiscuity, substance abuse and prostitution (Report by Clinical Psychologist, 1992), which may have signified attempts to act out both in terms of dealing with anxiety as a result of spousal projection (discussed in the section on emotional processes in the family system) and to fulfill his role as family scapegoat.

Mr Y stated that

he [Mr H] was still at school...well, he didn't want to go to school- that's where his problems were...he was also a loner- he had a similar background, you know...okay, he had sisters and brothers and that kind of thing but he was the odd one out...he didn't get the attention the others got from his mother and father...they wouldn't buy him things that they would buy the others, so he was the odd one out...he didn't fit in with his family at all so he was singled out.

Mr Y and Mr H appear to have been very compatible due to their respective membership of parent-child triad two and parent child triad three - supplementary. Mr Y, who was the focus of his parents' ambitions and looked to for success, appears to have been a complementary foil to Mr H, who was the focus of his parents' dissatisfaction and looked to as the family failure. This relationship may have also compounded the pressure on Mr Y to succeed however, in the sense that he now was responsible for the success of both his nuclear family system, and the relationship that he was a part of with Mr H. Mr Y stated that "his father [Mr H's father] even told me, he said that seeing as he only listens to me and not to them, then I must look after his son and make sure he's alright...I felt so protective about him...I became the father, mother, the brother, the lover, everything."

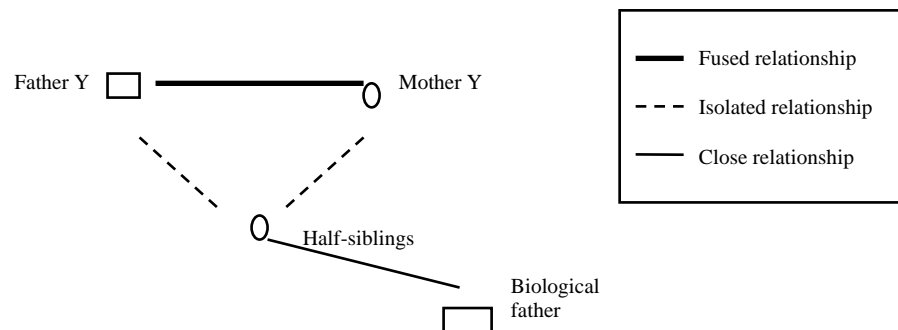
- Triads involving divorce or remarriage.

There appear to be two significant triads involving divorce or remarriage in the genogram of Mr Y (figure 3), namely:

- o between father Y, mother Y and the half-siblings of Mr Y (divorced/remarried triad one); and
- o between mother Y, Mr Y and Mr Y's stepfather (divorced/remarried triad two).

Figure 23.

Divorced/Remarried Triad One

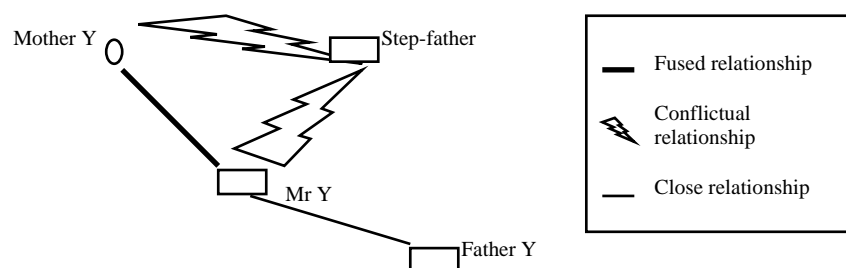


The first significant divorced/remarried triad appears to have involved a close relationship between mother Y and father Y and the isolation of the children from mother Y's previous marriage, namely Mr Y's half-siblings. The children from the previous marriage may also initially have attempted to remain closely attached to their other parent (namely their biological father), and further isolated themselves from their new step-parent, father Y. Mr Y's half-siblings may never have been fully integrated into the family systems that developed after the break-down of mother Y's marriage to her first husband. Mr Y stated that "they went out of the house earlier, I mean, for their ages – those years, if you were 16, you went to work, understand...if you were 16, you had to work- you didn't need to go to school...and then my sister got married when she was 16, so she left."

Additionally, if mother Y's second marriage signified a new beginning for her, the new family system may have resisted accommodating Mr Y's half-siblings as additional members. The new system may also have lacked resources (emotional and financial) to accommodate the additional members. Given what has been discussed in light of the other triads (parent-child triad two and couples triad one), and the relationship pattern exhibited by mother Y consisting of a fused dyad, united against an intrusive or threatening third party, this pattern may have been repeated in the new system with Mr Y's half-siblings. They may have served this function in her relationship with both father Y and Mr Y, filling the role of possible threats to the relationships respectively, which served to bring her closer to both her son (Mr Y) and his father (father Y). As a result, further isolation from the half-siblings would have taken place. Mr Y stated that "when my sister and her husband used to come and visit and things like that, it was fine and well and so on, but I could see that she started getting stressed out."

Figure 24.

Divorced/Remarried Triad Two



The second significant divorced/remarried triad appears to have involved Mr Y, mother Y and Mr Y's stepfather. In a similar pattern to divorced/remarried triad one, Mr Y continued to idealize the lost parent (father Y), just as Mr Y's half siblings had continued a close

relationship with their biological father, and Mr Y resented his mother's new spouse (the step-father), just as the half siblings had possibly distanced themselves from father Y. In this triad, there also appears to have been conflict between Mr Y and his stepfather, and, as a result, Mr Y may have formed a closer attachment to the memory of his biological father.

Mr Y's fused relationship with his mother, together with family pressure to honour the memory and name of father Y, accompanied Mr Y's protective attitude towards his mother after the death of his father and Mr Y increasingly filling the role of primary male in the single parent household that resulted as he grew older. When mother Y married Mr Y's stepfather (when Mr Y was 12 years old), Mr Y may have perceived him as a rival to his role and position in the family system. This may have contributed towards the ensuing rivalry and competition between Mr Y and his stepfather.

Mother Y may have been in a particularly stressful position as she attempted to negotiate dual loyalties to her new husband (Mr Y's step-father) and Mr Y. This may have contributed to the conflict in the spousal relationship (as evidenced by the physical abuse present in the relationship as well as mother Y's addiction to painkillers), as well as Mr Y and his mother drawing closer together as he consolidated his role as protector and primary male with regard to his mother. This may also explain Mr Y's involvement with the occult and bodybuilding as a possible attempt to intimidate and gain power over his stepfather and increase his power within the system. However, this may also have been a source of great shame for Mr Y in that he was ultimately powerless to stop the abuse or to protect his mother from harm. This guilt and need to compensate for his inability to intervene while his mother was alive, may have repeated itself in his relationship with Mr H, where he may have escalated attempts to correct the systemic outcome and protect his partner by resorting to extreme measures such as murder to maintain the relationship.

Mr Y stated that “the things he did, the way he treated my mother and myself left a lasting impression...I cannot handle anyone that’s dominating” and that “I don’t believe in assaulting women and I don’t believe- because you must understand, I grew up watching someone being assaulted...I have no time for that, I also have an incredible sense of protectiveness over someone that I like...sometimes that protectiveness becomes a bit overwhelming...for the person to handle.” Mr Y also stated that “I would have loved to [retaliate against his step-father when he was assaulting mother Y], yes, but the problem is logic told me that if I had to retaliate against him, he’d take it out on my mother.”

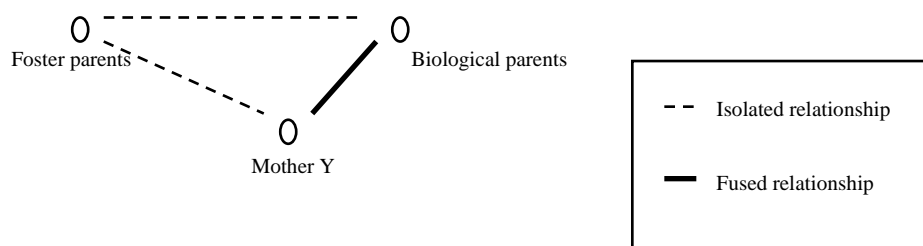
- Triads involving foster or adopted children.

There appears to be one significant instance of this type of triad in the genogram of Mr Y, namely:

- o between mother Y, her foster parents, and her biological parents (the maternal grandparents) (foster/adopted triad one).

Figure 25.

Foster/Adopted Triad One



As stated in McGoldrick and Gerson (1985), triads involving foster or adopted children, frequently exhibit a pattern involving the triangulation of the memory or idea of the biological parents in the relationship between foster parents and the adopted or foster child. This appears to have been the case with mother Y, where she triangulated the idea of her biological parents,

idealising this relationship in the face of consistent rejection by a series of foster parents. Additionally, this pattern may have escalated as mother Y distanced herself from her various foster family systems, and fused more intensely with the idea of her biological parents and her idealised relationship with them. As a child, she may also have resented the foster parents who attempted to “replace” her biological parents, and inadvertently perceived these foster parents as responsible for the loss of her biological parents and her idealised relationship with them.

Mother Y may have attempted to replicate this idealised relationship with her significant others in later life (such as with her first husband, then father Y and ultimately, Mr Y), and perceived any outsider to this relationship as a potential threat. This may have contributed towards fusion with the significant other in question and distance, isolation or conflict with the external party. This can be seen in her relationship with Mr Y’s stepfather. Although she cared for him, it would appear that she married him more for material security than emotional bonding. Mr Y stated that

in the beginning she probably fell for him a bit but I think the way I looked at it, is now, I used to ask her, “Why don’t you just divorce the guy? Leave him”, and her words were always “What would happen to me?” Where would she go...she’d have nobody to look after her...she didn’t have any skills whatsoever, understand, she wasn’t going to be able to get a job.

Her fused relationship with Mr Y appears to have catered to her emotional needs. In addition to material security, Mr Y’s stepfather appeared to have been valuable to the system in the sense that he contributed towards the increased fusion between Mr Y and his mother, as she covertly united with Mr Y against the threat of his stepfather. This relationship pattern of a

fused dyad united against, and closed to outsiders was passed on to Mr Y in the following generation, as can be seen in his relationship with Mr Y.

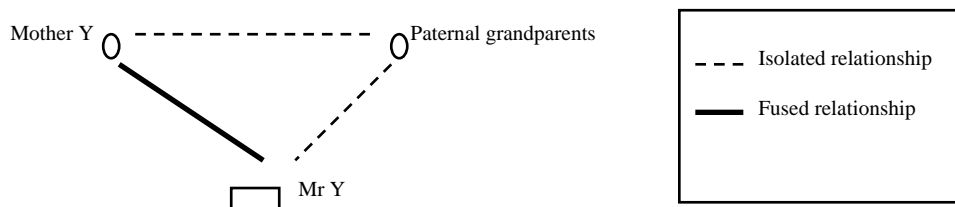
- Multigenerational triads.

There appears to be one significant multigenerational triad in the genogram of Mr Y, namely:

- o between the paternal grandparents, mother Y and Mr Y (multigenerational triad one)

Figure 26.

Multigenerational Triad One



This triad consisted of a close relationship between mother Y and Mr Y and an isolated relationship between Mr Y and his mother respectively with the paternal grandparents. This took place after the death of father Y (1963).

As discussed previously, both the extended family in the form of the paternal side of the Y family system, and the nuclear Y family system, had expectations of Mr Y, in terms of his role in the system. However, while father Y was alive, he primarily filled the role of family hope for success. After the death of father Y, as well as the failure of the paternal uncle to take his role in the extended family system, however, Mr Y seems to have become the sole focus of both the paternal side of the extended family system as well as mother Y with respect to the role vacated by the former. Given mother Y's close, fused relationship with Mr Y (which appears to have intensified after father Y's death), she may have perceived any closeness between Mr Y and the paternal grandparents as a threat to her relationship with Mr

Y, and a potential loss of Mr Y as a member of the remaining nuclear family system. She appears to have drawn Mr Y closer to her and cut off from the paternal grandparents (as can be seen in figure 3).

Mr Y appears to have felt considerable pressure for a while as the paternal grandparents and mother Y involved themselves in a power struggle over him. He may have felt pulled between two interconnected (albeit increasingly distant) systems. Eventually, this would have shifted as Mr Y moved closer to his mother and assumed his father's role in the nuclear family system, distancing and eventually cutting off from his extended family. This cut-off and isolation would have further intensified the relationship between Mr Y and his mother.

This pattern seems to have been repeated with respect to Mr H, Mr Y and Mr H's parents, where Mr Y identified with his mother's position in multi-generational triad one, and fought Mr H's parents for ultimate control over and exclusive relationship with Mr H.

- Triads involving relationships outside the family.

Given the intensely closed and fused relationship between Mr Y and his mother, together with their fear of outsiders and nuclear family system rigidity, there seems to have been little opportunity or flexibility in the nuclear family system for relationships with persons outside of the family system.

Mother Y's relationship with her third husband would appear to be one example of a relationship that was permitted to occur within the framework of the nuclear family system and her relationship with Mr Y. Mr Y's step-father possessed certain resources which the system required in order to survive, such as money and material support, especially considering that mother Y was unemployed and unskilled. The emotional bond between mother Y and Mr Y remained intact in spite of the introduction of Mr Y's stepfather into the system. He also may have functioned to promote further cohesion between mother Y and Mr

Y on account of his role as persecutor (with regards to his physical abuse of mother Y) and family scapegoat (in the form of his alcohol abuse and suspected extramarital liaisons).

Mr Y only started having relationships outside of the family system after the death of his mother, and subsequent collapse of the nuclear family system (as illustrated in the genogram, Figure 3). These relationships took on the emotional content and intensity of his relationship with his mother, as he possibly tried to recreate the fused dyad. This possibly explains the intensity of his relationship with Mr H and the drastic extents that Mr Y went to in order to protect this against external threats, such as murdering potential threats to the relationship and dyadic system.

Additionally, freed of his obligation to fulfill his mother's expectations regarding his success and conduct, and to redeem his father's memory, Mr Y may have been left with only the impending sense that he was to follow in the failed footsteps of his father, and to end his life in the same way. This feeling of impending failure may have been heightened by guilt that he could have felt for not having been able to protect his mother or to prevent her death. Subsequent relationships where he tried to recreate the dyadic relationship may have been attempts to succeed where he had failed previously with his mother. For example, this is most evident in his relationship with Mr H, where in an attempt to make some success of his life, he was driven to desperate and violent measures, which may have been learned behaviour patterns within the family system of using violence to resolve relationship problems. Mr Y stated that "I was battling the fact that I'm killing people in order to survive, I mean, with my co-accused." Mr Y also stated that "I was madly in love at the time, completely in love- we were perfect for each other...and I wanted to keep him...at all costs." These issues will be dealt with further in the section on emotional processes in the family system specifically with respect to levels of differentiation.

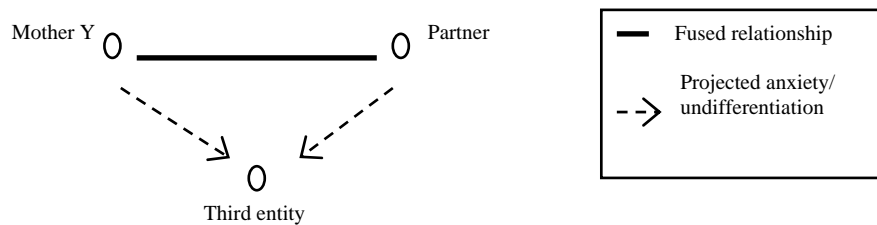
- Triads: other.

There are two other significant triads in the genogram of Mr Y, namely:

- o between mother Y and her respective partners (as the dyad) and another entity (triad other: one); and
- o between Mr Y and Mr H (as the dyad) and another entity (triad other: two).

Figure 27.

Triad Other: One



The first significant other triad appears to involve mother Y as the primary member and then the pattern of relationships in this triad repeats itself with each of her partners and another entity. This will be discussed with respect to:

- her relationship with her first husband;
- her relationship with father Y; and
- her relationship with Mr Y's stepfather.

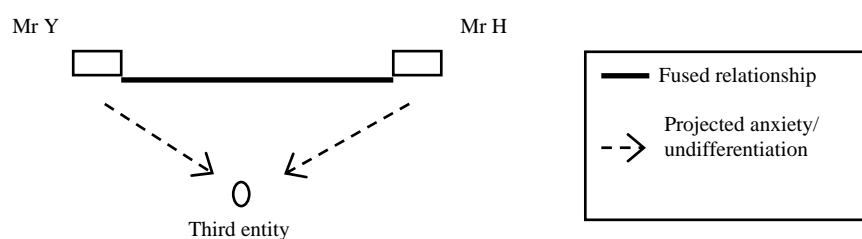
More elaborate attention will be given to aspects such as differentiation and anxiety in the section on emotional processes in the family system. However, it is important to mention at this point that mother Y's previous life experiences in terms of her early orphaning by her biological parents as well as her lack of a consistent home environment growing up meant that she had a low level of differentiation. However, her isolation from her foster homes may have made her more inclined to fuse intensely with the partners she was involved with. This

relationship would have been characterised by high levels of anxiety and undifferentiation necessitating possible triangulation around other members or things.

In her relationship with her first husband, the role of the third entity or triangulated member may have been filled by her eldest children (Mr Y's half-siblings). The high level of anxiety in this relationship may have resulted in the eventual divorce. In her relationship with father Y, Mr Y may have filled this position in the short time that the marriage lasted. Finally, with respect to her relationship with Mr Y's step-father, mother Y's addiction to Grand-Pa® headache powder, and the step-father's alcoholism and suspected extra-marital affair would have possibly filled the third position in the triad to absorb some of the anxiety or undifferentiation in the relationship. Mr Y stated that "my mother was absolutely hooked on Grand-Pa® powders – she'd polish off a packet a day, I mean you can get addicted to it...without the Grand-Pa® powders, she was a nervous wreck." These aspects will all be elaborated upon in the section on emotional processes in the family system.

Figure 28.

Triad Other: Two



The second significant other triad appears to involve Mr Y, Mr H and another variable entity. In this couples triad, there appears to be a repetition of the pattern in couples triad one. This is not surprising given the high level of fusion and identification of Mr Y with his mother.

Mr Y's had a close relationship with mother Y, and may have also had a large amount of undifferentiation which needed to be absorbed in any relationship of which he was a part. His relationship with Mr H involved various entities in triadic relationships at different points in time, with these entities filling the role of triangulated member that could absorb surplus differentiation or anxiety in the relationship between Mr Y and Mr H. These included Mr H's family; the occult; the Child Protection Unit; as well as the murder victims and criminal activity.

As with his relationship with mother Y, the presence of an external threat or perceived aggressor served to strengthen the dyadic relationship between Mr Y and Mr H. This is because they could focus or project all of the anxiety within their own relationship (which may have caused the relationship to break down) onto this third entity. By uniting against an outsider, Mr Y and Mr H appear to have been drawn closer together.

- Summary of category five: relational patterns and triads.

In terms of category five, relational patterns and triads, the genogram demonstrates a number of triads. However, only those significant to the current analysis were selected for study.

With respect to parent-child triads, two significant and one supplementary parent-child triad emerged. These were between father Y and the paternal grandparents (parent-child triad one); between father Y, mother Y and Mr Y (parent-child triad two); between Mr H and his parents (parent-child triad three – supplementary). It was shown that parent-child triads one and two may have functioned to prevent conflict or disruption in the spousal relationship by focusing upon the child as an idealised object. This appears to have also been to avoid guilt or responsibility for lack of family success by placing this obligation on the child concerned. It was also shown that Mr Y and Mr H would have been very compatible due to their

positions in their respective parent-child triads, but that this may have meant additional pressure for success on Mr Y.

With respect to triads involving divorced or remarriage, there were two significant divorced/remarried triads in the genogram, namely, between father Y, mother Y and the half-siblings of Mr Y (divorced/remarried triad one); and between mother Y, Mr Y and his step-father (divorced/remarried triad two). In divorced/remarried triad one, it was shown that Mr Y's half-siblings appear to have remained distant and isolated from the remarried family system that included mother Y, father Y and Mr Y. Additionally, it was shown that in divorced/remarried triad two, Mr Y appears to have remained in conflict with his step-father due to his loyalty to his father's memory as well as his close relationship with his mother.

In terms of triads with foster or adopted children, it was found that mother Y appears to have idealised her relationship with her biological parents, resulting in her isolation and distance from her foster parents, as well as an attempt to mirror this idealised relationship in her adult relationships. Mr Y may have repeated this pattern of idealizing absent individuals in terms of his relationship with his biological father after he was deceased. Additionally, the loss of her biological parents and idealised relationship may have made her more sensitive to potential threats to any of her adult relationships.

In terms of multigenerational triads, there is one significant triad in the genogram, namely, between the paternal grandparents, mother Y and Mr Y (multigenerational triad one). It was shown that this triad appears to have intensified after the death of father Y, when mother Y and the paternal grandparents were involved in a struggle over Mr Y. Ultimately, mother Y appears to have won and this appears to have resulted in a closer, fused relationship between her and Mr Y, and a distancing and cutting off from the extended family and paternal grandparents. Possession appears to be a multigenerational theme in the Y family system with

the paternal grandparents wanting possession of Mr Y; Mother Y wanting possession of Mr Y; and Mr Y wanting possession of Mr H.

In terms of triads involving relationships with others outside of the Y family system, it was shown that the rigid, closed relationship between mother Y and Mr Y meant that outsiders were guarded against and seen as a potential threat. The only individual allowed into the nuclear family system appears to have been Mr Y's step-father and it was shown that this appears to have been mainly due to his provision of material resources as well as ensuring that the fused dyad (between Mr Y and his mother) remained closely attached. It was also shown that Mr Y appears to have only gotten involved in relationships with others after the death of his mother; however, these relationships appear to have repeated the pattern of his original relationship with his mother, namely fusion and isolation and defence against outsiders.

With respect to significant other triads, two significant other triads emerged from the genogram. These were between mother Y and her respective partners (triad other: one); and between Mr Y and Mr H (triad other: two). It was shown that mother Y's relationship pattern and previous childhood experiences of intimate or significant relationships may have meant that she tended towards fusion with her partner or significant other in relationships, and that the surplus of anxiety or undifferentiation that resulted appears to have necessitated the involvement of a third entity to absorb some of this surplus. In mother Y's relationships, some of these entities included children, substance abuse and extramarital affairs. In terms of other triad two, it was shown that Mr Y may have repeated this pattern in his own relationships, notably with Mr H.

- **Category six: family balance and imbalance.**

Discussion of family balance and imbalance as seen in the genogram of the Y family system will proceed with regards to:

- o family structure;
- o roles;
- o level and style of functioning; and
- o resources.

- Family structure.

The genogram of Mr Y reflects three main imbalances with regards to the structure of the family system, namely with regards to:

- o families of origin;
- o the number of marriages; and
- o Mr Y's status as only child.

The genogram demonstrates that father Y, or the paternal side of the external family system, consisted of one sole family of origin. By comparison, the maternal side of the extended family system demonstrates numerous and various families of origin, including biological parents and foster parentage.

This imbalance may have had implications for the nuclear family system. It may have contributed towards a degree of conflict in the spousal relationship with mother Y having to accommodate herself within a larger external family system, with its own expectations regarding her husband, father Y, as well as her son, Mr Y. Having grown up relatively independently, this may have been a challenge for her. Additionally, her mistrust of outsiders and insecurity in her close relationships, may have made this even more challenging and increased her anxiety or neuroticism within the nuclear family system, given that she was outnumbered by father Y's side of the family.

These tensions appear to have become more prominent after the death of father Y, when mother Y (and the nuclear family system) lacked father Y as an intermediary member who

filled a mediatory role between the nuclear and extended family system. She may have felt further threatened and distanced herself from the paternal side of the family system, possibly using her influence over Mr Y to ensure that she did not lose him to the paternal side of the family system. This appears to be evident in Mr Y's statement that he knew that he was different from his father's family of origin from an early age. Additionally, Mr Y spoke of the paternal side of the family system with disdain and superiority throughout the interviews.

Mr Y stated that

that's why I say that I don't fit in with my family at all...totally, totally, totally an outsider...I don't think like them, I don't act like them, I never lived like them outside...your average, low class, white characters are raw and mostly uneducated...common is the right word...it was something I couldn't stand.

The genogram demonstrates that mother Y had three marriages. In comparison, it appears that father Y had only one marriage. Additionally, mother Y appears to have been the only member of the entire family system (nuclear and extended family systems) to have been married more than once. As a result, there was an imbalance in the family system in this regard.

The implications of this appear to be that Mr Y may have attempted to address the imbalance in the system by having a number of relationships (five) himself. This may have also been the result of his close relationship with his mother and identification with her and her style of relationship, and reflective of her upbringing in foster homes. Additionally, this relationship patterns may have paradoxically increased insecurity about the nature of relationships in both Mr Y and his mother. Mr Y's relationships appear to have been characterised by fear of losing his partners and strong attempts to control the relationship as

well as the other partner to prevent this. Paradoxically, this behaviour may have contributed to the end of the relationship.

As with Mr X, the genogram demonstrates that Mr Y was functionally an only child in the family system. As discussed previously, the age gap between Mr Y and his half-siblings, together with his status as favourite in the nuclear family system, resulted in him growing up as an only child functionally. Additionally, Mr Y is the only reported instance of an only child in the entire family system.

The implications of this may have been that Mr Y had to absorb the full surplus of undifferentiation in the nuclear family system. This intensified after the death of father Y, when the nuclear family system was reduced to two members and the relationship between mother Y and Mr Y appears to have approached complete fusion, with the system becoming extremely closed and intolerant of outsiders. Fears of self-annihilation in the fused dyad may have been high. Responses to this will be dealt with further in the section on emotional processes in the family system. However, to prevent the breakdown of the fused relationship, much anxiety appears to have been projected onto extended family in the paternal system and other outsiders, who were seen as aggressors and threats to the nuclear family system. Additionally, Mr Y's loss of his father appears to have contributed towards an increased in mother Y's identification with Mr Y due to the fact that she had also lost her parents.

- Roles.

The genogram (figure 3) and interview information reveals two areas of imbalance with respect to roles in the family system, namely:

- o Mr Y; and
- o the role of "bad guy" or external threat.

As evidenced in the genogram, Mr Y appears to have been the one member of the Y family system who took on multiple roles within this system. Within the nuclear family system, he appears to have fulfilled the roles of son and heir to his father's legacy (evident in him being named after his father). After the death of his father, Mr Y appears to have had to perform the role of son, caretaker, father and husband within the nuclear family system, as he became the sole focus of mother Y's attention. He was appears to have been placed in the role of family rescuer or savior who would redeem father Y's name and succeed where he had failed in his duties as caretaker of the nuclear family system.

In his relationship with his mother, Mr Y appears to have also been cast in the role of the strong partner in order to balance the weakness of mother Y. Given her apparent underfunctioning in the role of parent or caregiver, Mr Y's assumption of the role of caretaker and protector in this relationship appears to have also been an attempt to redress the imbalance in mother Y's functioning in this capacity. This role as caregiver in the system may have been particularly overwhelming due to the considerable imbalance in the entire family system as a result of the considerable lack of caregiving in the maternal side of the family system. It may have been a particularly arduous responsibility for Mr Y to take on. Additionally, Mr Y's role as the strong one may have also impacted upon his criminal behaviour in that it may have made it necessary to introduce victims into the system to assert this position.

In this light, Mr Y's model for his role as caregiver appears to have been influenced by his own experiences at the hands of his mother, who was neurotic, paranoid and controlling, and yet under-responsible. Mr Y would have associated this pattern as that for a caregiving relationship style within the Y family system. This may explain his relationship style with his partners, such as Mr H, as well as his relationships while in prison. Mr Y stated that "there's

one thing that I actually managed to do...I managed to control my relationships [in prison]...in that sense I could control, I could let them go.” Mr Y also stated that

in all my relationships, I don't expect that much from the partner...except the honesty and loyalty...and when I choose to, I can let him go...like with one of my relationships in prison, after I allowed him to leave me, I felt terrible afterwards, for two days I couldn't eat...they were worried about me in the section there...they came at night, made sure I was alive, I didn't hang myself...

As discussed previously, within the external family system, specifically the paternal side, Mr Y appears to have had to also perform the role of saviour or redeemer for this system.

As discussed previously, when his mother died, Mr Y appears to have interpreted this event as a sign that he had failed to perform his roles in the family system, namely as a caregiver and protector. He appears to have felt that he had also failed his father in this light, namely in not successfully filling his position in the family system. This may explain Mr Y's depression and downward spiral after his mother's death, as well as his extreme need to protect and care for those who he cared for in later life, such as Mr H. Given that a large part of his self in the family system was tied up to his roles in that system, this experience may also have intensified fears of self-annihilation. Mr Y stated that “I was battling the fact that I'm killing people in order to survive, I mean, with my co-accused.” Mr Y also stated that “he [Mr H] was with me the whole time, I didn't allow him to do any of the killing or any of the crimes himself...he was with me, I didn't allow him to touch anything...I didn't want him to experience that, I took it upon myself to basically do what we did to survive.”

Mr Y's roles within the family system appear to also have influenced his relationships outside of the system. His choice of partner was always someone of a considerably younger age, and Mr Y appears to have always played the role of caregiver and strong one in the

relationship. Additionally, his plans for the person he is involved appear to always have involved helping them to improve themselves in some way, thereby perpetuating his role as saviour or redeemer. His repetition of the same kinds of relationships and similar choices in partner may also indicate an attempt to succeed where he failed in his past relationship with his mother, as well as his failed duty to bring success to the family system. Mr Y stated that “he’s [his ex-lover in prison] doing excellent...all kinds of courses that he’s done...so he’s going well and it makes me feel that I was at least an inspiration or instrumental in the time period he was with me...in a way I’m trying to heal myself by looking after somebody else.”

Finally, Mr Y’s job choices can also be seen as a manifestation of the roles that he played in the family, namely in the way of his police work (that is, protecting others) and later security work, as well as in his pastimes with sports such as bodybuilding reflecting his strength.

In the genogram, the role of the bad guy appears to be overwhelmingly assigned to individuals or entities outside of the nuclear family system. Entities fulfilling this role for the system appear to include the paternal side of the external family system and Mr Y’s stepfather. Later on, in Mr Y’s significant relationships as an adult, this pattern appears to have been repeated. The role of the bad guy at these stages appears to have been filled by the family of Mr H; the authorities at the Child Protection Unit; and finally, the murder victims (especially the first murder victim).

It would appear that this role served to strengthen the fused dyadic relationship within the system (initially between mother Y and Mr Y and then, in Mr Y’s intimate relationships) as well as to provide a target onto which tensions or anxiety in the relationship could be projected. It also appears to have assisted Mr Y in successfully performing his role as saviour, redeemer, success and caretaker, as he was never positioned in the role of bad guy as long as these other outsiders were available for this purpose.

- Level and style of functioning.

In terms of level and style of functioning, the genogram and interview data reveals imbalances in four main areas, namely:

- o orientation towards family;
- o emotional style;
- o success and failure; and
- o under- and over-functioning.

As discussed above with respect to family structural imbalances, the genogram demonstrates how father Y appears to have been positioned within an extended family network that was absent on the maternal side of the family system. This was due to the fact that mother Y was an orphan and had spent time in and out of various foster homes growing up, ultimately being forced to leave her last home at the age of 17.

The implications of this imbalance for the family system may have been that father Y and mother Y would have viewed family differently, and oriented themselves towards such a unit in different ways. Whereas father Y would have seen the family system as a place of constancy and stability, and would have tried mould the nuclear family system along similar lines, mother Y may have viewed a family system as unstable and unreliable. This may explain her focus on the “home” as opposed to the “family” as well as her prioritization of a dyadic person fused relationship over a two parent and child nuclear family grouping. This also may explain why she possibly was not constrained by any norms around family and marriage and felt free to form new households or families on four occasions.

As discussed previously, these differing styles of orientation towards family may have resulted in marital tension due to mother Y’s inability or reluctance to integrate herself with the extended nuclear family system on the paternal side. Additionally, mother Y’s style of

orientation towards family appears to have been passed on to Mr Y, who appears to have felt little connection to his extended family on either side, or to other systems.

In the nuclear family system, specifically with respect to the relationship between mother Y and Mr Y, there appears to have been an anxious and hysterical emotional style on the part of mother Y. In order to balance this as part of a complementary relationship with mother Y (discussed further in section), Mr Y may have developed a more controlled style, as can be seen in his behaviour and approach to committing the murders and the way he dealt with the effects of being on the run from the police, as well as in the clinical impressions of the interviewer.

Mother Y's emotional style appears to have influenced her choice of partner, as well as their quality of relationship. With respect to father Y, this appears to have taken the form of a complementary relationship with father Y balancing her hysterical style with a controlled manner of behaviour (in much the same way as Mr Y). In the case of Mr Y's step-father, mother Y appears to have chosen a partner who was less controlled and more emotional than her previous husbands, more in line with a symmetrical relationship. Escalated marital conflict appears to have ensued culminating in incidences of physical abuse. Mr Y stated that, in comparison to the abuse that his step-father unleashed on mother Y, "if she [mother Y] got angry with him [father Y]...he'd just hold her hands, you see, I mean she can't do anything because he held her...no, he would never lift his hands to her."

Mr Y's emotional style appears to have also influenced his choice of partner as can be seen in Mr H who was more emotionally expressive, and at times, anxious and neurotic. This appears to have also been the case with his partners in prison as well as friendships, all of which appear to repeat the complementary pattern of his original relationship with mother Y. Mr Y stated that he was attracted to someone who was "good-looking of course, very good looking...personality gentle, full of fun, not someone with a criminal mentality...very gentle

person, extremely soft, he cries...to me that's so sweet." In the clinical psychologist's report for sentencing on Mr H, Mr H is described as anxiously preoccupied, impulsive and jumpy in comparison to the more controlled presentation of Mr Y.

This pattern appears to have been carried through to the crimes themselves as reflected where Mr Y stated that during the time period of the murders,

I hardly ever slept...my co-accused he could just drop where we were and sleep...I was so full of adrenaline rush constantly...oddly enough I didn't feel physically out of it...I ate less food than I've ever eaten in my life ...I didn't seem to need it, I was running on full adrenaline...any chance that I could get hold of booze I took it, got motherlessly drunk but even in the drunken state that I was, I kept going...I was exactly the same as when I was sober.

Mr Y also stated that

there was still control, you understand, that's why I say the sentence that I received was appropriate because I wasn't insane at that time period [of the murders]...I knew exactly what I was doing...I was emotionally unstable, yes, but who isn't sometimes? But not in such a way that I couldn't control what I was doing.

As depicted in the genogram, there appears to be an overwhelming amount of failure in the Y family system, with almost no signs of success in the lives of respective members. This failure includes mother Y's biological parents; mother Y's foster parents; mother Y's first marriage; father Y; and the paternal uncle. The implications of the extent of failure in the system appear to have been twofold, namely that:

- o the degree of success needed to balance the failures in the system would have had to have been sufficiently large to achieve this; and

- o with each succeeding generation's lack of success, the pressure for this success would have increased in the family system.

Mr Y, as the chosen successor to his father, appears to have felt both incredibly pressurized under the weight of the expectations of members of the family system, as well as fatalistically doomed to repeat the failures of each successive generation. As will be discussed further in the section, Mr Y's failure to achieve the success demanded of him by the family system may have contributed towards him ultimately giving in to this fatalism, and committing the crimes that he did.

Another possible explanation of the predominance of failure in the family system may be that the system was attempting to destroy itself, due to lack of sustainability. The nature of the family system, as a closed system, and principle of homeostasis would have possibly resulted in the stagnation of that system (due to lack of new inputs) as well as an inability to deal effectively with change. Mr Y, as the final and only end product of a particular branch of the family system (namely, between father Y and mother Y), in effect, prevented that branch of the system from continuing, both in terms of his sexual orientation, as well as his criminal behaviour. In this way, the remaining parts of the extended family system may have grown stronger.

In terms of imbalances regarding levels of functioning, interview data indicate one significant area of imbalance, namely in the relationship between mother Y and Mr Y. In terms of this relationship, mother Y appears to have under-functioned in her capacity as a parent and caregiver. In order to compensate for this, Mr Y appears to have learnt to look after himself and over-functioned in this relationship in terms of reversing the roles so that he took care of his mother. As discussed in the section on roles, this style and level of functioning appears to have stayed with Mr Y throughout his adult life. Mr Y stated that

I never had parents that would come to athletic meetings or anything like that...because I mean I had no- all the others had their parents there and support and so on and here, you're on your own, you know...emotionally I had to start suppressing and realize that I'm on my own, and you have to do everything on your own...she [mother Y] tried her best to be a good parent but she was suffering continually...psychological problems and so on...I would say that my mother had a very low self-esteem...

Despite having learnt to be independent from a young age, mother Y appears to have been emotionally very needy. She appears to have under-functioned in this regard in her close relationships, namely in that she depended on the other party in the relationship for emotional support but did not reciprocate in this regard. Mr Y appears to have over-functioned in his emotional input into the relationship with his mother. This assumption of the adaptive position in the relationship may have contributed towards fears of self-annihilation in the context of the relationship.

- Resources.

In terms of the balance of resources in the family system, the genogram and interview data appear to indicate three main areas of disparity, namely:

- o occupational and financial resources;
- o coping skills; and
- o support systems.

With respect to occupational and financial resources, the family (extended and nuclear) appears to have been from a particularly low socio-economic background, and lacking considerably in financial resources. This appears to have been a source of great shame, as well

as frustration and resentment for Mr Y, especially when it stood in the way of his extramural activities as a child (as quoted in previous sections). He appears to have distanced himself further from his family background (especially after the death of his mother).

The lack of financial resources in the family system may also have increased the desperation and need for a member to address this imbalance through their own occupational success. This may have motivated Mr Y to succeed academically and start a career that was an advancement on the occupational pay level of the family system, namely as a policeman in a family of miners. Interestingly, due to his distance and cutting off, he appears to have withheld these resources from the extended family system and invested them in his nuclear family, and later relationships.

The nuclear family system appears to have been considerably depleted of occupational resources, especially after the death of father Y, due to the fact that mother Y was unskilled and unemployed. As a result, this imbalance appears to have necessitated continual correction by bringing in the necessary resources from outside of the system, in the form of her various spouses, or grants from the State.

In the case of State grants, these appear to have been insufficient to support mother Y's attempt at being a single parent with Mr Y, and as a result, she married her third husband. This may have resulted in resentment towards the State on the part of Mr Y for what he perceived as its failure to prevent the introduction of an outsider into the nuclear family system in the form of his stepfather. His resentment towards his stepfather may also have been increased by what he saw as the enslavement of mother Y on account of her lack of financial independence. Mr Y stated that

in the beginning she probably fell for him a bit but I think the way I looked at it, is now, I used to ask her, "Why don't you just divorce the guy? Leave him", and her words were always "What would happen to me?" Where would she go...she'd have

nobody to look after her...she didn't have any skills whatsoever, understand, she wasn't going to be able to get a job.

With respect to coping skills, the genogram demonstrates a considerable lack of these resources in the Y family system, specifically in relation to dealing with conflict. Members of the family system appear to have dealt with stress and conflict by:

- o escaping or running away when the adversary was too powerful. This occurred either by literally escaping (such as in the case of mother Y with Mr Y's step-father) or through substance use (such as in the case of mother Y and her addiction to painkillers). Stress appears to also have been dealt with in the same way, such as with Mr Y's paternal uncle and Mr Y's step-father's alcoholism, or father Y's smoking;
- o using violence. This can be seen in father Y's killing of his employer in a dispute over his wages as well as Mr Y's step-father's physical abuse of mother Y; or
- o developing emotional or behavioural problems. This appears to have occurred in mother Y, as evidenced by her hysteria and obsessive cleaning.

Many of these ways of dealing with stress and conflict appear to have been passed on to Mr Y, and thus, the system appears to have maintained its ineffective attempts at solutions and coping. With respect to escaping or running away as a tactic, this can be seen in relation to Mr Y's running away with Mr H when he felt that the authorities were too powerful to argue with. Additionally, Mr Y used to smoke to deal with stress, and drink while fleeing the police. With respect to the use of violence, this can be seen in Mr Y's general style of dealing with conflict and stress, as expressed in his crimes, as well as in his recounting of his experiences in prison. Mr Y stated that "I simply just decided that he [the first murder victim] was a problem...he would be a problem...and- but then I must admit I understand why I suppose, I

couldn't have a sensation, no hard feelings about killing him...I just went, strangled him...and that was the end of it."

In terms of support resources external to the family system, these appear to be notably absent from the nuclear family system, both in terms of extended family system support, and sources of support such as friends or areas of the community such as churches. This appears to be on account of the rigidly closed nature of the relationship between Mr Y and his mother, and their suspicion and mistrust of outsiders. Additionally, mother Y's experiences with organisations such as the welfare department in her time as a foster child may have increased her weariness in this regard due to her perception of the failures on their part (which was worsened by their perceived failure to support her adequately as a single parent).

The nuclear family system may have had to depend solely on its members (namely, mother Y and Mr Y) for support, and these two individuals may have been considerably strained in terms of their ability to provide this. This may be one motivating factor in Mr Y's discovery of the occult, in a possible attempt to obtain support resources from another area.

- Summary of category six: family balance and imbalance.

In terms of category six, family balance and imbalance, the genogram revealed a number of areas of imbalance in the family system.

With respect to family structure, these imbalances appear to have occurred in the areas of families of origin; the number of marriages; and Mr Y's status as an only child. The result of these imbalances appears to have been that there was conflict between father Y and mother Y concerning their respective attitude toward family, specifically integration with the extended family system of father Y. Additionally, the imbalance with regard to number of marriages may have resulted in Mr Y attempting to balance the system by emulating the relationship patterns of his mother, as well as contributing to his insecurity in relationships. Mr Y's status

as only child appears to have resulted in increased pressure on him as the sole target for anxiety in the nuclear family system as well as possible tension between him and Mr H on account of Mr H's more open relationship style and differing sibling position.

With respect to roles, two areas of imbalance emerged from the genogram, namely Mr Y and the role of the bad guy or external threat. It was shown that Mr Y appears to have had to perform multiple roles in the Y family system and that the role of the bad guy was frequently attributed to outsiders as a means of bringing the fused relationship dyad (mainly in the form of Mr Y and his mother, and then Mr Y and his partners, specifically Mr H) and nuclear family system closer together.

With respect to levels and styles of functioning, four areas of imbalance emerged, namely orientation towards family; emotional style; success and failure; and under- and over-functioning. Once again, this appears to explain mother Y's distancing from the external family system, as well as her favouring of the dyadic relationship as opposed to larger group system. Additionally, it was shown that Mr Y appears to have been frequently required to balance the level and style of functioning of his mothering a complementary interaction due to his position as her partner in the dyadic relationship. As a result, he appears to have generally over-functioned and developed a controlled emotional style. The overwhelming prevalence of failure in the family system was explored.

Finally, with respect to resources, imbalances emerged in three areas, namely, occupational and financial resources; coping skills; and support systems. It was shown that Mr Y may have developed shame and resentment towards the family system, as well as the larger social system on account of their inability to support the nuclear family system adequately. It was also shown that Mr Y's violent behaviour as well as some of his responses to stress and conflict such as smoking and running away appear to have been the result of a general lack of coping skills in the family system. Mr Y's discovery of the occult was shown

to have possibly resulted from this lack of support resources in the nuclear family system. This lack of support was also shown to have possibly placed great strain on both Mr Y and his mother.

7.2.2 Thematic content analysis

As discussed above, the clinical observations of Mr Y, the genogram of Mr Y and the interviews conducted yielded considerable information concerning the family system of Mr Y. This information was supplemented with interviews with the prison psychologist of the prison where Mr Y is being held, as well as the cellmate of Mr Y. Court reports and assessments were also consulted as a secondary source of information, together with a television documentary on Mr Y.

The above body of data was then analysed using the content analysis method and the resulting themes will now be elaborated upon in terms of the family systems theoretical framework discussed in the methodology section (chapter 5), namely in terms of emotional process, multigenerational patterns and relationship patterns.

- **Themes relating to emotional processes in the Y family system.**

In terms of emotional processes, the following themes emerge, namely:

- low levels of differentiation in the nuclear family system (Theme one);
- high anxiety levels in the nuclear family system (Theme two);
- emotional cut-offs,
 - specifically with respect to the isolation of a dyad from surrounding systems (Theme three); and
 - fears of loss of self due to extremely fused relationships (Theme four).

- Low levels of differentiation in the nuclear family system (theme one).

The Y family system demonstrated a low level of differentiation, specifically with respect to mother Y and the system variations that developed with each of her significant relationships. As discussed in previous sections, mother Y, although relatively differentiated from her foster parents and surrounding societal system and social welfare systems, appears to have been involved in a fused, closed relationship with the memory and fantasy of her deceased biological parents. This is a pattern that she appears to have repeated with father Y, after his death in 1965.

This relationship pattern of mother Y appears to have become the central point around which the subsequent nuclear formulations of Mr Y's family system developed. This involved a central, fused dyad together within a family system that may or may not have included other members (such as the half-siblings of Mr Y, as well as his step-father). The level of differentiation in the nuclear family system appears to have been very low. This would have influenced Mr Y in the sense that the low level of differentiation that characterized his relationship with his mother appears to have made him inclined to move towards fused relationships after her death, in line with the principle of homeostasis that would have characterized the family system. Mr Y appears to have repeated this pattern in his later life, with his co-accused, and the level of differentiation in this dyad appears to have also been very low, despite the isolation of the dyad from surrounding societal systems. Mr Y stated that "I think my mother was not very happy most of her life, you see the only person she truly loved was my father...and she was happy." He also described Mr H as "amazing...he was special...he never asked me for anything...he simply wanted to be with me, that was one of the best things I ever heard."

The nuclear family system appears to have also been very closed and rigid, preventing outsiders from entering. This can be seen in mother Y's attitude to the home and to visitors.

There appear to also have been few avenues by which some of the surplus undifferentiation and anxiety in the system could have been absorbed, and this may have taken its toll on the members of the system, namely Mr Y and his mother. Mr Y stated that

I wasn't allowed to have friends at home- I could go and visit them...their houses were much better...I think my mom was embarrassed due to the fact that she could not get on with people...people of her own age group and all that kind of stuff...I actually inherited a similar condition as hers...I don't particularly like having people around me...I never encouraged people to come and visit me.

Given that mother Y and Mr Y were so enmeshed and fused, it can be hypothesized that they would have had difficulty surviving without each other. This would have been compounded by mother Y's own fears regarding abandonment in significant relationships. There also appears to have been no room for conflict in this relationship to possibly prevent the breakdown of the relationship and system. Therefore, the two methods that were used to deal with the anxiety and undifferentiation in the nuclear family system appear to have been dysfunction in family members and projection.

It would appear that this pattern was repeated in the relationship between Mr Y and Mr H, although there appears to have also been an escalation in the level of undifferentiation and accompanying anxiety, as possibly reflected in the extremity of the above methods, namely to involving murder of others.

The premium on conflict avoidance in the fused relationship between Mr Y and his mother, as well as their distance from outsiders or members of the external family system at various points in time, may have inclined Mr Y and his mother towards developing behavioural symptoms to absorb some of the anxiety in the system. With respect to mother Y, this may have consisted of her hysteria, obsessive cleaning, as well as addiction to painkillers,

namely Grand-Pa® headache powders. With respect to Mr Y, this seems to have involved his early criminal behaviour such as shoplifting, and fraud, as well as involvement in the occult.

Mr Y and his mother also appeared to deal with anxiety and undifferentiation in the nuclear family system by projecting this onto a third entity. Paradoxically, however, this projection mechanism served to bring Mr Y and his mother closer together, and isolate them further from surrounding systems, contributing to even greater levels of undifferentiation that had to be absorbed in the nuclear family system, thus perpetuating the need to manage this anxiety in some manner that did not threaten the relationship (and thus maintaining system homeostasis). There are a number of examples of this in the Y family system.

In the early years of the nuclear family system, the extended family system appears to have served this function. Mother Y may have reduced her own anxiety levels by projecting them onto the extended family that were seen as an entity that needed to be avoided on account of their “simplicity” and “inferiority” to the nuclear family system. This also served the dual purpose of ensuring that Mr Y did not distance from her and move closer to father Y’s family.

The second significant target of projection mechanisms of the nuclear family system appears to have been Mr Y’s stepfather. By projecting the excess anxiety onto him and focusing on him as the aggressor or abuser, mother Y and Mr Y were able to get rid of some of the surplus anxiety in the nuclear family system. As a result, Mr Y’s stepfather may have developed problems such as heavy drinking, as a release for the system anxiety leveled at him.

Other possible targets for projection may have included Mr Y’s half-siblings and the memory of Mr Y’s father. In terms of Mr Y’s half siblings, they may have served a similar purpose to the extended family for mother Y and Mr Y and their departure from the household as soon as they were able to support themselves independently may reflect an

attempt to cut-off or distance themselves from the projected anxiety. With respect to the memory of Mr Y's father, by focusing on his probable wishes and desires for Mr Y, mother Y may have been able to project some of her own desires for Mr Y, and consequently, keep her dominant role in the fused relationship covert.

As with the development of dysfunction as a means of dealing with surplus anxiety and undifferentiation in the nuclear family system, Mr Y appears to have repeated this pattern of projection in his later relationships as an adult. This can be seen in his attitude towards Mr H's family who may have functioned as a target for excess anxiety in Mr Y's fused relationship with Mr H, in much the same way as Mr Y's mother had used father Y's extended family. This may have also been the role of the various murder victims, who served as targets through which excess anxiety in the relationship between Mr Y and Mr H could be managed, and the system could continue. For example, Mr Y stated that

because of all the crimes, everything started pouring out you understand, and because I basically crossed over from being a normal person to the person that did the crimes and I wanted to kill him [the step-father] because my mother had never been the same, the amount of abuse she went through, she just gave up.

- High anxiety levels in the nuclear family system (theme two).

As discussed previously, the Y nuclear family system had particularly low levels of differentiation. Bowen (1978) states that individuals frequently choose partners of a similar differentiation level. This may explain the low levels of differentiation that mother Y in particular brought to the various relationships that she was involved in within the and it may be hypothesized that father Y, as well as Mr Y's step-father may have also come from systems with low levels of differentiation and high anxiety or subjectivity. The violent behaviour and angry dispositions of both these individuals may be an indication of the above.

The levels of differentiation in the Y family system appear to have decreased even further after the death of father Y, when the nuclear family system was reduced to mother Y, Mr Y and his two half siblings, and mother Y attempted to substitute the loss of her close relationship with Mr Y with her relationship with Mr Y (which appeared to approximate almost complete fusion). In this way, the Y family system appears to have been exercising its principle of homeostasis; however, as a result of the considerable further decline in differentiation that would have occurred accordingly, there would have been a large amount of anxiety in the Y nuclear family system.

With regards to the high level of emotionality and subjectivity in the system, this can be seen in mother Y's high anxiety and hysteria, and father Y's violent outburst and inability to manage his anger as indicated in his crime. Mr Y described his mother as "totally emotional...I mean, she would freak out for the slightest thing" and his father as "he used to get angry very easily- he'd fly into a rage."

This low level of differentiation may have also been exacerbated by the fact that the Y family system appeared to grow even more rigid and closed after the death of father Y (1965) and particularly after the departure of Mr Y's siblings from the household (1969 and 1971 respectively). The system may have needed to find outlets for the accompanying increase in anxiety levels, which may have played an increasingly important role in influencing the actions and behaviour of both Mr Y and his mother, and possibly posing a threat to the fused relationship. Some of this tension may have been resolved via the introduction of a new member to the system in the form of Mr Y's stepfather, who could then serve as a target for the intense emotions on the part of Mr Y and anxiety of his mother.

The above, in turn, may have set up a pattern for Mr Y, and the systems of which he was a part, where outsiders to the fused, dyadic relationship may have been seen as means of reducing anxiety in the fused relationship. This can be seen in his criminal behaviour and

murder series, where the murder victims appear to have served as a focal point for intensely violent emotions on the part of Mr Y, which could then be kept from interfering with his relationship with Mr H.

The intensity of his jealousy and possessiveness in relation to Mr H may also be seen as a repeat of the above pattern, as a result of the low levels of differentiation that characterized the relationship between Mr Y and Mr H. Mr Y appears to have repeated this pattern in prison, in terms of his relationship with his cell-mate, Mr Z, as well as the various partners that he has had whilst in prison.

- Emotional cut-offs (theme three).

In the family system of Mr Y, it would appear that the mechanism of emotional cutting off or distancing and isolation functioned to preserve the fusion between two individuals involved in a close dyadic relationship, and isolate the dyadic system from surrounding systems and other members of these systems. Initially this relationship consisted of Mr Y and his mother, but later this pattern appears to have been repeated by Mr Y in his relationship with Mr H.

Mother Y's early experiences as a foster child may demonstrate patterns of developing emotional distance from foster caretakers and their families in order to prevent the trauma of separation that resulted when she was sent to a different home. This isolation and distance from those around her may have contributed further towards her apparent fusion with the idealized notion of her biological parents.

When mother Y started her adult relationships, she may have repeated this pattern, with her first and second husbands taking the place of her biological parents, and with her isolating herself from everyone else around them. When Mr Y was born, she became particularly close to him and developed a fused relationship with him, especially after the death of his father. Her relationship with Mr Y's step-father does not appear to have been of the same type as that

with her previous husbands, but he may have been important with regards to the Y family system, due to the resources that he added to the system in terms of money and financial support, as well as a form of outlet for the high levels of anxiety in the system (discussed in theme two). Mr Y stated that

in the beginning she probably fell for him [Mr Y's step-father] a bit but I think the way I looked at it, is now, I used to ask her, "Why don't you just divorce the guy? Leave him", and her words were always "What would happen to me?" Where would she go...she'd have nobody to look after her...she didn't have any skills whatsoever, understand, she wasn't going to be able to get a job.

The use of emotional cut-off is also evident in Mr Y's relationships. He appears to demonstrate a pattern of investing his emotions exclusively in a fused dyadic relationship with another individual (first his mother and then his subsequent partners in adult life such as Mr H), and isolate himself emotionally from everybody else. The extent of his emotional investment in the relationship can be seen in the way that Mr Y felt that he was not capable of sharing himself with more than one individual.

Mr Y stated that

I'm used to being a loner...that's why I can concentrate only all my energies and emotions on one person...I can't share it among several people – I find that extremely difficult, for the simple fact that it's difficult to actually- say you've got four people, four friends, how are you going to split up the amount of time that you have to spend with them? How are you going to be fair about who gets what? You know, dishing out your friendship to four people...

Mr Y's emotional isolation and cut-off from those around him may have also contributed towards his inability to empathize with those around him or to feel bound to any social responsibility towards the social or societal system of which he was a part. This inability to empathise with others may have influenced his criminal behaviour. When he committed the murders in his series, the emotional connection with Mr H appeared to consume all of Mr Y's available emotional investment (repeating the pattern of his mother). The system, in line with homeostasis and established patterns, may have satisfied established criteria for self-sustenance, and Mr Y may not have felt a need to form emotional connections with members outside of the dyad, or rigidly defended against this in order to prevent the dyad from being threatened. Mr Y may have felt little guilt or remorse over inflicting harm on outsiders, if such behaviour was perceived as ensuring the survival of the system. Any remorse he did feel appears to have been related exclusively to the possible negative effects that his actions may have had on his relationship with Mr H. Mr Y stated that "I'd never been so happy [when he met Mr H]...it was like you found your partner in life...the magic is there...but the emotional attachment to each other was far greater than anything I've experienced before in my life...it was unique" and that "I feel responsible for what happened, the fact that he ended up in prison as well...I need to speak to him, I need to get it off my chest, I need to ask his forgiveness." He also stated that

I was battling that fact that I'm killing people in order to survive...I mean, with my co-accused...and obviously, I know it's wrong [but] even to this day I don't feel...I don't think about, I don't think about the crimes unless somebody asks me...I don't have any nightmares about it, I don't have any guilt feelings about it.

- Fears of loss of self due to extremely fused relationships (theme four).

The centralized, fused relationship between Mr Y and his mother can be classified as pathological according to Ackerman's (1984) criterion, which stipulates that a pathological centralized family system occurs when all functions of the family are excluded except for one. This can be seen in the case of Mr Y and his mother, where the Y family system focused exclusively on emotional survival and support in one another, and other functions such as adequate parenting and socialization were excluded. Mother Y also assumed a position of pseudo-responsibility in relation to Mr Y. This changed as he grew older and took more of a one-up position. However, initially, mother Y spoke on Mr Y's behalf, decided that he would remain apart from the extended family, influenced him to believe that he was different from the extended family system, and shaped other perceptions of himself, notably in terms of his superiority.

Mr Y's involvement in the fused relationship with his mother appears to have contributed to fears of self-annihilation, or loss of self-identity in the fused relationship. In an attempt to assert himself and prove that he existed beyond the fused relationship with his mother, he may have developed behaviour and engaged in pastimes that defined him as different to the nuclear family system. Such behaviour may have included his academic achievements, sexual orientation, and involvement in pastimes such as bodybuilding and judo. His assertions that he was different from his family and that he felt that his soul had been swapped may all be attempts to prove that he existed as an entity independent to his mother, despite the fact that he could never reveal these parts of himself to her out of fear of conflict and the breakdown of the fused relationship. The need to be different appears to be a theme that runs quite strongly in Mr Y, as evidenced in his desire to also be different to the stereotypical homosexual male. Mr Y stated that "I don't look like your average gay guy...I don't react or think like that actually – or, I'm basically a straight guy that likes to go to bed with men."

Mr Y appears to have been caught in a paradox. Having fused with his mother, he was dependent on the relationship with her. However, the same relationship risked annihilating his distinct self identity completely. Mr Y appears to have developed ways of proving that a part of himself still remained, independent of the fused relationship, thus allaying fears of self-annihilation. However, because a large part of him depended on the fused relationship, he was forced to keep these ways covert from his mother, thus preventing conflict and a breakdown of the relationship. This pattern persisted with Mr Y throughout his later life in his relationships with others. This can be seen in the way that he had to take a complementary role to Mr H in their relationships, and this escalated as the relationship progressed and the two became closer. For example, Mr Y appears to have had to have been the strong, violent, aggressive, mature caretaker in relation to Mr H's role as the weak, dependent, submissive individual in the relationship.

To prevent the possible annihilation of the self in the relationship Mr Y may have asserted himself by taking the lead and controlling the relationship. Any situation in which he possibly felt that he was losing total control of the fused relationship may have triggered established patterns dealing with responses to fear over the annihilation of the self, such as distancing from other systems or individuals and fusing more intensely with one's partner. This may have sparked desperate attempts to retain control such as in the case of his relationship with Mr H, where the intervention of the Child Protection Unit members threatened to take control away from Mr Y. Consequently, he had to assume control in any way possible (to prevent what he viewed as self-annihilation) and ran away with Mr H, protecting the relationship from outside interference with violence and murder. Mr Y stated that "I think because of the fact that they wanted- they tried to split us up...that sort of- I had dreams and dreams and dreams about him and there I knew I changed...when I got out of there I was not the same person I was...I became more jealous there."

These patterns may be also seen at the higher tiers of the family system, such as with Mr Y's mother whose own early experiences in foster homes may have resulted in her developing emotional distance and isolation as a defence mechanism against growing too attached to temporary caregivers. Her fear of self-annihilation as a result of sharing herself with more than one individual may have been responsible for her fear of outsiders and her intense need to remain in her own house and to avoid other people. Mr Y stated that

I'm used to being a loner...that's why I can concentrate only all my energies and emotions on one person...I can't share it among several people – I find that extremely difficult, for the simple fact that it's difficult to actually- say you've got four people, four friends, how are you going to split up the amount of time that you have to spend with them? How are you going to be fair about who gets what? You know, dishing out your friendship to four people...

This statement is significant in that it illustrates the process by which fusion takes place in a relationship, namely, with the two individuals involved almost functioning as one self, but also accompanied by fears of self-annihilation, specifically in the individual who takes the adaptive role. This fear of self-annihilation may have been one of the reasons that Mr Y chose to leave home in 1981. The fact that his mother died soon after this can indicate the extent to which she was dependent on Mr Y in the fused relationship, and may have contributed towards Mr Y fearing a similar fate in his future relationships, if his partner were to leave him or the fused relationship was to be broken up by others (such as in the case of Mr H). Mr Y stated that "I couldn't stand staying at home, joined the railway police at that time period [after his compulsory national service] and it was six months later that my mother died."

- **Themes concerning multigenerational patterns in the Y family system.**

In terms of multigenerational patterns, the following themes emerged, namely:

- transmission of certain attitudes, beliefs and coping styles across generations as a means of homeostasis in the Y family system (Theme five);
- weak generational boundaries and poorly defined subsystems (Theme six); and
- a tendency towards periodic active intervention by the larger social system in an attempt at recalibration of the Y family system in line with social norms (Theme seven).

- Homeostasis mechanisms across generations of the Y family system (theme five).

It would appear that in order to allow the Y family system to sustain itself over a number of generations, certain aspects of the system had to be repeated across generations in line with the principle of homeostasis that characterizes systems in general (Bowen, 1978). These aspects may not necessarily appear to be beneficial to the individual members that make up a system; however, their repetition functions to sustain the overall system, and are consequently beneficial to it.

Some of the aspects that appear to have been repetitively passed on in the Y family system include the following attitudes, beliefs and coping styles, namely:

- anger management skills and violence;
- attitude towards relationships; and
- failure of individual members.

o **Anger management skills and violence.**

The Y family system history appears to demonstrate a trend of violence and poor ability to manage violence across generations. The first reported incidence of this appears to be father Y, who bludgeoned his employer to death when he could not resolve a pay dispute with him. Given that Mr Y's extended family is either deceased or estranged, little detail could be obtained about whether these patterns were present in other areas of the extended family system. However, it would appear that this particular pattern was passed on to Mr Y. This may have formed part of Mr Y's inherited role and position in the Y family system as the successor to his father. Mr Y stated that "it [father Y's crime] was in a fit of anger. He had this argument with the employer- the guy owed him money for his pay and they had words and my father apparently became angry and hit the guy with a tyre iron, killed him..." He also described his own aggressive behaviour in the following way -

only after they [the hiking companions of the second victim] were away about an hour later, and after eating and I sort of started looking around and stuff and then, then it started affecting me- that reaction...and I became extremely aggressive, you know, because I was angry with myself...I thought to myself, this is completely unnecessary...it's messy, it's overkill.

The introduction of further violence and poor anger management skills with the arrival of Mr Y's stepfather (in the form of his physical abuse of mother Y) would have added to the presence of this behavioural trend in the family system as a means to resolve conflict and to express one's anger.

The implications of this for Mr Y were that, when the system of which he was a part was faced with possible change or perceived threats to the dyadic relationship, he may have defended against his fear of loss or change with anger and expressed this aggressively or

violently as a means to maintain the system. This can be seen in his criminal behaviour. When he was involved in conflict with the authorities at social welfare and the Child Protection Unit over his relationship with Mr H, and it seemed as if this relationship might end (and therewith the entire system) he responded with anger, and resorted first to escaping the threat by running away, and then actively preserving the system by murdering individuals that he perceived as further threats to the relationship. This can be seen particularly in the first and last murders, as well as the attempted murder, where Mr Y may have perceived Mr H's friend (the other runaway) as well as the other men that they attempted to con and manipulate as a threat to their relationship and solved this problem with violence, namely by murdering them. In this way, the system sustained itself, and was able to maintain (temporarily) its rigid and closed boundaries. Mr Y stated that "I simply just decided that he [the first murder victim] was a problem...he would be a problem...and- but then I must admit I understand why I suppose, I couldn't have a sensation, no hard feelings about killing him...I just went, strangled him...and that was the end of it."

o **Attitude towards relationships.**

Another behavioural trend that was passed down through the generations in the Y family system appears to have been a particular attitude towards relationships with significant others. Given mother Y's early abandonment and orphaning by her biological parents, as well as her movement through several foster homes, mother Y may have never truly felt like a member of the systems of which she was a part, viewing relationships as temporary and inconsistent. This may have been coupled with an insecurity and fear of abandonment and separation that had resulted from her loss of her biological parents. Mother Y may have aligned herself with alternative systems emotionally cutting off from the systems in which she was placed and fusing completely with a member of the new system, usually as part of a dyadic relationship.

This appears to have occurred firstly with her deceased biological parents, and then in her later relationships. However, each failed relationship in her life, appears to have been positive feedback in terms of the principle of fusion that operated in the various systems of which she was a member, resulting in fusion being more intense in each relationship that followed.

By the time that mother Y developed a fused relationship with Mr Y, her insecurity would have been particularly great. Perhaps her choice of Mr Y was based on the practicality that as her son, he was dependent on her, and would not abandon her. The fears and insecurities of mother Y, with respect to relationships, may have also resulted in her need to control and maintain the relationship at all costs in order to preserve the family system.

This attitude towards relationships appears to have been passed on to Mr Y in line with homeostasis. The trend of controlling the relationship and partner; fear of loss and abandonment; and dependency on the other in the relationship were all evident in Mr Y's relationship with Mr H as well as his partner in prison. Mr Y described his relationship with Mr H as

it was lovely, there was no- it was great, it felt like, you know, the feeling of actually having someone that needs you, you understand...being alone is I think- because you actually become blasé about having these feelings so you cut your own feelings down so now you meet someone that you actually fall in love with that person and then all those feelings that have always been packed away surface...and then...they are much more powerful...I think that's my biggest problem...controlling emotions.

Mr Y also stated that "I tend to get extremely jealous- I think it's that thing of worrying that someone else will take the person away, you understand."

To a similar extent, Mr Y's discomfort with his own independence or solitude may reflect the effects of the Y family system's imperative of homeostasis in terms of maintaining a rigid, closed system via a fused dyadic relationship –

I don't like being out of control, no control of myself, you understand...I have to be in control of myself because that's a scary feeling that you're on the outside, I mean being alone you have to- I mean, you're in charge of things around you...you don't have somebody else you can go to and they going to do the work for you now and that kind of thing, you understand, so you do everything yourself...so you have to control constantly.

o **Failure of individual members.**

Finally, there appears to be a repeated pattern of failure across generations in the Y family system. This failure appears to have occurred specifically in the area of money or financial security; adequate caregiving; occupational success; relationships; and respect of the law.

Mr Y appears to have attempted to escape this pattern by achieving his Matric [grade 12] and getting a good job; developing a good standard of living; getting involved in a stable, long-term relationship; and taking care of his mother. However, the principle of homeostasis in the Y family system appears to have resulted in the pattern of failure eventually repeating itself in the life of Mr Y, specifically after the death of his mother. Although he appears to have blamed his stepfather, he also felt that the death would not have occurred if he had remained at home. In Mr Y's opinion, he had failed in his primary relationship, and as a result, his subsequent relationships appear to have been attempts to succeed by applying "more of the same" where he perceived he had failed with his mother. To have failed with mother Y may have meant that he abandoned her in the same way as his father. Additionally, when his relationship with Mr H was threatened he may have resisted abandoning him at all

costs, resulting in his violent response. However, as a result of homeostasis in the Y family system, Mr Y's failure with regards to his significant relationships appeared imminent, given mother Y's own pattern with relationships, which was passed on to him.

The introduction of the occult into the Y family system as well as mother Y's reports concerning father Y's death and paranormal influence on Mr Y (Clinical Psychological Report on Mr H (17) and his relationship with Mr Y, 23 November, 1992), may have served to further consolidate Mr Y's role in the family system, as well as to ensure that Mr Y ultimately repeated his father's criminal and violent behaviour and failure in terms of also obtaining the death sentence and thereby ensuring the homeostasis of the system. Mr Y stated that

when I left home, I was worried leaving her [his mother] in the house...oddly enough, I knew it was not the right thing to do...but I had to make a choice, I had to think about my future, you understand...she made her choice...it seemed like things were alright there for a while...when I used to phone home and so on and go and visit, it seemed alright...because at that point in time I joined the police force and obviously, he started sort of behaving...but behind the scenes I was wrong.

Mr Y also stated that "I actually clapped my hands in court...I stood up and clapped my hands [when he received the death penalty]."

- Weak generational boundaries and poorly defined subsystems (theme six).

The Y family system appears to have been characterized by extremely permeable boundaries between the poorly defined parental and child subsystems. This is evident in the apparent parentification of Mr Y in relation to his mother, who became increasingly dependent on him for caregiving after the death of father Y. Mr Y may have struggled to develop the necessary

skills for developing relationships outside of the family system. Mr Y stated that “I wouldn’t say that she spoiled me but she had little things that she always bought and stuff to show me she loved me...and she had a miserable life...I mean she wasn’t a happy woman...the only happiness she had was me basically...”

Additionally, the lack of clearly defined boundaries between subsystems may have contributed further to the enmeshment between Mr Y and his mother. This enmeshment may have resulted in their over-involvement in each other’s lives, as well as a perception that separation from the system would constitute an act of betrayal. Mother Y’s death soon after Mr Y’s departure from the household appears to illustrate the extent to which the two were enmeshed, and that the survival of the family system depended on the dyadic relationship between the two.

The Y family system also appears to have been characterized by a rigid boundary between the parent-child subsystem and the grandparent subsystem. It would appear that members of the grandparent subsystem were prohibited from entering the parent-child subsystem consisting of mother Y and Mr Y to such an extent that there appears to have been disengagement of these two subsystems from each other. As parent and child became more enmeshed, this disengagement appears to have extended to include the larger societal system as well.

Given the lack of available supplementary information on the Y family system, due to the lack of other members of the system available for interviews, it is difficult to comment on the prevalence of the above structural pattern at other points in the system, and whether this may have been repeated as a means of maintaining homeostasis. However it does appear that this systemic structural pattern of enmeshment with a dyadic partner and disengagement from other systems was repeated in Mr Y’s other relationships, such as that with Mr H. For example, Mr Y described his relationship with Mr H as “perfect...I played the part...basically

I looked after him...we were perfect for each other...here's this kid that looked up towards me...I was looking after him- I was actually being a parent, lover, everything to him.”

It would also appear that the degree of fit between Mr H and Mr Y may have also been influenced by the extent to which the subsystems in each of their family systems complemented each other. It appears that in the H family system, the boundaries between parental and child subsystems were clearly demarcated; however, in contrast to the family system of Mr Y, where these boundaries were increasingly diffuse, in the case of Mr H, these boundaries were particularly rigid. Consequently, in the H family system, autonomy of the children may have been maintained, but at the expense of nurturance and involvement. It would appear that when Mr H and Mr Y formed their own system, Mr Y may have contributed resources to the system that were absent from the child subsystem of Mr H, namely nurturance and emotional involvement, which may have been very attractive to him.

This may have been compounded by the fact that Mr H is reported to have been isolated within his own sibling subsystem as well. The Clinical Psychological Report on Mr H (17) and his relationship with Mr Y (23 November, 1992) stated that “For her (mother H) it was obviously normal to give her craving son virtually nothing materially or emotionally despite repeated promises to do so” (p. 11) and that “the father (father H) was fundamentally uninterested in his son's conduct, and clearly ignorant of much long-established detail pertaining to the case and well known to his wife” (p. 13). Regarding the relationship between Mr H and Mr Y, the report states that “the relationship between the two accused is clinically termed symbiotic. Symbiosis...denotes a relationship of mutual interdependence in which each partner requires intimate interaction with the other literally for survival and development.”

- A tendency towards periodic active intervention by the larger social system in an attempt at recalibration of the Y family system in line with social norms (theme seven).

As indicated in the genogram (figure 3), two key events in the Y family system were the arrest and hanging of father Y for murder, and the criminal behaviour of, and serial murders committed by Mr Y. This would seem to imply that the social norms surrounding acceptable behaviour in society were not being integrated completely within the Y family system norms for behaviour. The larger external societal system may have had to intervene on two occasions to sanction members of the family system in an attempt to possibly bring about the recalibration of the Y family system to social norms via negative feedback.

In the case of father Y, this intervention was unsuccessful, specifically at the level of the nuclear family system. This may have been influenced by the isolation of mother Y and Mr Y from larger external systems on account of their fused, closed relationship. Mother Y may also have been skeptical of the broader societal system as a result of her experiences of social welfare as a foster child, the perceived injustice of the department of justice with regards to father Y's sentence, and her own difficulty with social welfare grants and support as a single parent. Any attempts to force compliance via negative feedback may have been lost on the nuclear family system, and distance from social norms may have increased with the greater isolation of the fused dyad of mother Y and Mr Y. This may explain the intensification of criminal behavior and deviance from social norms that occurred at the next level of the family system, namely with respect to Mr Y.

As expressed in interviews, Mr Y appears to have had little faith in the societal system and any accountability or allegiance to his membership of such a system appears to have been absent from him, even though he worked as part of an agency of such a system, namely the police force. This may have been more for his own sense of power and control, than a desire to espouse any social aims. Additionally, with little integration of norms and values of the

larger social system, mother Y may have been Mr Y's primary guide in terms of what behaviour was acceptable or permissible. In this regard, she was particularly under-responsible. Mr Y stated that

I never had parents that would come to athletic meetings or anything like that...because I mean I had no- all the others had their parents there and support and so on and here, you're on your own, you know...emotionally I had to start suppressing and realize that I'm on my own, and you have to do everything on your own...she [mother Y] tried her best to be a good parent but she was suffering continually...psychological problems and so on...I would say that my mother had a very low self-esteem...

Due to the fact that social norms appears to have played little part in influencing the nuclear family system, they may have played a minimal part in influencing Mr Y's role as a member of a family and social system. Norms with regard to acceptable social behaviour would consequently not possibly have placed a constraint on Mr Y's criminal behaviour. He would have most likely been more concerned about his mother's feelings on this matter. Due to the fact that she had passed away by this point, there may have been even less reason for him to check his decision to murder the victims, and may explain the coldness with which he approached his crimes, as well as his lack of restraint or hesitance in committing them.

Mr Y stated that

basically what it boils down to is that two overzealous policemen decide they want to arrest this gay guy and his younger lover and the two gay guys...decide well, no, this is not on and they start running and obviously, to their surprise, they commit one crime and it carries on, and gets worse and gets worse and gets worse...we were hunted...thing is, I needed to survive- I needed for us to stay together...oh well, I

knew it would be stopped...the odds were too great...but, we still tried, you see, we still tried to fight the system.

The pattern of the societal system attempting to force a recalibration of the family system via negative feedback appears to have been repeated in Mr Y's generation, when Mr Y received the death penalty, just as his father had. The system that he had formed appears to have collapsed (namely, with the separation of Mr Y from Mr H), and members of the societal system in the form of prison officials, as well as prison psychologists, continue to repeat and enforce societal attempts at recalibration by preventing the two from being reunited as well as monitoring Mr Y's relationships in prison, and preventing him from being released.

- **Themes concerning relationship patterns in the Y family system.**

Relationship patterns will be discussed with respect to the following themes, namely:

- the use of triads and triangulation to strengthen the dyadic relationship pattern in the Y family system (Theme eight); and
- the use of symmetrical and complementary patterns of interaction to negotiate power in the Y family system (Theme nine).

- The use of triads and triangulation to strengthen the dyadic relationship pattern in the Y family system (theme eight).

As discussed above, in the interpretation of the genogram, it would appear that a number of significant triads emerge. These will now be discussed in more elaborate detail, specifically with regard to their function within the Y family system, which appears to be mainly concerned with the preservation of the fused relationship.

It would appear that most of the triads in the family system functioned largely to preserve a fused, dyadic relationship between two members, triangulating around a third member who took the role of the bad guy in the family system or outsider against whom the fused members had to unite in order to protect the enmeshed relationship. This will now be illustrated with reference to a number of the significant triads that emerged in the genogram and interview details.

Figure 25. Foster/Adopted Triad One

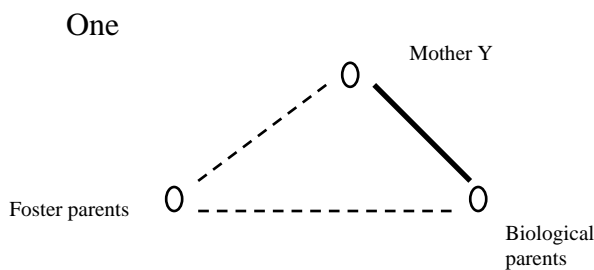
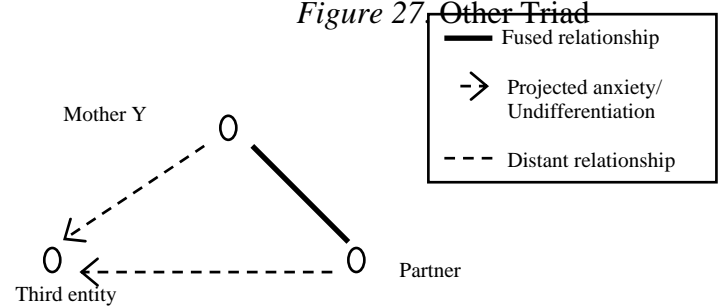


Figure 27. Other Triad



As discussed with respect to foster/adopted triad one, mother Y's experiences as an orphan and a foster child may have contributed towards her idealization of the relationship with her biological parents. She also appears to have resisted integrating herself in her various foster families, viewing her foster parents as possible threats to the idealized relationship, and resenting them for their perceived responsibility for the loss of her biological parents. Thus, in order for the maternal family system to be preserved, it may have been necessary for mother Y to sustain the relationship with the memory of her biological parents.

This patterns appears to have been repeated in later life as a means to sustain the other systems of which mother Y was a part, as can be seen in couples triad one. The high levels of undifferentiation that mother Y introduced into the systems that she entered may have overwhelmed the available resources of those systems possibly explaining the divorce with

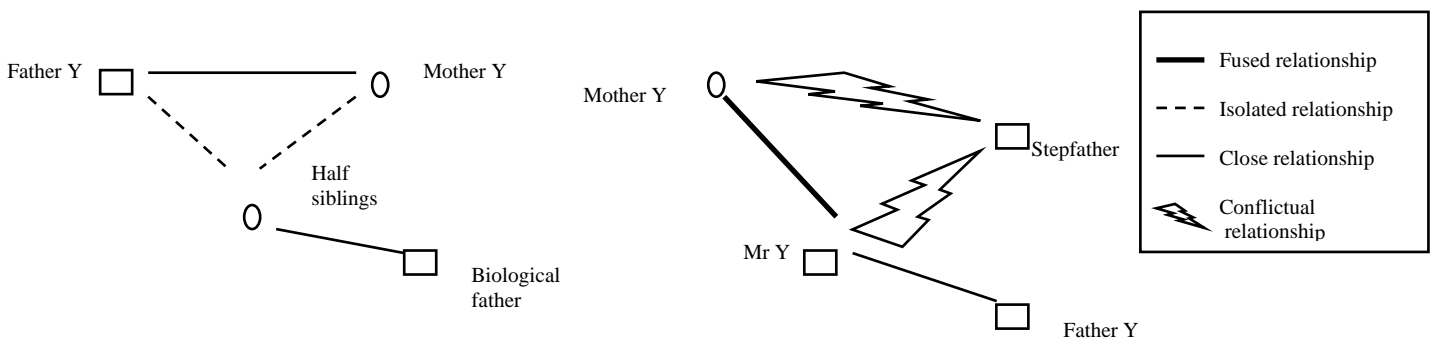
her first husband, and conflict with her third husband. Additionally, her low level of differentiation in such a relationship and tendency towards fusion may have contributed towards increased anxiety in her partners, as evident in triads involving relationships with others, such as alcohol and extramarital affairs (as possible means of absorbing anxiety and asserting themselves in fear of self-annihilation). The pattern of the original triad, namely foster/adopted triad one, may have also contributed to the system needing one member (or alternatively an outsider to the system) to take the role of threat to the fused relationship, so that the system could preserve itself around the fused, central dyadic relationship. This can be illustrated in the various systems formed by mother Y such as:

- o mother Y's relationship with father Y, where the paternal grandparents took the role of threat to the system; and
- o mother Y's relationship with Mr Y, where both the where the paternal grandparents (multigenerational triad one) and Mr Y's stepfather (divorced/remarried triad two) took on the role of threat to the system.

Figure 23. Divorced/Remarried Triad One

Figure 24. Divorced/Remarried Triad

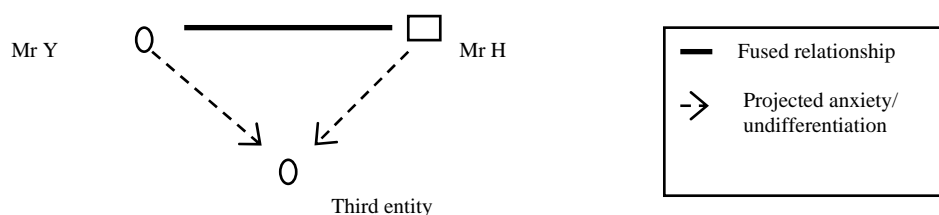
Two



Mother Y's need to recreate the idealized, fused relationship of foster/adopted triad one in order to sustain the system of which she was a member, as well as the precarious nature of such a system, appeared to rigidify system boundaries and close the system to outsiders in order to preserve what resources were available. There also appears to have been a cutting off or distancing from other individuals within the system who did not form part of the fused, dyadic relationship or from members of other systems, outside the Y family system. This is evident in the isolation of Mr Y's half-siblings, when mother Y formed a new system together with father Y. This is also evident in the new system that resulted after the death of father Y, when Mr Y appears to have become the member who replaced father Y in the fused dyadic relationship, and together with mother Y, distanced himself from the extended family and other outsiders. For a while, this relationship drew strength and fusion at the expense of further isolation from Mr Y's half siblings as well as triangulation around these members of the immediate Y family system and the paternal grandparents in the extended family system. However, when the half-siblings left the system, a replacement would have been necessary to absorb some of the anxiety that otherwise might have overwhelmed the fused dyad. Additionally, the Y family system may have been depleted of some resources, mostly in the form of financial resources, and required a source for these. Mr Y's stepfather appeared to be the new member introduced into the Y family system to fill this position.

Figure 28.

Other triad two



The above relationship pattern, which appeared to first be observable in the system in foster/adopted triad one, appears to be repeated as a means of sustaining the further systems of which Mr Y was a member. This is evident in his adult relationships with Mr C and Mr H. The fact that Mr Y's first relationship commenced the year in which his mother died illustrates the systemic principle of homeostasis which required a replacement for the deceased member in the Y family system, specifically in terms of the fused dyadic relationship to which Mr Y had become accustomed, and which appears to have been the structure around which the system sustained itself.

Additionally, due to the enmeshed nature of the relationship with his mother, Mr Y appears to have had a poorly developed sense of an autonomous self that could exist outside of a relationship with another. This may be reflected in Mr Y's apparent struggle with fears of his own annihilation after the death of his mother, possibly evidenced by his depression and heavy drinking after her death. Mr Y stated that "I joined the railway police at that time period and it was 6 months later that my mother died...that sort of knocked me and for a year I just went on the pot, fights in bars, stuff like that...I was involved with a guy [Mr C]...it was substantial"

Having discussed how triads within the Y family system functioned to maintain homeostasis within that system, it will be shown how the process of triangulation served a similar function within the system. Triangulation in the Y family system appears to have functioned to keep the dyadic relationship around which the system was centred fused in a coalition against a triangulated third member. This can be seen in the case of Mr Y and his mother, who formed the main fused dyad with the position of the triangulated third being taken by extended family members, the larger social system, as well as with Mr Y's step-father at various points in time respectively. These methods did not appear to be particularly

effective as can be seen in the way that the system eventually did collapse when Mr Y left the household.

As with the triads discussed above, this pattern appears to have been repeated in Mr Y's adult life and relationships, as in the case of Mr H, where the two formed a coalition against Mr H's family, possible rivals to the relationship, the social welfare system and Child Protection Unit, and ultimately, the murder victims. As with the original pattern, and in line with system principles such as homeostasis, this process of triangulation ultimately failed to sustain the system, as can be seen in the arrest and separation of Mr Y and Mr H in the end.

- The use of coalitions, alliances and complementary and symmetrical patterns of interaction to negotiate power in the Y family system (theme 9).

In terms of coalitions and alliances, the previous sections can be referred to for a discussion of how coalitions and alliances in the Y family system manifest themselves in the various triads and triangulation processes that occurred in the Y system. Suffice to say, the main coalitional pattern in the Y family system appears to have consisted of a fused relationship or coalition against other members of the system or other systems and outsiders to the Y family system.

Importantly, this coalition appeared to afford its members considerable power within the Y family system in terms of feelings of superiority and self-sufficiency, in spite of any marginal positions of powerlessness that these members of the fused relationship may have held respectively within other systems of which they were members. For example, mother Y held relatively little power as an individual member within the Y family system when she married father Y. It was only together with the heir to father Y, in the form of Mr Y, that her power increased in the system. Mr Y, held little power in the societal system as the son of a murderer or convicted and executed criminal, as well as a homosexual. However, in his fused

relationship with his mother (and together with Mr H at a later phase of his life), he appeared to have been made to feel superior and powerful.

With regards to interactional patterns, these can be discussed with reference to the pattern of complementary and symmetrical relationships in the Y family system.

- Complementary relationships.

There appear to be three significant complementary relationships in the Y family system, namely:

- between Mr Y and his mother;
- between Mr Y and Mr H; and
- between mother Y and Mr Y's stepfather.

These will now be discussed in turn with respect to how these impacted on power dynamics within the Y family system.

The complementary relationship between Mr Y and his mother initially consisted of mother Y in the one-up position, and Mr Y in the more dependent one-down position. However, as Mr Y grew older, he assumed the one-up position more regularly, with mother Y apparently becoming increasingly dependent on him for emotional support. As a result, a large proportion of Mr Y's role in the family system appears to have revolved around being in a one-up position as caregiver or provider in his close relationships (especially the fused dyad of which he was a part).

Additionally, mother Y's attempts to distance herself from the extended family system and develop a closer relationship with Mr Y in the form of a fused coalition against the extended family, may have influenced Mr Y's position in a complementary relationship with the extended family system, as well as all outsiders, and other systems. This relationship appears to have consisted of Mr Y assuming a one-up position of superiority in relation to

anyone outside of the fused, close relationship with his mother. The Y family system may have created an additional role for Mr Y, namely as being superior to, and more powerful than others.

In line with homeostasis, Mr Y may have felt impelled to continue performing this role, even with the death of his mother, in relation to the other fused relationships that he entered into with his partners. As this relationship was increasingly threatened, the system may have necessitated that this role be performed with increasing differential between one-up and one-down positions. In other words, as other systems impinged further on the viability of the fused relationship, it appears that it became more necessary that attempts to secure the one-up position of one of its members be more dramatic or extreme, which may explain the lengths that Mr Y went to secure this, namely by murdering members of external systems, thus apparently reducing their power. For example, when the Child Protection Unit members intervened in his relationship with Mr H, they threatened both his position of superiority (by portraying him as socially inferior on account of his sexuality), as well as his position as caregiver in the relationship. His sense of self may have been threatened on two levels, provoking the extreme actions that he took to reassert himself as powerful, dominant and able to take care of Mr H. This can be seen in the manner in which he committed the murders, as well as the desperation of his need to look after Mr H.

The fused nature of the relationship between Mr Y and his mother, and lack of any other significant relationships may have prevented a broader definition of Mr Y's roles as well as his self-identity in the system from developing. Mr Y's membership of the system appears to have been contingent on two very specific roles, namely, as superior or more powerful than others, as well as a successful caretaker and provider in his close relationships. Any experiences or relationships which may have questioned his capabilities in these two areas, may have been perceived as a disconfirmation of self and possibly aroused fears of self-

annihilation and loss of membership of the system in Mr Y, possibly provoking extreme measures to reassert himself as powerful and capable as a caretaker. This can be seen in his reaction to the arrival of his stepfather, which challenged his position as head of the household. Soon after the arrival of the stepfather, Mr Y took up bodybuilding and martial arts, as well as the occult. These may have all been attempts to reassert himself as a powerful and dominant member of the family system, out of fears of possible loss of his role and membership in the system.

The second instance where this pattern may be observed is after the death of his mother. Mr Y may have felt the threat of self-annihilation and collapse of the system due to his inability to fulfill the role of caregiver. This is evident in the depression that he suffered after the death of his mother. He may have attempted to reclaim this position in a number of other complementary relationships, in order to reclaim a sense of self, recreate the family system and prevent annihilation. This can also be seen in his choice of job, namely as a protector in the form of a railway policeman, and in his relationships, which all consisted of his partner occupying a one-down position of dependence.

Mr Y stated that

I regret the fact that I didn't manage to kill him [the step-father]...you see, it's almost like I owed my mother at least that for all the suffering and what she gave me, you understand...I wouldn't say that she spoiled me but she had little things that she always bought and stuff to show me she loved me...and she had a miserable life...I mean she wasn't a happy woman...the only happiness she had was me basically...and I felt that I sort of missed- I abandoned her at that difficult stage of her life by moving out of the house to stay on my own

As discussed above, the relationship between Mr Y and Mr H, appears to have satisfied Mr Y's need to be in a complementary relationship where he could occupy the one-up position as caretaker. This relationship also came at a time when Mr Y had lost his job with the police force, and with it, a source of confirmation of himself in the role of caretaker as well as the power and superiority that he drew from this occupational position. The ending of his relationship with Mr C, his first lover, also exacerbated this. As a result, the relationship may have been particularly intense due to Mr Y's increased need for self-confirmation with regards to his two roles.

As discussed in the previous section, the relationship with Mr H allowed Mr Y to perform both of his prescribed roles as caregiver and superior individual within the system that resulted. Attempts to preserve the power that he derived within the system as a result may have been particularly extreme, as in his evasion of being caught by police, as well as his violent behaviour while on the run - all possibly ways of demonstrating his superiority to others. Mr Y described the circumstances surrounding the third murder – "I decided to go to the toilet, I go to the toilet, come back, there this guy's got my co-accused there, now he's nice and pissed, you see and he's slobbering all over my co-accused and that makes me explode...and I attacked the guy, I immediately decided now I'm going to rob him and the whole trip."

The relationship between mother Y and Mr Y's step-father was complementary, with mother Y occupying the one-down position and Mr Y's step-father in the one-up position. Mother Y was submissive to Mr Y's stepfather. However, at times, when mother Y may have appeared to challenge his position in the relationship, Mr Y's step-father may have used physical abuse in order to reassert himself in the one-up position. This physical abuse may also have been intensified by possible competition for power in the family system on the part of Mr Y in relation to his stepfather and the role of primary caregiver. The use of physical

force to establish dominance and superiority may thus have been observed by Mr Y who used this method to assert himself at times when his one-up position was challenged in his future relationships.

Additionally, Mr Y may have been frustrated in this respect due to his limited ability to provide totally for his mother (that is, emotionally and financially) as a result of him still being at school and a minor. He may have developed a pattern of finding alternative ways to gain power over others and in the family system that did not involve financial means, such as may be seen in his discovery of the occult and introduction of this into the family system. This may be seen in his behaviour in the army where he would have been forced to assume the one-down position in relation to superiors. As a result, Mr Y found other ways in which he could reassert himself in the one-up position and feel superior or powerful in some way. This pattern can also be seen as a motivation for the murders that he committed in later life.

Mr Y stated that

18 months on the border- now there actually I should've known that something was wrong because something unusual started happening there...there was a bushman training camp...one sergeant said that if you see any dogs chasing horses...I must shoot the dog, because the horses are very important...and this somehow stuck in my head and every dog that I saw from then on, I shot...

- Symmetrical relationships.

There are two significant symmetrical relationships in the Y family system, namely:

- between Mr Y and his father; and
- between Mr Y and his stepfather.

These will now be discussed in turn with respect to how these impacted on power dynamics within the Y family system.

Given the pressure in the family system for Mr Y to follow in the footsteps of his father and take up father Y's role in the system, there appears to have been a symmetrical relationship between Mr Y and his father which consisted of Mr Y having to repeat and improve on the achievements of father Y. The failure of father Y to fulfill his role successfully in the family system appears to have affected this symmetry in that it escalated in the sense that Mr Y's achievements had to be considerably greater than those of his father in order for to compensate for the loss of resources and investment in the system. In other words, it appears that Mr Y had to outdo his father.

This appears to be evident in the way that Mr Y completed his Matric, and got a better job than his father had had. Ultimately however, the symmetry in the relationship appeared to revolve primarily around Mr Y's ability to successfully fulfill the role of caregiver for mother Y. Due to his early departure from the family system, father Y failed in this role. Mr Y may have felt pressure within the system (and specifically his subsequent fused relationship with his mother) to compensate for the loss of emotional resources in the system. This may also explain Mr Y's guilt after her death, which he felt was a direct consequence of his leaving the family household and not caring for her adequately.

This also explains the intense need that Mr Y may have had to look after Mr H in his later relationship. Mr Y may have viewed this as a second opportunity to prove himself better than his father, and as a result system pressure on his symmetrical relationship would have intensified, and attempt to outdo father Y increased in intensity similarly. This can be seen in the extreme nature of the measures taken by Mr Y to preserve the relationship such as going on the run, and committing crime to succeed in the role that father Y had failed in.

This symmetrical interaction between Mr Y and his father appears to also be reflected in the crimes that Mr Y committed. Whereas father Y murdered one individual, Mr Y murdered three individuals and committed other crimes such as assault and theft. Ultimately, the

societal system punished both in the same way for failing in their roles as members of society, namely, via the death penalty. This may provide further proof of the extent to which these individuals had isolated themselves from other systems, namely in that the symmetry in the relationship between Mr Y and his father, while operational in the Y family system, did not have a place within the societal system from which these individuals were detached.

Finally, there may have also been an escalation in the intensity of the consequences of failure in the sense that, when father Y died and ‘abandoned’ mother Y, she suffered a prolonged depression and withdrew further into the family system; however, when Mr Y left the household and “abandoned” his mother, she died.

The relationship between Mr Y and his stepfather appears symmetrical, largely on account of competition between the two to fill the role of primary male and head of the household in the Y family system.

As discussed in the section on complementary relationships, Mr Y was involved mostly in relationships that were complementary in the systems of which he was a member, with him occupying the one-up position, and another individual occupying a one-down position, whether this constituted a position of inferiority in the case of an outsider, or dependence, if in a close, fused relationship. When Mr Y’s step-father was introduced into the Y family system, he appears to have challenged the accepted relationship pattern, largely because he refused to occupy the one-down position with respect to Mr Y. Competition took place between the two, with Mr Y developing intense resentment for his step-father. However, being younger than his stepfather, and concerned for the well being of his mother, Mr Y could not express this resentment directly or challenge his step-father in anyway. Additionally, such a challenge may have possibly resulted in the collapse of the system, especially when the financial resources added to the system by the inclusion of Mr Y’s stepfather were necessary for the survival of the system. Mr Y could neither accept the one-down position in the interaction

with his stepfather however. As discussed previously, he may have drawn on other resources such as the belief that he was intellectually superior, gifted with supernatural powers, and a better emotional support for his mother, to make him feel that he was ultimately in the one-up position. Mother Y may have also had to take a more extreme one-down position in her interaction with Mr Y in order to maintain balance in the family system, through compensating for the possible loss of power that Mr Y may have experienced in his interactions with his stepfather.

In later life, when Mr Y did have the means to challenge similar symmetrical situations (such as with the Child Protection Unit, or other male individuals who he perceived to be challenging him to relinquish his relationship with Mr H), he may have been willing to resort to extreme measures to assert his physical and intellectual superiority in order to compensate for his relative powerlessness in his relationship with his step-father, in relation to mother Y. This may explain the excessive use of force and violence in the murders that he committed, and his motives behind many of the murders. One may argue that a significant motive behind the murder series that he committed, was ultimately to gain ultimate ascendancy in the symmetrical relationship with the stepfather by murdering him. Mr Y stated that "...that was the last one...that's when I decided well now...we're going to kill one more person – my step-father...so we go off to...[town in Gauteng Province] to get my step-father..."

- Summary of themes.

There appear to be a number of themes in the Y family system, with respect to emotional process, multigenerational patterns and relationships. It would appear that the Y family system was characterized by a large degree of anxiety (theme two) as partly a function of the low levels of differentiation in the system (theme one), reflected predominantly by the central point of the system being constituted of a fused dyadic relationship, detached from other

members of the system (theme three). This, in turn, appears to have contributed further to anxiety levels through fears of self-annihilation possibly experienced by members of the fused dyad in relation to the diffuse boundaries that characterized the relationship between them (themes four and six).

Additionally, there appear to be themes of homeostasis across generations of the Y family system maintaining patterns of anger management, attitudes to relationships and failure of individual members (theme five). Weak boundaries between poorly-defined subsystems (theme six) appears to be another theme that affected the Y family system, specifically in terms of further decreasing levels of differentiation (theme one) and increasing anxiety levels further (theme two) amongst other effects. Another important theme that seems to appear in the Y family system, is that of attempts of the surrounding societal system to recalibrate the Y family system with regards to societal norms on repeated occasions (theme seven). This also illustrates the homeostatic principle of the societal system.

In terms of relationships, triads and triangulation processes in the Y family system contributed to the strength of the fused, central relationship (theme eight), which also functioned as part of a repeated coalition pattern, as well as a number of complementary and symmetrical relationships that functioned to manage power within the family system (theme nine).

Mr Y's criminal behaviour appears to serve a function within all of these themes as has been reflected in the discussion above. Primarily, however, it would appear that the predominant role functions may have been concerned with:

- maintaining system homeostasis through attempts to maintain the superiority of the fused central dyad in relation to other systems;
- sustaining the Y family system through attempting to fulfill roles assigned by such a system and perceived as integral to the survival of that system;

- serving as a manner in which the Y family system could manage anxiety concerning the preservation of the fused central dyad and associated fears of annihilation or loss of identity of its members; and
- serving as a means via which the Y family system could prevent interference from outsiders or other systems into the fused, central relationship.

These are only a sample of possible functions that have been discussed in the above results, and many more may emerge from alternative perspectives on the data or repeated analysis in subsequent study. The sample highlighted in this discussion reflects those suggestions that the researcher feels are most strongly supported by the data. These will be addresses further in Chapter 8.