SINGLE FATHERS' EXPERIENCE OF FATHERHOOD

by

IZéLLE VAN ZYL

Submitted in partial fulfilment
of the requirements for the degree

MASTER OF ARTS
in
COUNSELLING PSYCHOLOGY

In the Faculty of Humanities
Department of Psychology
University of Pretoria

Supervisor: Dr. L.H. Human

August 2008

DECLARATION

Student Number: 96250951

I declare that SINGLE FATHERS' EXPERIENCE OF FATHERHOOD **is my own work and that all sources I have used or quoted from have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.**

Signature   **Date**

(I. van Zyl)

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

SUMMARY

SINGLE FATHERS' EXPERIENCE OF FATHERHOOD

By

I. van Zyl

i.	**Degree:**	**MA (Counselling Psychology)**
ii.	**Department:**	**Psychology**
iii.	**Supervisor:**	**Dr. L.H. Human**
iv.	**Date submitted:**	**August 2008**

In recent years various factors have contributed to the dissolution of the traditional family and the subsequent emergence of alternative family systems like the single parent family. Single parent families have become a reality in our society, a fact reflected by statistics which indicate an increase in the occurrence of single parent families over the last couple of years. However, the single parent family is still mostly perceived as consisting of the mother and her children, rather than the father and his children. Research narratives seem to support the single-parenthood-equals-single-motherhood plot in that there is an abundance of single parent accounts in the literature that mostly tell the stories of single mothers. Thus, fathers who find themselves in the position of single father seem to be marginalised in society and stories regarding their experiences are few and far between. The aim of this project was to explore and describe how single fathers in South Africa experience fatherhood by focussing on their personal narratives. Therefore the research inquiry for this project took the form of a narrative inquiry which provides a way to understand people's experiences by privileging their stories. The researcher conducted unstructured interviews with participants to produce languaged data which were analysed using a narrative analysis strategy. A narrative analysis aims to investigate not merely the content of the story, but rather the story itself and the way in which it

is told within a specific cultural and historical context. Hopefully, in the telling, listening and retelling of their stories these fathers' voices will become more pronounced in the research narratives and thus contribute to the body of knowledge pertaining to single fatherhood.

Keywords

Single parenthood

Fatherhood

Single fatherhood

Father-child relationship

Narrative inquiry

Experience

Cultural context

Historical context

Narrative analysis

Reflexivity

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER 1
ADVERTISING THE POST

In this introductory chapter I would like to extend an invitation to you, the reader, to join me in a recruitment centre where interviews with applicants are being conducted. The applicants are men who are applying for the position of **Single Father**. If you decide to join me on this metaphorical vocational journey, you are likely to become part of the 'interview' process, developing your own questions, answers, ideas and philosophies as we go along.

Here I provide you with further information to inform your decision of whether you want to partake in the process or not. Thus, this chapter provides a brief overview of the context in which this research project is located. It describes the research question and the aim of the project. Finally, it concludes with a summary of the chapters to follow.

CONTEXT

In the world of work, the recruitment process is set in motion by a need for human capital. In other words, we assume that circumstances changed somewhere in an institution, hence the need arose to appoint additional suitably qualified candidates to address the changed circumstances. The need for human capital leads to the creation of a new post, followed by advertising or headhunting procedures.

Similar to the creation of a post to fulfill a need in an establishment, it can be reasoned that the family system was created to fulfill a need in society. In the same way that we get different types of occupations to fulfill an assortment of organisational needs, we have different types of family systems to fulfill a variety of societal needs.

For example, the traditional family consisted of the breadwinner father, the stay-at-home mother and the children (Allan & Crow, 2001; Browning & Rodriquez, 2002). A typical need in this family type is the need for father to be free from other responsibilities in order

to have enough time to spend on occupational activities – hence his primary description as that of breadwinner. This family type also needs someone to take care of the children and to perform the household chores – hence the position of stay-at-home mother.

Economic and political changes have altered these needs. For instance, political changes in South Africa has led to an increased demand for female workers. Economic demands have necessitated higher expendable incomes per family and so the dual-career family was created. In this family type both the woman and the man pursue lifelong careers as well as establish a family life that often includes children (Gilbert, 1993).

Additional factors that have affected family life are death and divorce. Both factors have caused family life to alter and have led to the creation of yet another type of family – the single parent family. First, let us look at the influence of divorce on family life.

Prior to the South African Divorce Act 70 of 1979, rigid common law principles were enforced in the courts, which made it quite difficult to obtain a divorce. However, since the commencement of this act during the early eighties, obtaining a divorce has become a relatively simple procedure, since now either of the parties to the marriage only has to prove 'irretrievable marriage breakdown'. This term has been interpreted broadly and effectively it means that a divorce is granted to any person that feels that he or she no longer wants to remain in the marital relationship (Visser & Potgieter, 1994).

In short, the Divorce Act has made divorce an easy option – at least in legal terms. The divorce rate has soared over the last couple of years. According to South African statistics, 32 484 divorces were recorded in 2005, with 12 302 of these in the Gauteng area alone (Statistics South Africa, 2005).

It is clear that divorce has led to an increasing number of families dissolving in recent years. However, it is not only divorce that is responsible for the dissolution of traditional families; parental death has also been a contributing factor.

Parental death has become a specific concern in South Africa because we are faced with an additional dilemma with widespread implications in this country. The HIV/AIDS pandemic has had devastating effects worldwide, but the African Medical and Research Foundation estimates that almost 65% of the 40.3 million people that lived with the virus in 2005 were located in sub-Saharan Africa (AMREF, n.d.). This disease tears our families apart on a daily basis and leaves many single parent families in its wake at an alarming rate. Additionally, Morrell and Richter (2006) argue that the brunt of responsibility for AIDS orphans currently falls to women, whereas potentially more fathers could take responsibility for the growing number of maternal orphans.

The increase in divorce and death amongst parents has caused an increase in the creation of alternative family systems like the single parent family. Although other types of family systems have also been brought about by these factors, for example, child-headed households following HIV-related parental deaths (Van Dyk, 2001), an examination of these families did not fall within the scope of this study. Single parent families have become a reality in our society, a fact reflected by statistics which indicate that the occurrence of single parent families has increased over the last couple of years (Statistics South Africa, 2001). However, the single parent family is still mostly perceived as consisting of the mother and her children, rather than the father and his children. Thus, single parenthood is equated with single motherhood (Emmers-Sommer, Rhea, Triplett & O'Neill, 2003; Hardey & Crow, 1991; McKee & O'Brien, 1982).

Research narratives dealing with single parenthood seem to support the single-parenthood-equals-single-motherhood plot. There is an abundance of single parent accounts in the literature, but closer inspection reveals that they mostly tell the stories of single mothers

(and not fathers) and of children who grow up in single parent homes where the mother is the single parent rather than the father (McKee & O'Brien, 1982; Weitzman, 1996). Even though research regarding single fathers increased during the 1980s, the focus remained on the father-child relationship and not so much on the father's experience as an individual (Lewis & O'Brien, 1987).

Furthermore, the single-parenthood-equals-single-motherhood plot was not only supported by the lack of research narrative regarding single fatherhood, but it was also thickened by the South African legal system. It seems that the family courts favoured the creation of a single parent family headed by the mother, rather than one headed by the father. Fathers have been battling for recognition within the legal system and they have a noticeable lack of parental rights pertaining to obtaining custody of their children when compared to mothers (Gallinetti, 2006; Khunou, 2006; Watson, 1981).

But if the above scenario is indeed true, it has highlighted an interesting contradiction in our legal system: fathers' distinct lack of fatherly rights in terms of our family law system clashes directly with our supreme law, the South African Constitution. This happens in the following way. Firstly, the South African Constitution, Act 108 of 1996, and specifically Chapter 2 which contains the Bill of Rights Section 9, guarantees every South African citizen equal protection and benefit before the law. It further prohibits unfair discrimination practices against anyone on the basis of, for example, their gender, marital status, or sexual orientation. In effect this should mean that both parents, notwithstanding their gender, should have equal rights in terms of the legal system and access to or custody of their children. Secondly, Section 28 of the Bill of Rights makes it clear that every child should have the right to parental care, which surely includes nurturance by both parents. In effect this should prevent discrimination against either one of the parents in terms of custody hearings and visitation rights.

Notwithstanding the many challenges that single fathers face, a growing number of single parent families are now headed by the father and not the mother (Statistics South Africa, 2001). Thus, fathers who find themselves in the position of single father have an important role to play, yet they are marginalised in society and stories regarding their experiences seem to be few and far between.

I find myself back in the hypothetical recruitment centre, where certain positions that are so much in demand that my desk is piled with applications from prospective job seekers. Then there are those positions that are not very popular amongst job seekers, but on closer inspection they appear promising and exciting. These are the positions I am interested to explore further. I invite you to join me in the recruitment centre to further investigate these positions. In an attempt to satisfy my curiosity, the following question guides my inquiry for this project: How do single fathers experience fatherhood?

AIMS

The general aim of this project is to explore and describe how single fathers in South Africa experience fatherhood. In an attempt to accomplish this goal, I established four secondary aims. First, I review the research narrative that deals with the father figure, fatherhood in general and single fatherhood in particular. Second, I describe the research inquiry for this project, which takes the form of a narrative inquiry. A narrative inquiry provides a way to understand people's experiences by privileging their stories (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). Hopefully, in the telling of their stories, these fathers' voices will become more pronounced in the research narrative. In this sense I hope that this project will contribute to the body of knowledge pertaining to single fatherhood. Third, I conduct this research project as both the researcher and the third participant, together with two other single father participants. As a researcher I am interested in exploring the personal narratives of the participants' experiences whilst maintaining a reflective stance on my experience. Lastly, I report my understanding of the research narrative and personal narratives in the form of a research report.

OUTLINE

In this first chapter of the research report entitled *Advertising the Post* I have discussed the research context, the research question and the aim of this research project.

In the following chapter entitled *Job Description* I focus on existing research narrative dealing with fatherhood in general and single fatherhood in particular.

The *Curriculum Vitae,* chapter 3, provides a description of the methodology utilised in this project.

Chapter 4 entitled *The Interview* focuses on the analysis of the single fathers' narratives.

The report concludes with chapter 5, *The Appointment,* in which the findings of this project are summarised, and the limitations and the way forward discussed.

I have prepared you for the vocational journey ahead by contextualising the territory that we will attempt to travel, and I trust that you will join me in the recruitment centre and on the journey ahead that we will travel together. The following chapter, the *Job Description,* discusses the research narrative on fatherhood and single fatherhood.

THE JOB DESCRIPTION

This is our first pit stop on the vocational journey. We now find ourselves in the recruitment centre and our aim is to gather as much information as possible about the post we intend to fill. In order to gather the necessary information, we ask ourselves a range of questions about the post, and our aim is to explore all possible answers to these questions.

As such, in this section of the report I describe the available research narratives regarding single fatherhood. I begin by exploring the meaning of a father figure. This is followed by an exploration of fatherhood in general and a shift in focus to single fatherhood in particular. This section includes a review of existing research narratives dealing with the experience of single fathers.

FATHER

I begin my exploration of fatherhood by asking myself the question: What does the word *father* mean? A single word like *father* can be loaded with meaning. It can evoke various memories, emotions, attitudes, beliefs and values, depending on the individual differences of the person asking the question. This is because we story our lived experiences. According to the narrative approach we use language to assign meaning to our experiences and relationships (White & Epston, 1990). In this sense, a word like *father* can hardly have a neutral, objective meaning, as it contains the differences in our individual lived experiences.

Additionally, the focus on lived experience cannot ignore the influence of culture and history on these experiences. How we derive meaning from our experiences depends upon where we find ourselves at any given time. According to Burr (1995), all ways of understanding can be viewed as products of culture and history. Burr (1995) states that all forms of knowledge, including psychological theories and explanations, are historically and

culturally bound and constructed between people through their daily interactions with each other.

Therefore, our current knowledge or what we regard as the 'truth' will vary across time and culture, and as such there can be no single truth. Furthermore, our knowledge is not discovered by some objective process, but rather is created through people's constant interaction (Burr, 1995). This author further states that since social life changes continually, it is futile to search for a single everlasting definition or description of a person or a societal occurrence.

Nonetheless, it remains important to review the various definitions of a father that we encounter in research narrative. These descriptions, which I will review next, provide us with information on how fathers have been perceived over the years. They also highlight how these perceptions have differed over time, depending on the cultural context prevalent during that period.

FATHERHOOD

In *BABA, Men and Fatherhood in South Africa,* Morrell and Richter (2006) argue that fathering is a social role that can take many forms. Accordingly, they distinguish between being a father, which merely entails being the biological parent of a child, and fatherhood, which demands a social relationship with the child. To accept the fatherhood role does not require that one be a biological father.

Initially, a common practice in the literature was to equate fatherhood with biological paternity, especially in Western culture and society. However, due to biomedical advancements and fertilisation options, it has become necessary to distinguish between biological fathers, social fathers and legal fathers (Jacobs, 1995).

Accordingly, Anderson (1997) suggests that one can look at fathers through the eyes of social scientists who have divided them into four groups:

- recognised biological fathers
- hidden biological fathers
- social fathers (through adoption)
- social replacement fathers (raising a child to take one's place)

The above description of fatherhood is much broader than the conception of a father as merely someone who is biologically linked to his offspring. McBride and Lutz (2004) extend their definition to include any male person that has the potential to act as an important and positive influence in a child's life. Their description has broadened the horizons to include, for instance, non-marital partners, uncles or other male family members.

The different descriptions of fatherhood are important because the way in which a father describes himself can potentially influence the way that he experiences and enacts his fatherhood (Pleck, 2004). For example, if a father experiences himself as having only a biological or legal link to his child, he might provide financially, but lack a sense of obligation and motivation to provide everyday care and nurturing for his child.

The Good Father versus the Bad Father

This brings us to an alternative way of describing fathers and fatherhood, namely in terms of the good father/bad father dichotomy. According to Burr (1995), any phenomenon is defined not only by itself, but also by its opposite term. Thus, we only have a concept of 'good' because we can relate it to what it is not – in other words, its opposite: 'bad'. According to Pleck (2004), both history and the academic literature have divided fathers into these two broad categories.

The idea of dividing phenomena in two opposing categories is not new. According to Burr (1995, p.107), "Derrida's argument is that for thousands of years Western thought has been founded upon the logic of such 'binary oppositions', the logic of 'either/or'". It is therefore not strange to find this type of logic in the research narrative dealing with fatherhood.

The Good Father

Let us first focus on exploring the 'good father' side of the dichotomy. A contemporary description of a good father might entail the following:

- a father who provides for the family
- a father who is involved with the upbringing of his children
- a father who acts in a kind and caring manner toward his children
- a father who acts as the caretaker (not the patriarch) of the family

Although very broad, above description of a good father is informed by the prevailing cultural and historical context. As mentioned before, the narrative approach informs us that meaning is mediated by time and place (White & Epston, 1990). If we were to find ourselves in a different time and/or place, the description of a good father is likely to be very different from the contemporary description presented here. For instance, before the move towards gender equality, the ruling patriarchal system would have expected a good father to treat his male and female children differently. The male and female genders were not viewed as equal during that time, as females was mostly perceived as inferior to males.

According to Knibiehler (1995), the good father has had to obey a tough set of laws in order to protect the patrimonial system:

> In order to protect the patrimony he has to favour the eldest at the expense of the younger, the boy at the expense of the girl, the legitimate at the expense of the bastard, occasionally reluctantly. He does not allow himself the right to show feelings. Tenderness would be a sign of weakness: it would reveal their power to the child (or to the women). (p.209)

The point is that to be considered a good father at any given time, one has to act upon the accepted knowledge of that time. In the above example, a good father would have typically cultivated gender asymmetry as he continued to educate his children (Bronstein, 1988; Pleck, 2004). In contrast to this, a more recent conception of a good father has entailed the idea that a father has to be a role model to both his male and female children, encouraging concepts of gender equality and tolerance (Pleck, 2004). This notion of encouraging gender equality is embedded in current knowledge, which was created through research, and legal and societal regulations.

Clearly the 'truth' about being a good father depends on the knowledge available during a specific time. This is so because "our identity is constructed out of the discourses culturally available to us, and which we draw upon in our communications with other people" (Burr, 1995, p.51). More specifically, the truth is linked to the most dominant of the available cultural narratives. In turn, the dominant discourses (or cultural narratives) are likely to work in favour of the most powerful groups in society (Burr, 1995).

To illustrate, I refer back to the patriarchal society in which men dominate. In order to ensure that they remain in this powerful position, they are likely to encourage a cultural narrative of gender asymmetry. Such a cultural narrative continues to receive the status of truth. Any cultural narrative opposing the dominant cultural narrative is unlikely to receive similar support and is in danger of being undervalued instead.

The Bad Father

By the same token we have different cultural narratives about the 'bad father'. The description of a bad father entails ideas such as :

- a father who refuses to acknowledge paternity
- a father who rejects his responsibilities toward his children – especially financially
- a father who emotionally neglects his children
- a father who does not spend sufficient time with his children
- a father who abuses his children physically, emotionally or sexually

The above list is not exhaustive and each of us will be able to add our own ideas based on our own lived experiences. However, as with the description of a good father, this list is also influenced by time and culture.

To illustrate the influence of time and culture on our notions of the bad father we can look at child discipline as an example. The above list mentions that nowadays a father is considered a bad father if he beats his children harshly. This is in strict disagreement with conceptions of fatherhood during colonial times, which considered a bad father to be one who did *not* whip his children (Pleck, 2004).

Although descriptions of both the good father and the bad father have co-existed since the beginning of time, research narratives seem to have favoured the bad father prior to the 1970s, whereas the emphasis shifted to the good father during the early 1970s (McBride & Lutz, 2004). This state of affairs can easily but erroneously lead one to believe that there were more dead-beat dads during the seventies; and that men have recently changed to embrace fatherhood and the concept of the new father. Pleck (2004) argues that this is simply not the case, as bad fathers are neither a recent phenomenon, nor have they been brought about by higher divorce rates. However, Amato and Sobolewski (2004) caution that the increase in the divorce rate and the subsequent change in previously accepted family structures have undermined the current cultural belief that fathers should be more involved in their children's lives.

The research narrative has focused on the nature of a father's involvement with his children as a factor that distinguishes him as either a good or a bad father (Bronstein, 1988; Greif, 1990; Griffiths, 1997; Lamb, 1995). For one, financial involvement seems to have been an important indicator of the father's position on the good-father-bad-father scale (Pleck & Masciadrelli, 2004; Ramphele & Richter, 2006). Throughout history, if a father could and most importantly did provide financially for his children, it has made him eligible for membership of the good-father category. Thus, even though he might not have visited his children regularly or even at all, he remained acceptable in society's eyes. As long as he

honoured his financial obligation toward his family, he was good. However, the contemporary view is often that if a man does not pay child support or if he does not act as the financial provider or breadwinner of the family he is a bad father. Being divorced and not seeing his children is one thing, but the moment it becomes clear that the father is not keen on making any financial contributions, he instantly becomes a bad father in society's eyes.

The reason for the disapproval of fathers who neglect their financial responsibility might have something to do with social welfare and the state coffers. If fathers do not contribute to the financial wellbeing of their children (and their mothers), the mothers apply to state welfare programmes, which puts a burden on the state's coffers. The economical implications are clear; and so it could be argued that the state prefers individual fathers to foot the bill rather than having to deal with increased welfare costs themselves (Pleck & Masciadrelli, 2004).

I concur that a father's financial obligation toward his family is deeply embedded in (Western) society. Men that negate their breadwinner role to spend more time with their children and to take care of their household are still perceived with at least some degree of suspicion, if not total resistance. Thus, it seems apparent that providing financially has remained an important indicator of the kind of father men are perceived to be.

For now, let us go back to where the research narrative began to favour the story of the good father in the 1970s. As I have shown, bad fathers did not disappear during this stage, but there was a shift in research focus that had the effect of putting the good father in the spotlight. This impacted on the broader society who developed new expectations, specifically demanding more fatherhood involvement in the parenting arena. Therefore, although fathers' financial involvement proved important through the ages, their involvement as hands-on and nurturing parents to their children became the new standard.

The New Father

The focus on the good father has possibly contributed to the emergence of the 'new father' movement in more recent years. Instead of being described as a good father one can now be described as a new father (Hochschild, 1995). The recent conception of the new father can possibly be linked to the present interest in maleness and masculinity.

According to Stainton-Rogers and Stainton-Rogers (2001), masculinity or maleness has recently been considered the norm. As psychology has tended to study only deviations from the norm, masculinity remained largely unexplored. However, feminism began to challenge the notion that masculinity was unproblematic or normal and therefore in no need of study, which has led to the emergence of a broader conceptualisation of masculinity (Easthope, 1990; Mac an Ghaill, 1996; Stainton-Rogers & Stainton-Rogers, 2001).

Incorporated in the more recent conceptualisation of masculinity is the notion of multiple masculinities, which includes the concept of hegemonic masculinity (Hearn & Morgan, 1990). Connel (2000) notes that hegemonic masculinity has often been viewed negatively as "the opposite of femininity" (p.31) and is therefore representative of the traditional masculine idea of being tough, in charge and successful. Because of the perception of hegemonic masculinity as the traditional form of masculinity, other masculinities have been referred to as subordinated, marginalised or complicit.

In a recent study pertaining to stay-at-home fathers, Doucet (2004) questions whether fathers as caregivers represent hegemonic, subordinated or complicit masculinities. She was interested in the effect that fathers' caregiving could have on the concept of hegemonic masculinity. Subsequently, she has concluded that the fathers in her study did not merely reproduce or challenge hegemonic masculinity, but created new types of masculinities. This outcome builds on the conceptualisation of multiple masculinities. Thus, with the emergence of new types of masculinities came the conceptualisation of the new father. The essence of the new father is his hands-on involvement in the rearing of his children. His

involvement is based on his solid interpersonal relationship with his children, and not merely on his financial obligation toward them.

In this regard, Lamb's (1995) research focuses on the *relationships* between fathers and their children, putting the spotlight on the detrimental effect of fathers' absenteeism on their children. In this study, he underlines the importance of fathers' hands-on approach to child upbringing.

Yet, according to Hochschild (1995), the new man is not so new, at least not within the domain of certain cultures. She describes trends in African American families during the 1950s and 1960s that are very similar to the trend described above. Her research highlights the importance of considering the cultural and historical contexts that inform research narratives. In this regard Knijn (1995) argues that

> Changes in fatherhood should not be seen as a temporary choice made by a number of individual fathers. They form part of a historical process aimed at finding a new balance between and within all the aforementioned elements of fatherhood (p.17).

The Fatherhood Crisis

The changes that have arisen from the need to find a new balance, together with the demands created by the changes, has led some to theorists believe that fatherhood has been undergoing a crisis as fathers' roles have changed and society's expectations of fathers have evolved (Knijn, 1995).

Hochschild (1995) argues that the majority of men have been living with ideals that do not fit the reality of their lives. According to this author, middle class men in particular strive to be new fathers; however, the career system does not allow them to implement the changes necessary to become new fathers. Thus the ideal is there but it is almost impossible to act upon it. In a similar vein, Lamb and Tamis-Lemonda (2004) state that fathers' expectations of fatherhood could be limited by the reality of the roles that they are actually able to fulfil.

If fatherhood is indeed in a crisis, or at least undergoing a metamorphosis, what then would the future direction of fatherhood be, at least hypothetically speaking? Hochschild (1995) suggests that the future of fatherhood may reflect two trends. Firstly, there would be a trend towards more women joining the workforce, which in turn would lead to men having to help out more on the home front, which in turn would lead to stronger bonds between men and children. Secondly, there would be a trend for men and women to form less intense bonds, which in turn would lead to less intense bonds between men and children. These two trends may reflect the social reality where globalisation, female education and industrialisation have led to firmly entrenched capitalist values. In turn this has led to an increased demand for women to join the workforce outside of the home, forcing men to help out more at home and bettering the bond between men and children. Conversely, the increased divorce rate and pregnancies occurring out of wedlock has led to less involvement of men in the lives of their children. Ironically, this brings us right back to the initial distinction between good fathers and bad fathers, but with a startling twist: new fathers may now be much closer to their children than before, whilst the bad fathers may be more useless than before (Hochschild, 1995).

So although there has always been more than one way of being a father, Hochschild (1995) argues that the extremeness of the duality in trends of the good father and the bad father will be new; and indeed may also be an indication of future trends in fatherhood. Interestingly, it seems that Lamb and Tamis-Lemonda (2004) confirm Hochchild's description of the duality of fatherhood. They show that smaller changes have appeared in recent years in the fatherhood domain, whereby fathers have become either more devoted to spending time with their children or surprisingly resistant to their parental responsibility.

Overall though, fathers appeared to have accepted much broader and more varied roles during the last three decades than before, even engaging in activities previously perceived to be typical mothering activities (Lamb & Tamis-Lemonda, 2004). The upward trend in fathers embracing single parenthood in recent years is just one example of the more varied roles that fathers have come to consider as alternative fathering options.

SINGLE FATHERHOOD

In an attempt to move closer to an answer to the research question, this section explores single fatherhood. Similar to the previous section, I begin this section with a review of the various descriptions of single fatherhood that I encountered in the research narrative.

Descriptions

According to a commonly used definition in the research narrative, single or lone parents are described in terms of three criteria, namely that they:

- do not have a partner (either marital or common law)
- live with at least one child of their own under the age of 18
- are the main income recipient of the economic family (Kapsalis & Tourigny, 2002, p.8)

A less formal description is proposed by Griffiths (1997) who suggests the term "home parent", as it refers to the parent "who provides the children's main home – the place where the children spend more of their time and keep most of their personal possessions" (p.8). This description is broader than that of Kapsalis and Tourigny as it does not prevent a father from experiencing himself as a single parent based solely on aspects such as the age of his children or whether he has a partner or not.

Becoming a Single Father

The above descriptions of single fathers do not address the question of how they became single fathers in the first place. This may occur in a variety of ways. For instance, fathers provide the main home for their children because the children's mother has died or because she deserted the family for reasons such as remarriage, pursuing a career, or because she was not able to handle the children well. Fathers have also taken over the main care of their children after a divorce and a custody settlement that appointed them as sole custodian.

Griffiths (1997) divides the process of a father's gaining care of his children into three broad categories:

- forced acceptance of the situation
- peaceful negotiations between the mother and the father
- forceful legal pursuit by the father against the mother

Within these categories, further distinctions may be made. For example, in the case of forced acceptance, care of the children could be because the mother died or deserted the family.

Greif (1985) mentions another possible way of becoming a single father, though not legal. He reports that some fathers abduct their children and establish new identities in order not to be tracked by the mother who would ensure that they lose access to their children.

To summarise the possible ways of becoming a single father, I have divided them into two broad categories. The first possibility allows for choice. The fathers who have decided to take on the main responsibility of raising their children fall into this category. They have made the choice to become single fathers and then followed through on their choice, by either engaging in peaceful negotiations with the mother or by pursuing it more forcefully through a legal battle. Fathers who abduct their children also fall into this category, as it remains their choice to care for their children. The second possibility allows no or little choice in the matter. The fathers who are the primary caregivers of their children due to the mothers' death or desertion fall into this category.

At this point the reader may wonder why it is important to look at the different ways of becoming a single father. According to research, the way in which a man becomes a single father can potentially influence his subsequent experience of being a single parent. For instance, Greif (1985) has found that fathers who have been deserted by their wives differ from fathers who gain custody of their children in some other way. Firstly, these fathers were found to have been more involved in household tasks and the raising of their children

before the marriage breakdown, as their wives often shared the role of breadwinner. Secondly, these fathers tended to be less satisfied with their roles as single fathers. Specifically, they felt that they lacked solid relationships with their children and they perceived themselves as lacking in parental skills. Additionally, they reported encountering more problems coping with work and family life and were generally unsatisfied with their social life. In terms of the distinction between single fathers who have a choice and single fathers who did not have a choice, these fathers would fall into the no-choice category.

In contrast to this, fathers who fought for their children in a custody battle often report higher satisfaction with their parenting role and positive relationships with their children (Greif, 1985). This could be for a variety of reasons, not least that they experience their gaining custody as positive because they 'won the battle'; and also because they had time to prepare and get used to the idea of becoming a single parent. After all they got what they fought for. In terms of the distinction between having a choice and having no choice, these fathers fall into the choice category.

An additional factor that can influence the single fatherhood experience seems to be timing. Timing is crucial in that the more suddenly a father is confronted with assuming a full-time parenting role, the greater the adjustment seems to be. According to Hamer and Marchioro (2002), "mothers expressed lack of interest in parenting generally caught fathers by surprise. These fathers recalled feeling 'very panicky' at the prospect of assuming full-time parenting status" (p.121). These fathers initially struggled with the new dimension of being single fathers even though, for all practical purposes, they were fathers to their children before the change. They experienced a whole new dimension of fatherhood once they became single fathers.

The Legal System
Whether single fathers had much choice or not, most of them find themselves challenged by the legal system at some point during their journey. This is especially true for the fathers who long to obtain full custody of their children. Stories of legal battles and unsatisfactory

custody outcomes frequently arose in the research narratives (e.g., Anderson, 1997; Emmers-Sommer et al., 2003; Griffiths, 1997; Greif, 1990; Hamer & Marchioro, 2002; Watson, 1981).

In an attempt to understand this, the legalities surrounding parenthood, divorce and children's rights must be examined. In South Africa, the section of the law that regulates parent-parent and parent-child relationships is known as *family law*. The guiding principle in South African family law is that any decision that involves a child's wellbeing has to be executed in the best interest of that child (Visser & Potgieter, 1994). So, if custody is granted to a specific parent, it should only be done if it is has been proved to be in the best interest of such a child. But what does 'in the best interest of the child' mean? This is not determined so easily and there are no set guidelines in family law that provide a quick answer to this difficult question.

Family law, and specifically the Divorce Act 70 of 1979, makes provision for the reliance on expert witnesses such as social workers, psychologists, family advocates and family advisors to help the court determine the best interest of the child concerned. These experts are representatives of society and they are thus likely to adhere to the same beliefs and values as the rest of society. Thus, should we as a society buy into a cultural narrative that tells us that a mother is the more caring and nurturing parent, then we are also more likely to accept that it would be in the best interest of the child to remain with the mother post-divorce or separation. According to Pleck (2004), the debate on whether fathers could be naturally tender or not has been ongoing in the research narrative for many years. Looking from this vantage point may provide some understanding as to why fathers attempting to gain custody of their children feel that they have to prove that they are good enough parents, whereas judges more often than not seem to assume that mothers are naturally good parents (Greif, 1990; Watson, 1981).

It is relevant, however, that the above cultural narrative has not always prevailed. Before the twentieth century the father was the preferred parent, partly due to the high maternal

mortality rate and partly because of men's more powerful status and financial position in society at the time (Watson, 1981). Thus children were most often placed in the care of their fathers, although Griffiths (1997) points out that this responsibility rarely fell to the fathers alone, as extended family networks were the order of the day. The above examples do not only illustrate how dominant cultural narratives are socially constructed and maintained, but shows also how they affect society. What can be considered an acceptable practice today may prove to be quite unacceptable tomorrow. In this regard, Burr (1995) points out that we should be careful to assume that the dominant cultural narrative at any given time shall prevail forever. Are times changing once again?

With South Africa's new democracy in 1994, a new law was passed. The Constitutional Law, which is the most revered law in our country, guards our constitutional rights, which are contained in the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa 108 of 1996. Incidentally, this constitution has been described as one of the most advanced constitutions in existence in the world today. The Constitution, specifically Chapter 2 which contains the Bill of Rights, Section 9, guarantees every South African citizen equal protection and benefit before the law. It prohibits unfair discrimination practices against anyone on the basis of, for example, their gender, marital status or sexual orientation. Furthermore, the Bill of Rights, Section 28 makes it clear that every child has the right to parental care.

The effects of these provisions are enormous, because they qualify all existing laws, including all of the provisions in family law. Thus, if a court now has to determine the best interest of the child, it needs to do that on the basis of these provisions. This means that both parents, notwithstanding their gender, should have equal rights in terms of the legal system. It also means that neither parent should be discriminated against in terms of custody, as the Bill of Rights embrace a child's nurturance by both parents. More recently, the Children's Act 38 of 2005 was promulgated in June 2006, specifically to give effect to certain rights of children contained in the Constitution. For the first time, the Children's Act provides more direct guidelines as to what "the best interest of the child" means.

In the first place, it strongly encourages joint responsibility and involvement of parents. This means that courts should privilege joint custody arrangements, steering away from the previous practice of awarding custody to only one parent. Joint custody encourages the involvement of both parents in the upbringing of their children. In the second place, children themselves are brought to the foreground, as the Act encourages their participation in decisions affecting their futures. When deciding what is 'in the best interest of the child', Baueserman (cited in Emmers-Sommer, 2003) found that children who have contact with both parents post-divorce adjust better than children who found themselves in sole custody situations.

In similar fashion, Kaslow, Greif and Emad (1989) suggest that custody should be thought of in terms of residence and not in terms of one parent owning the child. Lamb (1995) states that "the absence of familial hostility is the most consistent correlate of child adjustment, whereas marital conflict is the most consistent and reliable correlate of child maladjustment" (p.153). A child who has a non-conflictual, supportive relationship with both parents after a divorce or separation is more likely to fare better psychologically. Thus, a father's marital relationship, whether it is by nature a relationship of quality or conflict, is linked to his fathering, his psychological functioning, his relationship with his child, and his child's adjustment (Cummings, Goeke-Morey & Raymond, 2004).

It is not necessarily in the best interest of the child for the mother to automatically be assigned sole custody of the children, as has often been done by the courts. Nor does it mean that the father necessarily becomes the preferred parent. Instead, according to Lamb (1995), "the differences between mothers and fathers appear much less important than the similarities" (p.153), insofar it concerns the influence they have in raising their children. He argues that the most important factor seemed to be the quality of the parent-child relationship in terms of supportiveness, warmth, nurturance, sensitivity and closeness rather than the gender of the parent. In many non-Western societies, the ideal parent is not necessarily related to the child, nor has ideal parenthood been gender-specific (Hochschild, 1995). Thus, a good or ideal parent in these societies may be either male of female, and a

biological connection to the child need not be a requirement. Nevertheless, what has become clear from exploring the legal narrative is that a father's relationship with his children has a crucial impact on their functioning. To obtain and maintain quality relationships with their children has often been the main reason and motivating factor that prompted fathers to challenge the legal system (Greif, 1985).

Career

Although the relationship with their children seems to be a priority for most fathers, their responsibilities usually do not end with this task alone. These men also have careers apart from their domestic lives, and often depend on these careers to provide their family's entire income. According to Russel and Hwang (2004), two dominant themes in work and fatherhood are portrayed. Firstly, fathers identify very strongly with their careers and the obtainment of paid employment. Secondly, the time they allocate to career development prevents them from spending sufficient time with their children. Effectively their careers interfere with the execution of the fatherhood role.

The research narrative on parenting and the workplace has therefore focused on parental leave and the demands that the workplace places on parenting (Russel & Hwang, 2004). This highlights a conflict of interest in society, where society demands that fathers spend more time with their children, but the work sector (also an aspect of society) demands that employees (including parents and single fathers) spend more time and energy at work.

One of the biggest adjustments for the new single father is to simultaneously cope with both work and childcare responsibilities. In Greif's (1985) study, in which 1136 single fathers participated, 80% reported difficulty handling these conflicting roles. This even led some of the single fathers to resign, be fired, or even go on welfare to stay at home with their children. Other studies (e.g., Emmers-Sommer et al., 2003) confirm the difficulty that fathers experience in this area.

Greif's (1990) research has not found a direct link between work difficulties and actual income earned. However, the fathers in his project earned average salaries and it was found that income only affected work stress negatively if it was reduced for whatever reason. In contrast to this, Hamer and Marchioro (2002) found that low-income single fathers often have jobs that do not support parenting responsibilities (e.g., truck driver). Their limited income, combined with their need to seek support from public aid, is likely to increases their work-related stress (Hamer & Marchioro, 2002). In concordance with this, a Canadian Paper for the Applied Research Branch found that "lone mothers have more than twice the incidence of low income of lone fathers" (Kapsalis & Tourigny, 2002, p.19). They conclude that one of the confounding factors for experiencing low income is when single parents care for children of preschool age, as this prevents them from engaging in the work force.

Nonetheless, many single fathers have indicated that a flexible work schedule like working flexi-time would assist them a great deal in coping with their jobs and childcare responsibilities (Greif, 1985; Hamer & Marchioro, 2002). Although relatively little research have been done on the topic of flexible work hours and fatherhood, allowing employees a more flexible work schedule seems to be a growing possibility. Countries like the United Kingdom and Australia have issued legislation that requires employers to at least consider a request from an employee who wants to work flexi-time in order for them to comply with their parenting responsibilities.

Relationship with the Children's Mother

Limited time and work responsibilities are not the only factors that can affect single fathers' relationships with their children. The father's relationship with the mother of his children can also affect his ability to handle conflicting roles. For instance, if his relationship with his ex-wife is good, a single father is likely to receive continued childcare assistance and financial assistance from his ex-wife. Hamer and Marchioro (2002) found that the father's relationship with his ex-wife seems to depend on the reason that the father obtained custody in the first place. If the father gained custody involuntarily, for example through desertion,

the relationship with the ex-wife has usually soured and she then seldom offers financial and social support (e.g., help with childcare). However, where the agreement is mutual, mothers often remain supportive and continue to make regular child support payments (Greif, 1985).

Household and Childcare

As if financial burdens are not enough, single fathers are often faced with the additional dilemma of maintaining a household. As mentioned before, the dominant cultural narrative in Western society tells us that women know best when it comes to raising children. Similarly, a cultural narrative exists that women know better when it comes to taking care of the household. Women who are competent around the household are often labelled as a 'domestic goddess'; however, there is no equivalent expression for men. In fact, men are often perceived as incompetent in dealing with household tasks.

This view is likely linked to the functioning of the traditional family. As mentioned in chapter 1, the traditional family consists of the wife, who takes primary responsibility for the household, and her husband, whose main responsibility revolves around breadwinning activities. As women have increasingly joined the workforce, the dual-career family has developed. In this family type both the husband and the wife work and contribute to the family income. As both partners share the breadwinning task, one would expect that they would also share the household chores. Instead, research indicates that the bulk of the housework is still being done by women (Allen & Crow, 2001; McBride & Mills, 1993; Powers, 2003; Renk, 2003). It is perhaps not surprising then that there exists a cultural narrative that men lack the experience to successfully maintain a household.

However, it seems that this narrative may not hold up when it comes to single fathers. Although many single fathers report an initial period of pandemonium in the beginning of their experience, the majority of them soon develop a routine and became accustomed to the challenges of running a household (Greif, 1985). Initially some may well utilise outside help by recruiting a housekeeper or involving family members, but this usually ends after

some time (Risman, 1986). In fact, in one study of 52 single fathers, less than 10% of them were found to utilise part-time domestic help (Griffiths, 1997). In contrast to this, a study of low-income fathers indicates that these fathers rely heavily on outside help from family members. This may be explained by the fact that they did not have expendable income available to recruit a housekeeper, nor were their working conditions such that they could rely on flexible working hours to accomplish childcare tasks first (Hamer & Marchioro, 2002).

Clearly other factors besides willingness or ability influence the accomplishment of domestic and childcare tasks. Working parents often struggle to make appropriate arrangements for childcare while having to perform their work duties. It could be argued that a single parent experiences double the strain to accomplish this feat. Especially younger children can be problematic, since they are simply not responsible enough to be left on their own for part of the day, such as after school. Nevertheless, it remains crucial to find a balance between work and childcare, as single fathers who are satisfied with their childcare arrangements also report greater satisfaction in other areas of parenting (Greif, 1985).

Social Life

This brings us to another important factor in the lives of single fathers. A single father needs to relax and have fun just as much as the next person, possibly even more so because of the high degree of stress he has to deal with on a daily basis. Establishing a social life amidst all their responsibilities seems to be an additional challenge that single fathers have to face. Griffiths (1997) argues that single fathers should make it a priority to look after themselves, as they are of little use to their children if they become emotionally distressed and mentally and physically unwell. Unfortunately their social lives may be hampered by the very same thing that increases their need for social contact and relaxation. The fact that they are single fathers means that they might be stereotyped as being on the lookout for someone with whom to share their caretaking burden. This can potentially hamper their

attempts to establish long-term relationships. Often these fathers also have to deal with their children's and their ex-wives' feelings towards new dating partners (Greif, 1990).

Other obstacles to leisure activities and relaxation include limited financial resources and access to childminding services. Although these problems are not unique to single fathers and are also experienced by single mothers, the sex of the parent can potentially influence the situation in a unique way. Specifically, some fathers report difficulty finding a baby-sitter because teenage girls are uncomfortable and wary of being alone with an adult male in the house (Greif, 1990).

Not surprisingly, many single fathers report loneliness to be a big problem in their lives. In fact, fathers who report greater social satisfaction are usually financially well-off and have older children who can take care of themselves (Greif, 1985; 1990). On a more positive note, Greif's (1990) comparative project found that the single fathers involved in his later project reported greater satisfaction with their parent-child relationships and their children's overall wellbeing compared to the fathers who participated in his first project in 1985.

The research narratives explored in this chapter so far have dealt with fathers, fatherhood and single fatherhood. The different paths that can lead to single fatherhood have been discussed, as have some of the challenges that single fathers face and the importance of their relationships with their children. The discussion has highlighted the many ways of understanding fatherhood and single fatherhood, depending on the time and culture we find ourselves in. However, it has not explored how single fathers in South Africa experience fatherhood. The following section explores this question.

RESEARCH

This section briefly explores the research dealing with the experience of single fathers in general and single fathers in the South African context. I will begin with an account of one

of the most recent research projects on this topic, followed by a discussion of other relevant projects.

Emmers-Sommer et al. (2003) utilised both quantitative and qualitative methods to explore the experiences of five single fathers and their communication practices with their children. Written accounts or narratives were produced in the form of responses to various open-ended questions. The responses were thematically coded. Additionally, the fathers were asked to complete three rating instruments related to communication, perceptions of family and attitude toward traditionalism.

The authors concluded that the single fathers valued their relationships with their children and that they felt they had reasonable communication with their children. Other emergent themes included their negative experiences with the court system and legal battles, as well as their difficulties in managing their conflicting roles of both breadwinner and childminder. These fathers also felt quite strongly that society should not judge them prematurely, but rather appreciate their unique circumstances. However, overall they reported satisfaction with their roles as single parents.

Although this project investigated the experience of single fathers, the researchers limited the fathers' narrative accounts by asking fixed, open-ended and closed-ended questions regarding their relationships. Additionally, the researcher requested the fathers beforehand to focus on their relationship with only *one* of their children and to keep this relationship in mind when answering all of the questions posed to them – thus adding another limitation to the possibility of a free response. This research project was not conducted in the South African context.

Hamer and Marchioro (2002) studied 24 low-income African American single fathers who obtained custody of their children, even though they had never been married to the mothers. These fathers were given custody without actively seeking it, mainly because of three circumstances:

- The mother's lack of interest in parenting
- The child's removal from the mother's household due to neglect or abuse
- The children actively sought to live with their fathers rather than their mothers

The researchers utilised grounded theory to analyse the transcribed interviews and coded the data thematically to identify common experiences and attitudes. They concluded that the fathers initially experienced a lack of confidence in their parenting skills and utilised family advice in times of uncertainty. However, their economic status seemed to be a complicating factor in the execution of their duties. They reported a continuous struggle with their caretaking duties, which was complicated by the type of work they were involved in as the lower paying careers seldom allow for flexi-hour work schedules. Their lack of finances also hampered attempts to pay for outside help; thus they relied heavily on family members and friends to assist with childcare and household duties. Overall the fathers in this study reported satisfaction with their eventual arrangements, despite an initial reluctance to become the primary custodians. They also reported a sense of pride with accomplishing the feat of single parenthood. However, Hamer and Marchioro's (2002) research was limited to low-income African American fathers and did not deal with single fathers in the South African context.

As far as single father research in the South African context is concerned, Davies (1993) performed an exploratory study to investigate the phenomena of paternal custody with the South African context. She utilised questionnaires to gather information from 25 fathers who had been granted custody by the Supreme Court. Although she concluded that her findings were largely in keeping with international findings, it remained an exploratory study that did not focus on the experience of single fathers per se.

In conclusion, the available research narratives dealing with single fatherhood involve a combination of qualitative and quantitative projects. These studies focus on the various difficulties that single fathers confront, as well as their eventual fulfilment and satisfaction with their roles. The majority of research projects explore foreign contexts and only one

exploratory study (Davies, 1993) deals with the South African context. Research narratives dealing specifically with the experience of South African single fathers are therefore lacking.

Currently we remain in the recruitment centre. We have gained some valuable insights whilst perusing the research narrative. However, we have to continue on this vocational journey if we want to increase our likelihood of making a successful appointment and answering the research question for this project. Thus we persevere, and at our next stop we find ourselves perusing the project's *curriculum vitae,* which explains the methodology followed in this project.

CHAPTER 3
THE CURRICULUM VITAE

This section of the report can be likened to the curriculum vitae of a prospective job applicant, but in this instance, it provides the reader with a detailed description of this research project's methodology. It describes the research inquiry for this project by detailing the research position, the participants, the research method and the ethics, validity and relevance of the project. Staying true to a curriculum vitae format, this section is divided into distinct subsections.

PREAMBLE
(CONTEXT)

This research project was situated in the broader academic context of the University of Pretoria. The University of Pretoria strives to be an internationally renowned tertiary teaching and research institution. The importance of research activities is reflected in their research agenda, which includes the following four aspects:

- Research should contribute and be aligned to local and international needs.
- Research should be built on researcher and research leader excellence.
- Research themes should address short-term needs as well as future needs.
- Research agendas should encourage unique competencies and skills within the institution (University of Pretoria, 2008a).

More specifically, this project was influenced by the University of Pretoria's Department of Psychology, which offers undergraduate and postgraduate training in psychology. The Department of Psychology's mission is to engage in activities that support excellence in teaching and research. Additionally, they aim to contribute to the community through their research activities (University of Pretoria, 2008b). There are three postgraduate training programmes in professional psychology. These are MA (Clinical Psychology), MA (Counselling Psychology), and MA (Research Psychology). The MA (Counselling

Psychology) programme has two specialisation areas, sport psychology and community psychology. This research project falls under the MA (Counselling Psychology) community psychology programme.

As a student at the University of Pretoria, and more specifically the Department of Psychology, I, the researcher, subscribe to their vision and mission. The importance of carrying out proper and useful research activity was firmly entrenched during my training at this institution and it has equally guided me during this research project. Next, I would like to introduce the reader to participants in this project, namely myself (the researcher) as well as the single fathers.

BIOGRAPHICAL DETAILS
(PARTICIPANTS)

Single Fathers

The participants consisted of two South African single fathers. For the purpose of this study, single fathers were broadly defined as men who had a child who was not living with the child's mother (due to death, divorce, abandonment or whatever reason). These fathers had the main responsibility of their child's physical, emotional and financial caretaking (Responsible Single Fathers, 2001). This definition incorporates Griffiths (1997) description of a single parent, namely, the parent with whom the child spends most of their time, and where the child leaves most of his or her personal possessions.

Only single fathers in the Gauteng region were considered for interviews. This was for practical reasons, as travelling outside of this area would have been too costly and time-consuming. Additionally, the participants had to be either Afrikaans or English first-language candidates. I decided on this criterion because I felt strongly that the participants should be allowed to tell their stories in their home language, which is more natural and comfortable than a second language. As I am fluent in both Afrikaans and English, it

allowed me to listen to their stories without the help of interpreters and translators. I felt that this arrangement would contribute to the overall quality of the narrative analysis.

Selection followed a non-probability sampling design. Specifically, consideration was given to purposive selection techniques. The participants were thus selected in terms of meeting the criteria of being single fathers and their suitability to provide the required information (Creswell, 1998; Kumar, 2005; Polkinghorne, 2005). It was not necessary to obtain a representative sample, as I did not aim to establish a generalisable finding or truth. However, exploring the narratives of more than one individual allowed me to compare their differing perspectives of their experiences (Polkinghorne, 2005).

Participant One – Kyle Stewart*:
The first participant, Kyle, was a 45 year-old single father who has two children under the ages of ten. Kyle was identified as a possible participant by a fellow researcher and colleague.

Participant Two –Louis van Eeden*:
The second participant was a 38 year-old single father of a 9 year-old daughter. Louis has cared for his daughter since the age of 19 months. He was informed about this research project by one of my colleagues and he volunteered to participate.

Researcher
I was the third participant in this project. I refer to myself as 'I' instead of 'the researcher' throughout this research project for a specific reason. Whilst carrying out this project I was not an objective outsider trying to find the truth, but an active participant in the process. I tried to remain focused on my own and the other participants' experiences as they unfolded. By referring to myself as 'I', I remind myself and the audience that my own subjective opinions and interpretations influenced this project throughout. The process of a narrative inquiry inevitably uncovers private narratives not only of the participants, but often also the researcher (Mishler, 1986). As Clandinin and Connelly (2000) state, "in narrative inquiry, it

  *Pseudonym for purpose of confidentiality

is impossible (or if not impossible, then deliberately self-deceptive) as researcher to stay silent or to present a kind of perfect, idealized, inquiring, moralizing self" (p.62).

At the time of the project I was a student in the MA (Counselling Psychology) programme (2006-2007). As part of the requirements for completing the MA (Counselling Psychology) degree, I had to successfully complete a mini-dissertation, which took the form of this research project. Although nothing could entirely prepare me for this journey, I did find my previous academic training and work experience very helpful. During my undergraduate studies, I completed modules in *Research in Social Sciences* and *Research Psychology* at the University of South Africa. These courses focused on basic research skills and psychological research methods. Thereafter, I completed postgraduate courses in *Research Psychology*, *Descriptive Statistics* and *Qualitative Data Analysis* at the University of Pretoria. Although nothing could have completely prepared me for this journey, I do believe that the above academic training, together with the practical experience obtained during my academic Master's year (2006) and my internship at the Tshwane University of Technology (2007) assisted me greatly during the implementation of this project.

QUALIFICATIONS
(POSITION)

In order to answer the research question, which deals with the experience of single fathers, I decided on a qualitative approach. More specifically, I pursued a narrative inquiry as it is the best way to understand and make meaning of experience (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Czarniawska, 2004; Polkinghorne, 2007). Narrative inquiry is consistent with a qualitative approach to research, which has the aim of understanding 'what it is like' to experience certain events or situations (Polkinghorne, 2005). Accordingly, the qualitative researcher is concerned with the quality of experience, rather than trying to establish a cause-and-effect relationship (Willig, 2001).

In postmodern narrative inquiry the search or inquiry is not focused on certainty, fact and finding an objective truth. Rather the focus is on describing human experiences which include all things human, our attitudes, perceptions, prejudices and views. Oakeshott (cited in Clandinin & Connelly, 2000) describes any human perceptions, attitudes, views and prejudice as the counterparts to experience, but also as potential threats of certainty, which explains why modernistic research tends to reduce these element in an attempt to uncover truth, certainty and fact.

What follows now is a description of the narrative position, as I have come to understand it. I explain it in terms of the following headings: Experience; Experience and Narrative; History; and Culture.

Experience

As human beings, we experience life every day. Our knowledge of the world and what we know about life is gained through our everyday lived experiences (White & Epston, 1990). The narrative researcher is not only concerned with the quality of experiences, but also with the meaning that we attribute to our experiences (Whitley, 2001; Willig, 2001; Polkinghorne, 2007). Therefore, if we ask the question "Why narrative?" we answer it "Because experience" (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p.50).

According to Clandinin and Connely (2000), Dewey describes the term experience as something that is based on both the personal and the social. A person may be understood as an individual, but also through their social interactions with others and with the world around them. Additionally, Dewey describes experience as continuous because a present experience will lead to another experience in the future, although the same experience can also be influenced by experience from the past. History, culture and language are all considered important factors in human experience and perception (Willig, 2001) and are addressed next.

Experience and Narrative

The underlying assumption in narrative inquiry is that, as individuals narrate their experiences, they create and communicate meaning (Mishler, 1986). Therefore, narrative can be seen as the central means by which we understand and make sense of our experiences in the social world (Clandinin & Connely, 2000; Czarniawska, 2004; White & Epston, 1990). Narratives are viewed as the middle ground where experience, culture and history interact (Sclater, 2003). Our narratives provide us access to our experiences because they are representations of our experiences (Riessman, 1993). This is why stories may be told from many different perspectives; and the way in which we tell these stories says something about the way we see the world (Roberts, 2000). Riessman (1993) states that "nature and the world do not tell stories, individuals do" (p.2).

Thus, we utilise language to organise, plan and comprehend our everyday experiences. In return, the meanings that we attribute to these events shape the way we live our lives (Freeman, Epston & Lobovits, 1997). Utilising language implies an interactive process – we share our experiences with others through language and as they do the same to us, we produce ever-changing realities (Freedman & Combs, 1996). Through the interactive telling, listening and retelling of our stories we shape our lives and those of others. The narratives are not merely accounts of events, but they actively shape our identities (Riessman, 1993; White & Epston, 1990; Wiles, Rosenberg & Kearns, 2005). As such, we have to remember that language does not only include the verbal, but also the nonverbal. Freeman et al. (1997) state that "the map of verbal description does not fully represent the territory of lived experience, including the richness of visual symbolic process, feelings, emotions and sensations" (p.147). They emphasise that we should consider the whole person – mind and body – when we reflect on lived experiences. In this sense we can say that we are able to experience things because we can narrate what happens to us and because we are embodied.

Experience, Narrative and History

Time brings about change. Our bodies change, our minds change and the world around us changes as time passes. We cannot experience these changes without time. The narratives that we employ to make sense and meaning of these experiences incorporate the temporal dimension (White & Epston, 1990). Narratives can be viewed as accounts of an experience that has a beginning, middle and an end (Merriam & Associates, 2002). According to White and Epston (1990), "since all stories have a beginning (or a history), a middle (or a present), and an ending (or a future), then the interpretation of current events is as much future shaped as it is past-determined" (p.10). Therefore a narrative constitutes a sequence of events connected by a temporal dimension (Wiles et al., 2005).

According to Clandinin and Connelly (2000), experience can be understood narratively, when it is thought of in terms of a "three dimensional narrative inquiry space; with temporality along one dimension, the personal and social along a second dimension, and place along a third" (p.50). Temporality refers to time (a past, a present and a future) and place refers to culture. For these authors, temporality is an important term since it not only captures the idea that experience has a temporal dimension, but also that collective experiences are temporal. In other words, when we study experience, the here and the now is given meaning, but the meaning changes over time and is influenced by meanings and experiences from previous times. At the same time, the meanings are influenced by larger contexts like our cultural context.

Experience, Narrative and Culture

Our narratives are always intertwined with a set of life stories about our world (Riessman, 1993). Therefore, our narrated experiences can be viewed as products of specific cultures and specific historic time periods, which are constructed between people during their social interactions with each other (Burr, 1998; Schwandt, 2000). According to Riessman (1993), "studying narratives is additionally useful for what they reveal about social life - culture 'speaks itself' through an individual's story" (p.5). Consequently, we make sense of our experiences through interaction with our specific social and cultural contexts.

However, narrative tellings also create cultural traditions, and by the same token sustain and disrupt these traditions (Gergen, 1998). Freedman and Combs (1996) state that "we think about how cultural stories are influencing the way they interpret their daily experience and how their daily actions are influencing the stories that circulate in society" (p.16). In other words, as individuals we do not tell our stories in a vacuum, because we do not exist in vacuums ourselves either. We are surrounded by other people and even if we are not in their midst we are surrounded by their voices – they are part of us through a system called culture. Burr (1995) adds that our knowledge of the world is constructed through the interactions between people on a daily basis. We construct so-called shared versions of knowledge as we engage with each other continuously. Accordingly, she argues that "language too has to be more than simply a way of expressing ourselves" (Burr, 1995, p.7). Thus, our narratives tell us something about our culture, but at the same time, through telling it, we create and sustain it.

PREVIOUS WORK EXPERIENCE
(MATERIAL)

This section points out the project's 'formal qualifications' by introducing the process that was followed to produce, transcribe, analyse and report the material. It is explained by way of the following phases: Narrating; Transcribing; Analysing; Reporting and Reflexivity, which were loosely based on Riessman's (1993) phases for a narrative analysis that consists of Telling, Transcribing and Analysing.

Phase 1: Narrating

This phase involved the production of languaged data or material. In an attempt to answer the research question, single fathers were invited to participate in unstructured interviews. According to Fontana and Frey (2000), the unstructured interview "attempts to understand the complex behaviour of members of society without imposing any a priori categorization that may limit the field of inquiry" (p.653). The researcher therefore formulates questions as the interview progresses and no set interview schedule exists to guide the interview

(Miller & Brewer, 2003). The open nature of this type of interview allows the participants the freedom to relate their narratives as they prefer (Mishler, 1986). This is an important requirement, because a narrative analysis revolves around the participants' narrative and the way in which they tell it to try and make sense of their lives (Riessman, 1993).

The overall non-directive nature of the unstructured interview assists in creating an atmosphere of conversation where participants are encouraged to narrate their full experiences (Miller & Brewer, 2003; Willig, 2001). As the researcher, I tried to facilitate a conversation rather than an interview. I did this by meeting each participant in an environment that was comfortable yet free from interruption. In order to enhance the quality of the data, the physical setting in which the interview takes place should be quiet and without distractions to allows for proper recording and a relaxed atmosphere (Cresswell, 1998; Crossley, 2000).

Before each interview I reminded the participant that I would be recording the interview and I explained how the recording device worked. I used a digital tape recorder to record the conversations and it was placed on a table between us. This procedure provided a more complete record than note-taking (Crossley, 2000) and freed the researcher to take part in the conversation (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000).

Even though I attempted to create a conversational atmosphere, I was reminded that the listener (myself) could influence the telling just by being the listener (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, Mishler, 1986; Polkinghorne, 2005). Riessman (1993) explains it as follows: "The story is being told to a particular people; it might have taken a different form if someone else were the listener" (p.11). In this regard Mishler (1993, p.105) states that "interviewers and interviewees are both aware of and responsive to both the cultural and research contexts within which a particular interview is located". This could lead to fixed expectations from both sides, perhaps influencing the participant to provide something 'factual' or 'scientific' instead of just telling their stories unencumbered. Nevertheless, I strived to overcome this by establishing a "participatory relationship" (Clandinin &

Connelly, 2000, p.110), by contextualising my interest in their stories and by being open to their questions and concerns.

Phase 2: Transcribing

The recorded interviews were transcribed by me. The reason for this was to allow me to use every opportunity to become more familiar with the texts. I took the utmost care to note silences, laughter, crying, pauses, and non-lexical words like "uhm" or "oegh", as I felt these represented an additional form of data that contributed to the overall quality of the analysis. According to Riessman (1993), the different ways in which researchers transcribe their research material lead to different interpretations thereof. This emphasises that the transcribing phase involves interpretative practice and not merely the straightforward transferring of the spoken word into the written word (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Polkinghorne, 2005). The transcript is at most a partial and incomplete narrative (Riessman, 1993).

Phase 3: Analysing

Narrative analysis was used to analyse the material. It aims to investigate not merely the content of the story, but rather the story itself and the way in which it is told (Riessman, 1993). In this sense, narrative analysis was ideally suited to understand and interpret the "layers of meaning" (p.90) produced during the interviews (Wiles et al., 2005).

During this phase I based my analysis on Gergen's (1998) criteria for constructing a narrative in contemporary culture. My decision to centre my analysis on this approach was mainly practical: I was a novice in the research domain and even more so in the field of narrative analysis. Focussing on only one approach gave me the opportunity to gain some confidence with the analysis phase, instead of stumbling amongst different approaches without obtaining a good understanding of any single one.

- To begin this process I immersed myself in the texts. I did this by reading and re-reading the field narratives. Next I had to extract the research text from the field

narratives. Clandinin and Connelly (2000) describe the development of research texts as a complex and layered process. I have to concur, as I did not by any means experience it as a smooth, step-by-step process.

- In order to select the research material, I first created a numbered timeline of all of the events in the field narrative. Next I selected the events that I wanted to include in the research material. This decision was informed by "questions of meaning, social significance, and purpose" (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p.120). In this regard I found Gergen's (1998) criteria for constructing a narrative in contemporary culture very helpful. According to Gergen (1998), most narratives have an endpoint or a goal. A person tells a story to make a point. I attempted to uncover the endpoint of each participant's narrative by asking questions like: "What is the participant trying to tell me?" and "What is his point?" Thus, by asking questions of significance I established which of the events contributed significantly to the endpoint, and were to be included in the research text.

- Once I established the endpoint I focussed on its evaluative aspect. According to Gergen (1998), each endpoint has an evaluative component which is linked to our cultural understanding. Thus our narratives usually portray either a positive or a negative message, which contextualises the events and the ordering of events.

- At this point I continually referred back to the timeline of events to see how the participant selected certain events to contribute to endpoint and the evaluation thereof. Thus, keeping the three dimensional enquiry space in mind, I asked questions about the historical and cultural significance of events to contextualise them (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000).

- Focussing on the ordering of events helped me to understand how one event linked with another (Wiles et al., 2005). According to Gergen (1998), ordering by means of temporal, linear sequence is probably the most widely used way of ordering events in a narrative. The timeline of events that I constructed attempted to replicate the temporal ordering that the participants utilised as closely as possible. Therefore the timeline helped me to establish what Gergen (1998) refers to as causal linkages. According to him, a narrative usually includes explanations by selecting events that

are linked to each other in a causal fashion; in other words, 'this happened and then that happened'.

- During this phase I also tried to understand how each event was situated in a particular social and cultural context (Riessman, 1993). I did this by noting and analysing any metaphors and cultural narratives that the participant used to establish the endpoint.

I take note of the fact that other appealing approaches (e.g., Labov, Yans-McLaughlin, cited in Riessman, 1993) could have contributed significantly to the quality of the analysis; however, as mentioned, I decided against their use for practical purposes.

Phase 4: Reporting

The data were written up in the form of this research report (mini-dissertation). The final phase of the analysis will take place when the reader peruses this report. In the process of reading it, the reader is bound to form his or her own meanings and interpretations of the narrative accounts. This happens because meaning is created in the interaction between people (Burr, 1998; Riessman, 1993). In this sense the reader will interact with a number of people when reading this report, as it contains the voices of the researcher, the participants and contemporary society.

Phase 5: Reflexivity

Reflexivity was not so much a phase as a persistent awareness of my contribution to the research process. This included the impact that the narratives had on me, the construction of meanings and the impossibility of remaining outside of one's subject matter during the research process (Willig, 2001). When a narrative analysis is done, researchers act as co-author of the narratives through their interpretation of the data (Czarniawska, 2004). According to Mishler (1986), the researcher becomes a storyteller who constructs a story's meaning by transcribing, analysing and interpreting the participants' stories, thereby becoming a co-author of the stories. Riessman (1993) concurs when she describes the narratives as being "born again in an alien tongue" (p.14).

The narrative accounts in this report represent my interpretation and understanding in collaboration with the participants. It is not intended to be a fixed truth and is open to different interpretations by the reader (Riessman, 1993). Any interpretations should be treated tentatively as we know that other interpretations and understandings exist alongside (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000).

OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS
(ETHICS)

As stated before, this research project was done within the academic boundaries of the University of Pretoria. My proposal for this research project was approved by the University's Ethics Committee of the Faculty of Humanities before I commenced. The Ethics Committee requires that data be stored for a period of 15 years, after which it will be destroyed.

All of the participants were asked to sign a participant consent letter (Appendix A) before commencing with the interviews. Apart from providing sufficient information regarding the purpose of the project, the consent letter clearly addressed the issues of voluntary participation, confidentiality and withdrawal from the project at any time if needed. Confidentiality was maintained throughout the project by using pseudonyms to protect the participants' identities. Additionally, any personal details or events that could identify a participant were omitted in the final report.

An additional ethical consideration was the welfare of the participants. As this project touched on issues of a sensitive nature it was important to contain these issues as far as possible. Therefore, I gave the participants the option to arrange for follow-up sessions to discuss any feelings and thoughts that might have arisen from our discussions.

Lastly, the participants were given the option to review the publication for final approval before I submitted it.

In order to judge the quality of a research project it needs to be evaluated. The criteria or evidence utilised during the evaluation process will depend on the type of knowledge claim that a researcher wants to establish (Polkinghorne, 2007). In qualitative research, specifically a narrative inquiry, there is no set of standardised rules against which one can easily make claims about the quality of the knowledge (Riessman, 1993). Nevertheless, aspects of quality need to be addressed by exploring issues of validity, reliability and generalisability.

Polkinghorne (2007) addresses the two main threats to validity in narrative research. Firstly, he mentions the difference in participants' experienced meaning and the stories they tell about it. This concern is similar to Stiles's (1993) criteria of reliability, which refers to the trustworthiness of the data. In narrative inquiry, stories are the evidence of people's experience, but they also have limitations which can affect validity. A story or personal narrative is never a mirror image of the actual events that were experienced (Riessman, 1993). The narrative that gets told can be influenced by language limitations, a limited ability to self-reflect, or a resistance to revealing true meaning due to social desirability and undue influence of the interviewer (Polkinghorne, 2007).

In the second place validity can be influenced by the difference between the actual narrative and the interpretation thereof (Polkinghorne, 2007). Stiles (1993) refers to this as the trustworthiness of interpretations. In narrative inquiry, researchers usually provide support for the validity of their interpretations by citing evidence from the text, without discarding the possibility of other plausible interpretations (Polkinghorne, 2007; Riessman, 1993).

Finally, the issue of generalisability needs to be addressed. The aim of a narrative inquiry is not to establish a generalisable truth, rather the aim is to explore and scrutinise individual experiences and meaning (Riessman, 1993; Mishler, 1986). Nevertheless, Riessman (1993)

points out that persuasive theory has been developed through narrative inquiry despite limitations of this method like small sample size and unrepresentative sampling.

In an attempt to contribute to the overall trustworthiness of this project, I made use of a table format that allowed me to include a description of my interpretations with supportive text citations and relative research narrative pertaining to the text, while remaining true to the participant's sequencing of events. Although this format tends to contain a large amount of information, I believe that it contributed to the overall transparency by allowing readers to judge the plausibility of my interpretations, while still allowing them to make their own interpretations (Polkinghorne, 2007). Furthermore, my reflections are made available to the reader in the form of a letter addressed to each participant. Additionally, I obtained regular individual and group supervision which included reciprocal discussions of datasets with fellow researchers in an attempt to deepen my perspectives on the narratives and their interpretation.

In this section of the report I provided a structured outline of the research inquiry. The participants were introduced, followed by a discussion of how a narrative inquiry informed the execution of this project. Next, I reviewed the process involved in producing, analysing and reporting the research material. I concluded with a discussion of the ethics and relevance of this project. In the next chapter, entitled *The Interviews,* I discuss the research findings.

CHAPTER 4
THE INTERVIEWS

We have now reached a crucial stage on our vocational journey – the interview stage. In this section, I discuss the analysis phase of the research project. The aim of this section is to create a space where we can explore the narratives of the candidates together, bringing us closer to the final appointment.

I present each analysis in a table format, together with a reflective letter addressed to each participant. Each table consists of a left column which depicts the participant's narrative and a right column in which I discuss the analysis and applicable research narrative.

THE NARRATIVE OF KYLE STEWART*

Kyle is a 45 year-old single father of two children, aged eight and ten. At the time of the interview he had been his children's primary caregiver for almost three years.

THE NARRATIVE OF LOUIS VAN EEDEN*

Louis is 38 years old and he has been a single father to his nine year-old daughter since she was 19 months old.

*Pseudonym for purpose of confidentiality

NARRATIVE ANALYSIS: PARTICIPANT 1: KYLE

Synopsis of Kyle's Narrative	Analysis and Research Narrative
Kyle was born in Johannesburg and his parents divorced when he was five years old. He was brought up by a single mother as he had little contact with his father who had since died. He completed school and university and then went to the army for compulsory military service. Thereafter he started a career which initially involved extensive travelling. He was then employed by another company where he still works today. (Event 1)	In this first section Kyle briefly portrays his background. He introduces two secondary narratives (storylines), the one being the secondary narrative of *being different* and the other that of *being normal*. The secondary narrative of *being different* can be seen in Kyle's words when he says "my parents were divorced when I was about five and so I was basically raised by my mom. I think there was probably about three or four occasions that I saw my father after that before he passed away." Thus, Kyle is telling me that his family is different to the norm – i.e. he grew up in a single parent family and he had almost no contact with his father as a child. The secondary narrative of *being normal* is portrayed in the following words by Kyle, when he states "Uhm, went to school, went to varsity. Uhm, had to go to the army as people had to do in those days." Thus, he tells me that apart from being different, he managed to accomplish all the 'normal' things in life, like school, university and the army. Additionally, Kyle seems to build on the narrative of being normal when he states "So ja, that's my background – very boring." I get the impression that Kyle wants to make the point that despite having had somewhat of an unusual upbringing (compared to others at the time) he was still just an ordinary ("boring") guy. According to Gergen (1998), most narratives are told to get a point across. I understand that Kyle is already establishing the point of his narrative in this first part of it. It is important to note that this part of Kyle's narrative on single fatherhood directly relates to the research question. In this section, by mentioning that he grew up in a single parent family, Kyle seems to set the stage for his narrative on single fatherhood .
After Kyle had briefly described his background (Event 1) he continued his narrative, and mentioned that he got married. At this time his career entailed	It seems that the two secondary narratives of *being different* and *being normal* are continued by Kyle in this part of his narrative. The secondary narrative of *being normal* is illustrated in the following quote: "I got married…then we had my son in '98 and my daughter was born in 2000." Kyle is telling me that

extensive travelling, and his wife went along. His son was born seven years later and then two years after that his daughter was born. (Event 2)	he got married and had children. These events seem to fit with the dominant cultural narrative in our society. The secondary narrative of *being different* can be deduced in Kyle's words when he says: "Ja, it was after we were married that I travelled for business." This can be viewed as an alternative way of doing things as people tend to settle in one place after getting married.
Kyle explained that it was a deliberate decision to have their children only much later during their marriage, as he wanted to accomplish certain things first. (Event 3)	It seems that Kyle is continuing the secondary narrative of *being normal* when he explains that "we were married for seven years before we had children….that was a deliberate decision….we… I certainly had things that I wanted do to. I wanted to do bit of travelling...and…my ex-wife was kind of quite happy to come along with all of those." As mentioned before, this description fits with the dominant way of doing things - to marry and then have children. However, during the interview I picked up that they only had their children seven years after getting married. Kyle seemed to want to explain to me why this was normal for them. He tells me that it was a 'deliberate decision'. Kyle also mentions that his wife was 'kind of quite happy to come along' with this arrangement as well as with them living abroad.
Kyle told me about his divorce. He had a business trip planned and he arranged for his wife and children to join him for a family holiday beforehand. As their holiday abroad neared the end and Kyle had to start work again, his wife told him that she wanted to move out. Once they got back to Johannesburg, his wife moved out and they were divorced approximately 18 months later. (Event 4)	It seems that the narrative of being different and being normal continues in this section of Kyle's narrative, which deals with the divorce. At first it seems that he builds on the narrative of *being normal* in that he continues this narrative from where they are still a 'happily married' couple, about to go on a pleasant family holiday together. However, then introduces the narrative of *being different* when he mentions "…and when we got back to Paris for business, my wife said no, she wanted to move out…..And ja, I guess it was about a year and a half after that the divorce finally went through." Although divorce has become common, it is still perceived as being *different* to the norm of marriage. Additionally, the narrative of *being different* that was begun in Event 1 (in terms of Kyle growing up in a single parent household) seems to be built upon in this section, as Kyle's divorce now forms the starting point for his becoming a single parent. Thus, the narrative of difference seems to be

	continued across generations.
	I find his use of language interesting in this section as it suggests an element of shock related to the news of the divorce. For instance, he tells me: "It came as quite a surprise to me" and "I was not expecting it at all" – which emphasises the suddenness of it all. My impression is that Kyle is using language in this manner to convey a certain message, that this divorce was a pivotal event in his life. This part of Kyle's narrative on single fatherhood directly relates to the research question, and provides a preamble to his becoming a single father.
After Kyle briefly described his divorce (Event 4) he provided more detail about the custody ruling. When Kyle's wife moved out of the home, he took no action for six months. However, when she moved in with a boyfriend, Kyle filed for divorce and custody of their children. Although his application was not contested by his wife, the legal system intervened and referred his application to the family advocate. The investigation by the family advocate took a few months, after which a final order of joint custody was made. Despite the joint custody order, both children remained with Kyle. They've visited their mother at	It seems that the secondary narrative of *being different* is continued by Kyle in this part of his narrative. The secondary narrative of *being different* is suggested in the following quote: "I was the one who filed. It should actually have gone through as an uncontested divorce, but the judge decided that fathers shouldn't have kids. So the judge referred it to a family advocate. Ja, then eventually the family advocate said that we should have joint custody." In the South African context the accepted practice has been to award sole custody to one parent (usually the mother) as opposed to joint custody. However, in Kyle's case joint custody was awarded, which makes him seem different from the norm yet again. Research narrative: Kyle's view of the legal process and how it treated him as a single father conveys a feeling of unfairness. This is one of the dominant narratives in contemporary research, as many fathers complain about unsatisfactory custody outcomes and their battles with the legal system (see chapter 2, pp. 19-22).

irregular intervals. (Event 5)	
Next, Kyle referred to his parenting style. For Kyle, being able to empathise with children is built into adults; however, there have been many things that he had to learn as well. Kyle initially asked the help of a parenting coach, and he also reads books on parenting. (Event 6)	It seems that the secondary narratives of *being different* and of *being normal* are continued in this part of Kyle's narrative in terms of his parenting style. The secondary narrative of *being normal* is continued here: "I think as you know, being able to empathise with kids and that is something that's built into adults. You wouldn't have kids if you didn't like kids to some extent." I understand that Kyle positions himself as a 'normal' parent like any other, who has an innate sense to deal with children 'like parents do'. The secondary narrative of *being different* is suggested in the following quote: "I did go to her (a psychologist) after the divorce and say to her, look, I probably need some help with some parenting skills, I wouldn't mind a parenting coach…." I understand that Kyle positions himself as somewhat different to other parents in this part of his narrative, as he tells me he needed help with his parenting skills.
Kyle's narrative on parenting continued as he positioned himself as slightly on the permissive side when it came to parenting. (Event 7)	In this part of Kyle's narrative he seems to continue the secondary narrative of *being different*. The secondary narrative of *being different* is reflected when he says "I'm probably maybe slightly on the permissive side as a parent. I do kind of let kids maybe get away with a lot. So the rules are fairly relaxed in our house." Being a permissive parent is different to the societal ideal, which tells us that parents need to maintain a certain level of strictness with their children. This section of Kyle's narrative (Event 6 and 7) directly relates to the research question. In this section he is telling me about his experience of being a single father, specifically his parenting experience. It seems that certain aspects of this experience are normal to him, whilst other aspects are experienced as different to the norm.
After describing his parenting style (Event 6 and 7), Kyle described his childhood. Kyle feels that he brought himself up as he had a working mother who was	The two secondary narratives of *being different* and *being normal* are continued by Kyle in this part of his narrative, in which he revisits his childhood. The secondary narrative of *being different* is implied when Kyle says, "I basically raised myself." His upbringing was different to that which the dominant culture prescribes, since he did

not available during office hours. Apart from a lift club when he was younger, he transported himself around with a bicycle, let himself into the house and made his own lunch. He therefore did not believe that strict rules were necessary in one's upbringing. (Event 8)	not have the constant care and supervision of a mother at home. This narrative of difference could be said to have had a negative effect on Kyle, who lacked what are considered to be important childhood needs, such as his mother's attention. The secondary narrative of *being normal* is portrayed when Kyle states "So I don't think that one needs to have very, very strict rules." I believe that Kyle relates his childhood to get me to understand something about him as a parent in the present. He wants me to understand that even though he was raised by a single parent, he still turned out 'normal'. He seems to link this event in the past with the event of his being a parent now, as he tells me that he lacked strict rules and supervision as a child, but he grew up without them anyway; therefore he does not think one needs very strict rules. He seems to be normalising both his different childhood and his permissive parenting style (Event 7). This part of Kyle's narrative also directly relates to the research question as Kyle's experience of single fatherhood seems to have been influenced by his experience of growing up in a single parent household. This continues the intergenerational pattern that begins in Event 1.
However, he had come to see the benefit of having parents around to teach certain things, like money management and temper control, as he had to learn these things by himself only much later in life. (Event 9)	In this part of the narrative the secondary narrative of *being different* is continued in that Kyle acknowledges the *effects* that a 'different' childhood has had on his life. The effects of this secondary narrative is implied when he says, "I can see things that, you know, that I had to learn later in life which maybe some kids did have the benefit of parents teaching them earlier….Time management….I mean my mom never really had much of a chance to teach us things you know, basic money management and that. You know, I had to learn that myself and probably quite late in life. I had a very short temper as a kid and kind of got away with it." The *effect* of growing up differently (without continuous input and supervision from both his parents) seems to point toward a shortfall in Kyle's life, in that he was not able to acquire certain skills early in life as other children did. This part of Kyle's narrative relates directly to the research question. In this section of his narrative Kyle elaborates on the effects of growing up in a single parent household.

After describing his childhood, Kyle discussed his children. Kyle's children were both short-tempered and he wanted them to learn to control their temper sooner rather than later. He has tried to teach them temper management by making certain house rules. (Event 10)	The secondary narrative of *being normal* seems to be continued in this section of Kyle's narrative, which deals with his children. The secondary narrative of *being normal* is suggested in the quote: "I have two kids with short tempers and I think they need to learn to get it under control, now rather than later, 'cause it is quite difficult later on. So that is one of the rules in our house." Kyle is establishing rules which counter his permissiveness. This is probably more in line with a culturally dominant parenting style. (Also see Events 7 and 8.) It would seem that establishing a narrative of normalcy in terms of his children's lives has helped them to acquire certain skills that he lacked in his childhood. In the following section of Kyle's narrative (Events 11 to 13), there seems to be an ongoing play of the *effects* that the two secondary narratives have had on his children's lives. The narrative of *being normal* is mainly used to refer to the context of Kyle's children and the present time and it seems to have the *effect* of them acquiring certain things or skills. The narrative of *being different* is mainly used to refer to past events, in the context of Kyle's childhood; and it seems to be described in terms of the impact of creating a shortfall or lack of certain skills.
Kyle referred again to his childhood. As a child Kyle had only one friend at preschool and one friend at high school. (Event 11)	As in Event 10 above, the two secondary narratives of *being different* and *being normal* seem to be continued by Kyle in this part of his narrative, which deals with the *effect* of these two narratives on their lives. The effect of the narrative of *being different* is suggested when he says: "I had a very, very small group of friends and I'm not sure that that was entirely healthy. You know, I had one friend at preschool and one friend at high school and that was it." I believe that the lack of friends represents a shortfall in his past, especially since he says: "One probably need more influence than that".
Kyle tries to make sure that his children have a bigger group of friends than he had. (Event 12)	However, immediately after relating this event Kyle seems to illustrate the effect of the narrative of *being normal* on his children, by saying: "So I try to make sure that my kids have a kind of a

	bigger group of friends… I think that helps with you know, social skills."
Kyle learned things later in life that most other children learn in their teens. Although he performed well at school, he lacked organisational skills, which limited his performance. The same lack of skills also limited his performance at university and during his early career. (Event 13)	In this section, Kyle seems to continue with the effects of the two secondary narratives of *being different* and *being normal* on his life. The secondary narrative of *being different* is continued when Kyle says: "There are things that as I say, I found, I think I learned when I was, like, in my early 20s that a lot of other kids learned in their early teens." Thus Kyle sees himself as different from other children of the same age in that he lacked certain skills, such as organisational skills, for he says: "When I look at how well organised some of the kids were… if I had had a little bit of that level of organisation, I probably would have done even better. And the same when it came to varsity and I think to an extent the same in my working career." At the same time Kyle counters the narrative of being different with the narrative of *being normal* for he says, "I mean…I did well at school. I mean, I finished 2nd in matric, I got 4 distinctions in matric, so I didn't do badly." Thus, Kyle seems to have managed well despite being different from other children. To me this fits with the point that he is trying to make, namely that despite being different in some aspects, his life was quite normal. This part of Kyle's narrative directly relates to the research question. In this section he continues to tell me about the effects of growing up in a single parent household (also see Events 1, 4, 8, 9 and 11).
The divorce taught Kyle much about time management and resource management. (Event 14)	Kyle continues with the secondary narrative of *being different* in this part of his narrative. He extends the narrative of difference that was applicable to his school, university and working life (Event 13) to his marriage. He does this by referring to his divorce. The secondary narrative of *being different* can be seen when Kyle says: "Uhm and bizarre as it actually might sound I think the divorce actually taught me a lot of things about time management and resource management." I understand that he is telling me that he was different

	to other people in that he lacked certain important skills even during his marriage. He lacked these skills and then he acquired these skills in the process of getting divorced, which might be bizarre to him because the very thing that now makes him different to the norm once again (namely the divorce) teaches him skills that are 'normal' for adults to have.
This was because during his marriage, Kyle was the main breadwinner. However, when he divorced he suddenly had three roles, namely breadwinner, housekeeper and full-time parent. (Event 15)	The narrative of *being different* and *being normal* seem to be continued in this section as Kyle elaborates on his marriage. The narrative of *being normal* is suggested in the quote: "When you're the breadwinner and you've got a wife who's just studying and living at home and all the rest of it, uhm, you tend to think, my job is to earn enough money for us to have a decent standard of living". It seems that it was 'normal' for Kyle to focus on his career during his marriage as breadwinners tend to do. The narrative of *being different* can be seen in Kyle's words when he says: "All of a sudden when you're a single dad, you're the breadwinner and you're running the household and you're parenting the kids. So you had one job and now all of a sudden you have three and each of them is, like, full time." There was a past (pre-divorce) in which he experienced himself in a certain way. Now there is a present (post-divorce) and he experiences himself differently. This reflects change. I understand that Kyle uses temporal ordering deliberately to emphasise that there have been many changes in his life. I also understand these changes to be the effect of his back and forth movement between the secondary narratives of being different and being normal. The movement leads to another narrative, namely a narrative of *change*. The narrative of change seems to supports the point that Kyle tries to make, specifically in terms of providing the evaluative aspect thereof. According to Gergen (1998), narratives have an evaluative component, which is linked to our cultural understanding. In Western society change is mostly perceived as something positive – especially in terms of acquiring something where there was 'lack of that something' before. A narrative that introduces change will often be evaluated as a positive narrative. I believe that Kyle is telling me about all the changes in his life to get me to understand that there have been many positive aspects in their lives, despite doing

Before the divorce Kyle used to do all the maintenance around their house himself. After the divorce he had to choose between doing those tasks and spending time with his children. He chose to pay someone else like a plumber to get the work done. A similar situation occurred at work, where he previously struggled with time management and delegating, but has since managed to stick to office hours and to delegate tasks to colleagues. (Event 16)	In this section of Kyle's narrative he seems to continue with the narrative of *change*. The narrative of *change* is evident in Kyle's words when he says: "So I've got a lot more brutal with what gets cut away…and I think that's something that I only learned after… maybe after the divorce. Maybe my life was a little bit one-dimensional before the divorce." Thus, since the divorce, things have changed for Kyle. Research narrative: Research narrative deals extensively with the impact of single parenthood on career and vice versa. It also deals with aspects of single fatherhood and its impact on the household and childcare activities. (See chapter 2, pp. 23-26.)
Now Kyle wants to teach his children to prioritise tasks and to live a balanced life. (Event 17)	It seems as if the narrative of change is continued in this part of Kyle's narrative when he refers to his children. The narrative of *change* is implied in the quote: "And that's something that I would like my kids to learn, is that one has to have priorities and balance is actually quite important in life." I understand that Kyle wants the changes in his life to also have a positive impact on the lives of his children.
Kyle referred to more changes that happened post-divorce. Both Kyle and his wife were hoarders during their marriage; however he has since mastered the art of simplicity, which was also something he had as a child.	The narrative of *change* seems to be continued in this part of Kyle's narrative. The narrative of *change* is suggested when Kyle says, "I guess the other thing that I have learnt since the divorce is….ah simplicity. I think I probably used to be a bit of a hoarder of stuff and had an ex-wife who loved to hoard and collect stuff. And when I was smaller I wasn't like that and it's actually been quite nice to get back to that."

	It seems that the divorce again stands out as a pivotal moment of change as Kyle relates what his life was like pre-divorce, and what it is now like post-divorce.
(Event 19)	
Kyle's children's bedroom is not yet as organised as the rest of the house. (Event 20)	The narrative of *change* seems to be continued in Kyle's story, which now relates to his children. The narrative of *change* is suggested in the following: "So ja, that was also something that was good, you know, like getting rid of the clutter and getting to a nice, organised house. The children's bedroom is still quite not there." After telling me how positive simplicity has affected his life, he then tells me that his children have not yet accomplished it. By making this statement, he seems to say that he would like them to get there sometime in the future. I believe he is telling me he that he wants to impart the impact of the changes in his life to his children in some way. It seems that he intends to continue with the positive *effects* of the narrative of change in the lives of his children.
Kyle referred to more post-divorce changes. Kyle's household was now neat and organised whereas before the divorce there would always be unopened mail on the dining room table and outstanding accounts. Now Kyle has an organised system in place. (Event 21)	The narrative of *change* seems to be continued in this section, which now becomes interwoven with the secondary narratives of *being different* and *being normal*. The narrative of *change* is suggested when Kyle says, "That's the way that things get done now, it works much better. It's a little bit more organised and I was never that way before. I had to become that way. I feel I'm a lot more effective with my time now than when we were married." Kyle positions past events against present events to indicate how things have changed. He also continues the positive evaluation with phrases like: "It works much better". The above narrative seems to be interwoven with the secondary narratives of *being different* and *being normal*. Both of these narratives are suggested in the phrases: "It's a little bit more organised and I was never that way before." and "I'm a lot more effective with my time now than when we were married." Thus, it seems that his experience in the past was different to the norm in that he lacked certain skills. However, his experience at present is marked by having acquired these skills, which imparts a sense of normality (i.e. its 'normal' for adults to be able to prioritise and organise their mail and accounts).
After Kyle described the changes in his life post-divorce, he	In this section of Kyle's narrative he seems to continue with the narratives of *change*, of *being different* and of *being normal*.

hypothesized whether making these changes earlier could have saved his marriage. (Event 22)	All three narratives seem to be contained in the following: "I'm…maybe if I'd been like that when we were married…I don't know, maybe we would still be married today." I understand that Kyle is saying that if he had been 'normal' (thus if he had been more organised and effective) when they were married, he might still be married today (and not divorced, which is different to the norm).This seems to build on the narrative of *being normal*. At the same time it builds on the narrative of *being different,* as he was not organised and effective during their marriage and as he has since divorced. These words also seem to build on the narrative of *change* as they highlight the effects of the changes in his life, albeit hypothetical in this part of his narrative.
Kyle told me about his children. Kyle had a good relationship with both children; however, his son's strong will and temper tantrums marred their relationship. His son's relationship with his mother was also complicated by the same issues. Kyle also struggled with temper problems as a child, therefore he wanted his son to learn to control this as soon as possible. (Event 23)	The secondary narratives of *being normal* and *being different* seem to be continued in this part of Kyle's narrative, which deals with his relationship with his children. The narrative of *being normal* is reflected in the phrase: "I think I have a good relationship with him (Kyle's son). We still do have a bit of a power struggle at times… He is getting better as he grows older." And "I think her (Kyle's daughter) and I get along quite well. I think she….she does respect me." The narrative of *being different* is suggested when Kyle tells me, "But I think at ten years old he still behaves like a six year-old. The psychologist tells me he is ADHD, that's the way that he will be." I understand that Kyle is saying he has a normal relationship with his son, despite some difficulties. In any event it is 'normal' for parents to experience some difficulties as their children grow up. Kyle's positioning of the two secondary narratives seems to build toward the point that he is trying to establish in his narrative, namely, that despite being a single father and being different, their lives are pretty normal. Research narrative: The research narrative deals extensively with father-child relationships, which makes it an important aspect in the single fatherhood domain. (See chapter 2*,* pp. 14-16.)

After telling me about his relationship with his children, Kyle told me more about his ex-wife's relationship with his children. Ideally, Kyle wanted both children to have good relationships with their mother, although this was not always the case as his ex-wife seemed to have a better relationship with their daughter than with their son.

(Event 24) | The secondary narratives of *being normal* and *being different* seem to be continued in this part of Kyle's narrative.

The narrative of *being normal* is implied when Kyle tells me that "she (Kyle's daughter) gets along very well with her mom as well." He seems to emphasise that they have a good, 'normal' relationship.

The narrative of *being different* can be seen when Kyle tells me, "She seems to be her mom's favourite…she does get spoiled rotten by her mom and that makes my life tricky sometimes. As you know, my ex-wife will say 'I refuse to see Jamie*'(Kyle's son) and nothing I do will convince her to take Jamie." It seems that Kyle tries hard to establish a 'normal' relationship between his children and their mother; however, his son currently barely has contact with his mother, which creates an unusual situation for Kyle and the children. |
| Kyle reminisced about how his father figure role has changed. Kyle used to be the disciplinarian in the house before the divorce, while his wife was the nurturer. After the divorce Kyle stopped disciplining his children and he has only recently begun to discipline his children again.

(Event 25) | Kyle seems to continue the narrative of *change* in this section.

The narrative of *change* is suggested when Kyle says, "It is, because kind of the roles that we had before the divorce… Mommy was the one who did all the kissing and cuddling and Daddy was the one who did all the discipline." Again Kyle describes himself and his ex-wife in the past (pre-divorce), which presents a certain reality that is different from the one he presents of himself in the present (post-divorce). This indicates change, with the divorce being the pivotal moment of change. |
| According to Kyle, the best thing about having this new relationship with his children was that they now did things to please him rather than to stay out of trouble; and he enjoyed seeing the children so happy. | Kyle seems to continue the narrative of *change*, together with the secondary narrative of *being normal*.

The narrative of *change* is implied in the phrase: "I think probably the nicest thing is the kids will actually do things to please me rather than to stay out of trouble. Ja, so now being able to motivate the kids with the prospect of some sort of a reward rather than everything being on the negative side." Thus, Kyle again contrasts his past relationship with his children with his present |

(Event 26)	relationship with them to illustrate the changes that have occurred since he divorced. The narrative of being *normal* is suggested in Kyle's words: "And the friends that they've got... the parents of the friends that they see all say to me that the kids seem to be much, much happier now than they were three years ago. Each of them has about four friends that they see regularly. So that makes me feel good…that the kids are happy, that they are enjoying school." I understand that Kyle is telling me that his children are 'normal', happy children, despite their situation being different. It seems that this part of Kyle's narrative dealing with normalcy is intertwined with the narrative of *change,* as it relates how his children have changed from the past (pre-divorce – not being so happy) to the present (post-divorce – being happy). This section of Kyle's narrative (Events 23-26) directly relates to the research question. In this section Kyle elaborates on the relationship he has with his children.
Kyle explained society's view of single parenthood. He has found it strange that single fathers are applauded for their efforts while single mothers are just expected to get by as single parents. (Event 27)	In this section of Kyle's narrative he seems to continue the secondary narratives of *being normal* and *being different*. The narrative of *being different* is suggested in the quote: "I said to people that one thing that's actually a little bit bizarre, is that, ja, I'm a single dad and people say, 'gosh you do so much as a single dad', and I look at single moms who do just as much and nobody seems to be absolutely incredulous that a single mom has managed that. But they all seem to be amazed that a single dad could manage it. I don't know why that is, maybe that's just our society that kind of thinks that moms are coping with a family and dads don't cope with a family." I hear that Kyle is saying society still perceives single fatherhood as being very different to the norm. The narrative of *being normal* is also implied in the phrase: "and I look at single moms who do just as much and nobody seems to be absolutely incredulous that a single mom has managed that….maybe that's just our society that kind of thinks that moms are coping with a family and dads don't cope with a family." I hear that Kyle is saying that single motherhood has to a large

	extent been normalised in our society, especially when compared to single fatherhood, which is not experienced as 'normal'.
	This part of Kyle's narrative on single fatherhood directly relates to the research question. In this section he describes single fatherhood and the impact of society's views on single father families.
	Research narrative: This section of Kyle's narrative relates to the research narrative that deals with the cultural narratives on single parenthood. (See chapter 1, pp. 1-4.)
Kyle believes that men tend to struggle with balance, whereas women tend to find that balance easier. Society therefore perceives women to be more capable parents. It took some effort for Kyle to maintain a balance whereas he believed that this comes naturally for most mothers. (Event 28)	In this part of his narrative Kyle seems to continue the secondary narratives of *being normal* and *being different*, which is at simultaneously intertwined with the narrative of *change*. The narrative of *being normal* is suggested when Kyle says, "I would say that most men probably struggle with a balanced life. Whereas I think that most women find that a little bit easier. Which is maybe why people have the perception that women find it easier to cope with a lot of balls in the air, whereas men tend not to." I hear that Kyle is saying it is 'normal' for men to struggle with balance in life and it is 'normal' for women to multitask and maintain that balance. The narrative of *being different* seems to be intertwined with the narrative of *change* when Kyle tells me that "it has taken a conscious effort for me to keep everything in check." I understand that Kyle is saying he is different to other men, because he has to make that effort to become more balanced. At the same time I understand that this indicates a change from how he was before (pre-divorce). He seems to continue to build on the narrative of *change* when he tells me: "…always before you could do kind of the things you felt like doing….Now you have to say no to the things that you want to do, that you feel like doing, you need to put those at the bottom of the list".
Kyle summarised the effects that single fatherhood has had on him. He felt that he changed on a	In this final part of Kyle's narrative it seems that he ties together the narrative of *change*, the narrative of *being different* and the narrative of *being normal*.

personal level and that other people could testify to that change. (Event 29)	The narrative of *change* is implied in the quote: "People do say that they're amazed how well I've coped and how much I've managed to get done. At the office people have commented that I am more effective at work than I used to be." I understand that Kyle is demonstrating how things have changed for him over time – from the past to the present, since he divorced and became a single father. However, Kyle also seems to explain the above narrative of *change* by building on the secondary narratives of *being different* and *being normal*. The narrative of *being different* is suggested when Kyle says: "…maybe, it sound a bit silly to say, maybe the trauma of the divorce actually, you know, sort of gave me room to grow, taught me things which, ja maybe, I should have been able to learn earlier in life." I understand that Kyle is saying that being different (i.e. being divorced and a single father) has in the end taught him to be 'normal', as it allowed him to learn certain things that other 'normal' people perhaps learned earlier in life. However, Kyle does not wallow in self-pity because he had a different upbringing. Instead he seems to have embraced being different as providing opportunities of growth, which he now wants to pass on to his children, like most parents. Thus, the narrative of *being different* seems to flow into the narrative of *being normal*, which is evident when Kyle tells me, "I kind of, then, want some of the lessons I learned later in life to impart them to my kids now." I understand that Kyle is saying that he wants to provide his children with the opportunity to learn things now when they are supposed to learn it, rather than being different like he was when he learned them only much later in life. This final part of Kyle's narrative relates directly to the research question as Kyle portrays his experience of growing up in a single parent household (that begins in the very first event) which he then links with his experience of being a single father.

Reflective Letter: Participant 1: Kyle

Dear Kyle

Your story about single fatherhood impacted me in a specific way and I would like to share it with you in this letter.

During our conversation I got the impression that you have been leading a life that happened to be quite different to the norm. Initially, as a child you grew up in a single parent household during a time when it was probably not the norm to do so. As an adult you now found yourself in yet another alternative family setup – being a single father.

However, as I spent time reading through our conversation, I began to understand that you were telling me that despite doing things differently at times, your life happened to be quite normal. I heard you saying that doing things in an alternative way did not make your life less important and less valuable than the next person's. In fact, I understood that you were trying to show me how valuable it has been for you to do things differently. You indicated how things have changed in your life since your divorce and how these changes seemed to have a positive effect on your life and those of your children. Overall, I got the impression that you seemed to have been able to make sense of this traumatic event by focussing on the future and imparting the lessons that you have learned to your children.

All of this left me feeling very positive. I understood that you acknowledged that life as a single father was different to what society was used to, in other words, you seemed to be different in status compared to many of your peers. However, despite being different in status, I got the impression that your day to day actions were no different from anyone else's. In this respect it would seem that you have not allowed your different status to dictate how you live your life, nor does it seem to dictate how you parent your children. In my view, this makes you an extremely adaptable person - to be different in many ways, yet to continue with life as normal without getting stuck in the unusualness thereof.

I thank you for sharing your story with me and for allowing me to listen to it.

NARRATIVE ANALYSIS: PARTICIPANT TWO: LOUIS

Synopsis of Louis's Narrative	Analysis and Research Narrative
Louis grew up in the countryside and he completed both his schooling and university in his hometown. He moved to the city almost 14 years ago where he still lives, although he admitted that he struggled to adapt to city life. (Event 1)	In this first section Louis describes his background in which he introduces the possible narrative of *traditionalism*. The narrative of *traditionalism* is illustrated in Louis's words when he says, "I'm actually a real country boy. My values and norms are still strongly more to that side – traditional." Louis emphasises that he was brought up in a conservative, traditional setting and that he spent most of his time in this setting before moving to a bigger city. It is likely that the narrative of *traditionalism* aims to describe his identity. According to Gergen (1998), storytellers define the characters' identities early on in their narrative and these characters normally retain their identities throughout. I understand that Louis is describing his own characteristics in this section by introducing the narrative of traditionalism, which posits him as a person with core traditional morals and values. He continues to build on the narrative of *traditionalism* by telling me that "I am not really a city person; I still struggle very much with the setup here." Cities are not known for their conservatism and it seems that he adheres to his traditional side by rejecting city living.
After Louis briefly described his background he referred to his subsequent marriage. Louis married because his girlfriend fell pregnant. He knew that it would be a strained marriage, partly due to being 'forced' to marry and due to a big age gap between them. However, he made the decision to get married because he felt it was	The narrative of *traditionalism* seems to continue in this section of Louis's narrative. The narrative of *traditionalism* is suggested in the quote: "My daughter was, as they say today, a surprise. I felt that I had to take responsibility for my actions. If I had been different I might have turned around and said, no, I'm turning my back on the situation, I'm prepared to do my bit every month and pay maintenance." Gergen (1998, p.3) states that "by contemporary standards the ideal narrative is one that gives an explanation. Explanation is typically achieved by selecting events that by common standards are causally linked." In the traditional Afrikaans culture (of which Louis is a

his responsibility to do so. (Event 2)	member), it is not acceptable to have a child out of wedlock. One of the ways that you can 'fix your mistake' is to get married. I understand that Louis is explaining the reason for his marriage as a means to retain his identity as a traditional person, thus continuing the narrative of *traditionalism*.
Once his daughter was born Louis became concerned that his strained marriage was going to affect his daughter negatively. However, he continued with the relationship in the hope that it might get better. (Event 3)	In this part of Louis's narrative Louis seems to introduce a narrative of *apprehension* while continuing with the narrative of *traditionalism*. The narrative of *apprehension* is suggested in the quote: "And yes, and uh, the more I had to do with my daughter after her birth, and the more I saw the path I was walking with her, and uh, the more I saw myself and my ex-wife drift apart in this regard, the more I realised… this child is the one who is actually going to suffer because of all of this. And in the end, she… uh (emotional tone)… in the end she will be the one who will be hurt the most." I understand that Louis's apprehension started when his daughter was born and he began to bond with her. The narrative of *traditionalism* is suggested in the following quote: "And, uh, yes, as I said, I really tried to take responsibility. You think you are doing the right thing and you try to think yourself happy, if I can put it that way. But deep inside you, you know it's not really working. But how do you handle this now, with your child? How… what is the best?" Although the relationship was strained, he continued to do the 'right thing' and remained married, hoping it would work out. The following section of Louis's narrative (Events 3 –7) relates directly to the research question, as it seems that Louis is setting the stage for how he became a single father.
Louis's wife indicated that she wanted a divorce. Louis rejected the idea, as he believed that he would lose his daughter if they got divorced. Instead he attempted marriage counselling and closed his eyes to the	Louis seems to continue the narratives of *apprehension* and *traditionalism* in this part. The narrative of traditionalism seems to continue when Louis says: "And then she suddenly said she wants a divorce. And I resisted this completely because I didn't know what my rights as a father were." Louis is directly confronted with the idea of divorce as his wife requests it. He rejects the idea of divorce, although it seems to be primarily based on the fear of losing his daughter.

possibility of a divorce. (Event 4)	The narrative of *apprehension* is implied when Louis says: "And I thought, if we divorce, she will get my daughter anyway. Uh, so I resisted the idea totally." I understand that Louis builds on the narrative of apprehension in terms of losing his daughter.
When his wife handed him divorce papers with a request to read and sign them, he realised that her mind was made up. He proceeded to obtain a lawyer and indicated that he wanted custody of his daughter. (Event 5)	In this section Louis seems to continue to build on the narrative of *traditionalism*. The narrative of *traditionalism* is reflected in the quote: "So I did nothing about the situation. Until she came to me and said that, no, she wants a divorce. And then I went to see a lawyer and I told my story as I experienced it." I hear that Louis continued to 'do the right thing' by avoiding a divorce, until it got to the point where he did not have much of a choice as his wife then initiated the divorce proceedings.
After Louis indicated that he would contest the divorce in terms of custody arrangements, his wife withdrew and took no further action in pursuing the divorce. (Event 6)	Louis seems to continue the narrative of *traditionalism* in this part of his narrative. The narrative of *traditionalism* is implied when he says: "Then I told her that I was going to contest the divorce to get custody, and she lost it completely. Then she wasn't interested in a divorce anymore, she just did nothing, so then I instigated proceedings." It seemed that Louis wants me to understand that he did not feel that he had much of a choice to sue for divorce as it was either that, or risking losing his daughter. I believe that he gives this explanation to retain his identity as a traditional person who has to do the right thing, thereby continuing the narrative of traditionalism in terms of his identity.
Although Louis realised at the time that his attempt to gain custody would be very challenging, he sued for divorce and custody because he felt that he was the more stable parent at that time. A few months later his wife accepted the agreement, they divorced and he obtained full custody of his daughter.	In this part of the narrative it seems that Louis continues the narrative of *traditionalism*. The narrative of *traditionalism* is illustrated when Louis says: "And three months into the whole battle we settled. Then she told me that I could have custody, and I told her that I thought that at that stage I was the more stable one. I could offer Nadine* (Louis's daughter) far more than she could." I understand that Louis continues the explanation that seems to begin in Event 5 to retain his traditional identity of someone who does the right thing. As mentioned previously, an explanation entails listing events in such a way that most people will understand their causal linkage (Gergen, 1998).

(Event 7)	Research narrative: It seems that Louis wants me to understand something about the legal system in South Africa. He tells me: "It would have been like swimming upstream, I think; very difficult. In those days, I think it's now six, seven years ago, you couldn't get it right (to obtain custody)." I hear that he was expecting an uphill battle as the legal system did not encourage single fatherhood. Louis's view of the legal system as a system that generally opposes the idea of single fatherhood is one that is frequently expressed in the research narrative. (See chapter 2, pp. 19-22.)
After describing how he became a single father, Louis continued his narrative regarding single fatherhood. One of the things that helped him to cope with single fatherhood was a good support network. Although he initially felt a responsibility to take care of everything himself, he soon realised that he needed help. He emphasised that the help and support he received has been part of his success. (Event 8)	In this section of his narrative Louis seems to continue the narrative of *traditionalism*. The narrative of *traditionalism* is suggested when he says: "I know I felt it was my responsibility to do this thing on my own… I must take it and run with it. But then I realised, goodness no, you really need someone to help, and I think that is probably part of my success." I understand that Louis is saying that he initially felt responsible to do everything himself, which seems to fit with the narrative of *traditionalism* in terms of his identity as a conservative person. Such a person tends to take full responsibility for their actions, often to their own detriment. Research narrative: Research on single fatherhood often explores the initial and long-term adjustments of single fathers. (See chapter 2, pp. 17-19.)
However, Louis found it tough to adapt as he experienced pressure to prove that he could do a good enough job raising his daughter. (Event 9)	At this point Louis continues the narratives of *apprehension* and *traditionalism*. Louis seems to build on the narrative of a*pprehension* in terms of his daughter when he tells me: "No, it was hard. I mean, there are a lot of things that happen. She gets sick… and how does one handle such situations?" I understand that he wants to portray something of the hardship that goes together with being a single father. The narrative of *traditionalism* is portrayed when Louis says: "The big, big thing that it is really about is… in the end you must show that your child is alright (emotional voice). That

	she lived with you and you did a good job… that is the big thing." Traditionally the dominant cultural narrative in Western society tells us that mothers are best when it comes to caring for especially younger children. Taking this context into account, together with the participants' traditional upbringing, it is not surprising that he experiences pressure to prove that he is a good enough parent under these circumstances. This section of Louis's narrative (Events 8 – 9) directly relates to the research question. In this section Louis informs me about his initial experience of single fatherhood.
Louis discussed his parenting approach. He approached fatherhood on a short-term basis, striving to accomplish goals he set on a year to year basis. (Event 10)	It this section of Louis's narrative he seems to continue with both the narratives of *apprehension* and *traditionalism;* however, here the narratives become intertwined. Both narratives can be detected in the following quote: "So I take it in the short term, year by year. I have goals that I work towards and after everything, it looks as if she is sorted out. She is mentally very tough, she does her thing and achieves really well at school." Firstly, the narrative of *traditionalism* is evident when Louis talks about his approach to handling single parenthood. His organised, structured way of dealing with things seems to fit with his traditional outlook on life. The narrative of *apprehension* can be seen when Louis talks about his daughter. He specifically indicates that she seems to be doing well. It is almost as if he is surprised by her wellbeing and he makes a point of pointing this out to me. At this point the reported events leave me with a strong sense that the point of Louis's narrative might be that single fatherhood has been a sacrifice for him, albeit one that has been worthwhile. The narrative of traditionalism has had a certain effect in his life – it seems that it creates hardship, as it is not always easy to 'do the right thing'. Additionally, it seems that the narrative of apprehension where his daughter is concerned has also had the effect of creating hardship as Louis worries constantly about her wellbeing. In this sense both narratives seem to contribute to the overall theme of the sacrifice of single fatherhood. However, when Louis gives such a positive evaluation of his daughter as he does in Event 10, he seems to tell me that his sacrifice has been worth it, because his daughter is doing

	very well.
Louis repeated that he had to show all of the doubtful people in society that a father could indeed raise a daughter successfully. He wanted to prove it by raising a child that everyone could see was coping and cared for very well. (Event 11)	Here Louis elaborates on the narrative of *traditionalism* that he described in Event 9. The narrative of *traditionalism* is suggested when Louis says: "You must show those people who say, how can a father raise a child? Especially a daughter. If you can show them, there goes the product – she's fine, she looks good, she's well cared for, it's really going well with her." I understand that Louis emphasises the dominant traditional outlook of society, namely, that it is not ideal for fathers to bring up young children by themselves. As Louis has a traditional outlook it seems that he felt the need to prove himself to others in a society that shares his belief system.
After describing the pressure he experienced from society, Louis referred to the time and effort that it took to do a good job as a parent. He experienced constant doubts and worries whether he was doing the right thing as a parent. (Event 12)	In this part of Louis's narrative, it seems that he continues both the narratives of *traditionalism* and *apprehension*. The narrative of *apprehension* is suggested when Louis says: "The time that you put in… you're never sure if it's good enough. You always doubt yourself. Are you doing the right thing, are you focussing on the right things? She sometimes does strange things and then you wonder if it is because of something you did wrong. You always worry…" At the same time the narrative of *traditionalism* is suggested in the above quote as Louis is clearly concerned about 'doing the right thing'. I understand that the *effect* of both these narratives is sacrifice on Louis's part, which seems to fit with the endpoint of the narrative, which is that single fatherhood has been a sacrifice for him.
Louis continued his narrative of parenting by stating that he	It would seem that Louis continues the narrative of *traditionalism* in this part of his narrative that deals with parenting.

believed in providing constant love and attention as a parent. (Event 13)	The narrative of *traditionalism* can be seen when he says: "Yes, but I believe that any parent that truly loves their child and cares for them will in the end do the right thing. There are two important things namely love and attention." I understand that he is telling me that the 'right thing to do' is to love ones child unconditionally. One has to focus on doing the right thing even in times of doubt and uncertainty. If this is so, it fits with his identity as a person with traditional values.
Louis evaluated his daughter's wellbeing by saying that she was doing surprisingly well. (Event 14)	Louis seems to continue the narrative of *apprehension* when he evaluates his daughter's wellbeing. The narrative of *apprehension* is indicated when Louis tells me: "But she's really getting along well. I must say, surprisingly well. Emotionally she's very strong. And it seems to me that she's getting even stronger." My impression is that Louis is apprehensive of his daughter's wellbeing, as he seems somewhat surprised that she has been doing so well. This section of Louis's narrative (Events 10, 12 -14) directly relates to the research question. In this section of his narrative Louis shares his parenting experience with me.
After discussing parenting, Louis pondered the fact that his daughter might decide to go and live with her mother one day. (Event 15)	The narrative of *apprehension* seems to continue in this section of Louis's story. It is suggested when Louis says, "But one day when she reaches 12 or 13, and she tells me that she wants to go and live with her mother, then my whole world is going to collapse. I can guarantee you that now. Because I haven't done all of this for nothing (emotional tone)." By referring to the hypothetical event of 'losing' his daughter in the future I understand that Louis is demonstrating apprehension about his daughter. Events 3, 4, 10 and 12 echo this narrative of apprehension related to his daughter. As mentioned previously, I believe that Louis uses the narrative of *apprehension* to make the point that single fatherhood has been a sacrifice. Feeling fearful and anxious much of the time is certainly a sacrifice he has made in order to raise his daughter. If this is so, the statement that his world will fall apart if his daughter decides to leave is understandable.

	How will he make sense of his sacrifice if she is not around anymore? At present Louis seems to make sense of this sacrifice by illustrating that it has been 'worth it' because she is doing so well. (See Events 11 and 14.)
Louis recognised that he was afraid of 'losing' his daughter one day. However, he also encouraged the development of a bond between mother and daughter. (Event 16)	Louis seems to continue the narrative of *traditionalism* in this section. The narrative of *traditionalism* is implied in the quote: "But I would never stop her. And because she has not yet… she now has a better relationship with her mother, but she doesn't yet have a close bond with her. And yes, I really want her to experience that, and she should have it, because it just makes her more sure of herself in life, more stable than if she were unsure about certain things". I understand that Louis encourages a strong bond between mother and daughter because it is 'the right thing to do' as it will improve his daughter's welfare. The narrative of traditionalism in this event almost seems to override the narrative of apprehension in Event 15, because Louis seems to encourage a stronger bond between mother and daughter, even though this bond might cause him to 'lose' his daughter in the future. I believe that Louis also use the narrative of *traditionalism* to make the point that single fatherhood has been a sacrifice. It seems to have been difficult for him to constantly 'do the right thing'; and by taking full responsibility he ended up raising a child by himself. Moreover, by once again doing the responsible thing and encouraging the bond between mother and daughter, he risks losing this child in the future.
Louis discussed the support he received. His in-laws provided very good support and they even supported his initial endeavour to gain custody of his daughter. He has kept his promise to them that they would always have access to their granddaughter. Initially when he divorced he did everything himself; however he	In this part of his narrative it seems that Louis continues the narrative of *traditionalism*. The narrative of *traditionalism* is suggested when Louis says, "And the other people whom I must mention are my ex-wife's mother and father. They are still a good support base, a very good one. And I have a very good relationship with them". I understand that Louis mentions them because it is the right thing to do to give dues where they are deserved. Additionally, he seems to illustrate that he is part of a close knit family, which fits with traditional values.

soon realised that he had to accept help from other people, like his sister and his in-laws. (Event 17)	
Despite his support network, Louis remained very involved in his child's life, and knew exactly what she did all the time. (Event 18)	Louis seems to continue the narrative of *apprehension* in this part. This narrative is implied when Louis tells me the following about his daughter: "I still try to be as involved as possible, and I always have to know what my child is doing, no matter where in the house she is. If I am busy cooking, I will go to her room about five times just to check on her. I'm not paranoid, I just want to know if she's okay. And I, uh, yes, it was bad enough to have to fight for her, so…"
Louis explained that single fatherhood was never about himself, rather it was about accepting responsibility and taking care of his daughter as best he could. (Event 19)	In this part of his narrative Louis seems to continue the narrative of *traditionalism*. The narrative of *traditionalism* is suggested in the quote: "It's not about me. I know they often say, sjoe, single parents need a break. They must get away, their situations, blah, blah, blah, blah… and I say blah blah blah because for me it is simply nonsense. It's your responsibility. It's your child. You decided to have a child. Take that responsibility". Once again it seems that Louis's traditional outlook on life influence his beliefs on parenting. This narrative of traditionalism possibly has the effect that Louis must sacrifice his own wellbeing for the sake of his daughter's. Research narrative: The research narrative explores the importance of single fathers looking after their own wellbeing. (See chapter 2, p. 26.)
He acknowledged the unusualness of single fatherhood in contemporary society. Although it has become more widespread he believed that many fathers only accepted this role to impress	At this point Louis seems to continue his narrative by building on the narrative of *traditionalism*. The narrative of *traditionalism* is indicated the following quote on single fathers: "But it is unusual, because I know that more and more fathers these days are obtaining more rights with regard to their children… but I think many of those guys only do it to show society that

others. However, for him single fatherhood was about making a total mind shift. (Event 20)	'I am interested, it's fine' …" I understand that Louis tells me that being a single father is different to the traditional way of doing things in our society. In this sense I believe that this narrative highlights the extent of Louis's sacrifice, as he prefers a more traditional life, but he now finds himself in a different position. This is illustrated in the quote: "But if you really want your child, you really have to make a complete shift and say, this is now how my whole life is going to be."
Louis stated that he never regretted his decision to become a single father. (Event 21)	Louis seems to evaluate his single fatherhood experience by stating: "And strangely enough, I never regretted anything. I never regretted the product that is now there, not ever..." I understand that Louis makes a positive evaluation about the theme that he has been trying to establish throughout his narrative, namely that he has sacrificed a great deal. The positive evaluation is that the sacrifice has been worth it, and so he does not regret being a single father.
As a single parent he experienced some tough times in the past, however he did feel that he had accomplished something, although he still preferred to focus on the short-term as he knew things could become tough again. (Event 22)	The narrative of *apprehension* seems to be continued in this part of Louis's narrative. This narrative is suggested when Louis says, "But I take her life and my education step by step. At the moment, very content. Yes, there were tough times when you feel that there is no light right now… So I'm hesitant to say it's fantastic and it's going to stay fantastic for the rest of my time." When I suggest to Louis that he is doing well he emphasises that it is only applicable to the here and now. It seems as if he expects something bad to happen in the future – specifically, he seems apprehensive about parenting his daughter. This section of Louis's narrative (Events 18-22) directly relates to the research question. In this section Louis continues to inform me of the way he experiences parenting.
Through all of this, Louis's daughter has remained very attached to him and he has remained very involved with and aware of her life.	Louis seems to continue with the narrative of *apprehension* when he talks about his daughter. This narrative is suggested when he says, "But what I also want to say is that my daughter is very attached to me. I hope so… She is very attached to me. And every second December

	when she goes on holiday with her mother, I worry." My impression is that it is very important for him to believe that his daughter is attached to him, although he simultaneously expresses some doubt and uncertainty about whether this is in fact true. He then builds on his apprehension by relating further concerns about his daughter's wellbeing.
(Event 23)	
The worst time in his life was when he was faced with losing his daughter, and he did not want to experience that again. (Event 24)	Louis seems to continue the narrative of *apprehension* regarding his daughter. The narrative of *apprehension* is illustrated in the quote: "What I went through then I would wish on nobody. You sit with the fear that you will lose your child. You're used to seeing your child every day, you bath her in the evening, you dress her, you rub cream on her, you get up at night, you change her nappy, you clean bottles, all those things. It's tough, very tough."
Louis continued his narrative about parenthood by telling me that everything he did was with an intensive interest in his daughter's life and wellbeing. (Event 25)	Louis seems to continue the narrative of *traditionalism* in terms of parenting his daughter. The narrative of *traditionalism* is suggested in the following: "Yes, yes, but I am terribly intense. And I want it that way. And I actually think that the key to any parent's success is attention, and that intensity goes together with the attention. I also see parents that are too much. For example, I would never want to interfere with situations. She must still be able to fight her own battles." I understand that he is telling me that his parenting style is in keeping with his traditional identity, which requires parents to be very involved in their child's life, but also to be tough though fair.
Louis provided an example of his involvement by stating how troubled he was when his daughter missed her mother. He then realised that parenthood was about unconditional love and not expecting anything in return.	In this part of his narrative Louis seems to continue the narratives of *traditionalism* and *apprehension*. The narrative of *apprehension* is suggested when he says: "And there was a time when all she said was, I miss my mom. And initially it bothered me, Izelle, it bothered me, see. Because it felt as if my child no longer wanted me. How does that work, when you invest so much energy the whole time? But then you realise, you know, you put in energy unconditionally. You must never expect anything back."

(Event 26)	The narrative of *traditionalism* – that parenting is about unconditional love for your child – seems to be intertwined in the *apprehension* expressed in the above quote.
	I understand that both of the above narratives have the *effect* of illustrating the sacrifice that Louis has been making as a single parent. In this sense it can be said that Louis uses these two narratives to make his point.
However, Louis explained that being so involved was tiring and he sometimes wished that he could get something in return for his efforts. (Event 27)	In this part of Louis's narrative he seems to introduce a different narrative, namely a narrative of *self-care*. This narrative is suggested when Louis says: "Intense interest and that attention that you must invest. You are not always… you don't always have the strength for it. Sometimes it feels good when she goes to her mother for the weekend, because then you can relax a little… Sometimes you feel, ag, I'd like to get just a little bit back…" I understand that Louis is acknowledging his needs in this part of the narrative, instead of only focusing on doing the right thing as a parent (narrative of traditionalism) and worrying about his daughter (narrative of apprehension).
After briefly focusing on his needs Louis continued by stating how important it was for him to provide his daughter with a feeling of security at all times. (Event 28)	Now Louis seems leave the narrative of *self-care* behind as he returns to the narratives of *traditionalism* and *apprehension*. Both narratives seem to be intertwined in the following words: "And uh, no, she must… she must experience complete and total security with me. Which I think she does. And I think that it why it is going so well at the moment. That, uh, the security is important." My impression is that Louis is apprehensive of whether his daughter experiences the security that he tries to provide her in accordance with his traditional beliefs on parenting. This section of Louis's narrative (Events 25-28) directly relates to the research question. In this section of his narrative Louis elaborates on his experience of parenting.
Louis stated that he wanted to	Louis seems to continue the narratives of *traditionalism, apprehensiveness* and *self-care* in

make an entirely different point about his career. (Event 29)	the following section of his narrative. The narrative of *self-care* is suggested when he says, "I have often thought about changing my job. And then I thought, now what kind of time would I have then?" My impression is that Louis briefly thought about his own needs when he considered a career change that would better satisfy his needs. However, he switches back to the narrative of *traditionalism* when he says, "But you know, I am very protective. She never stays after school or anything; I fetch her and then she sits with me in class. Thank heavens, my work allows me to do that. Things could have been completely different. I could have had a job where I worked from eight to five. And would I really have been able to have the same relationship with my child as now? But financially it is sometimes stressful, it is. But, uh, I made my bed and now I must lie in it." Thus, I understand that he continues the narrative of traditionalism by taking full responsibility for his choices; however this has the effect that he must sacrifice his needs. At the same time he also seems to be *apprehensive* about his choices when he ponders: "So I don't know if it is always the right point of view. Uh, should one do it this way? I believe that the above narratives support Louis's point, because he tells me that he has sacrificed a career which offers him more money so he can spend time with his daughter instead. Although he expresses some doubt (apprehensiveness) about whether he has made the right decision, he seems to revert to his traditional outlook on life to make sense of his ambivalence. Research narrative: The impact of single fatherhood on fathers' careers is explored in the research narrative dealing with single fatherhood. (See chapter 2, pp. 23-24.)

After illustrating the impact of single fatherhood on his career, Louis again referred to parenting. He tried to do his very best as a parent; however, he realised that he also made mistakes. He wanted fathers in general to take more responsibility for their fatherhood and to become more involved in their children's lives. (Event 30)	Louis seems to continue the narrative of *traditionalism* in this part of his narrative, which deals with parenting. The narrative of *traditionalism* is suggested when he says, "I really just try hard to do my part for my child, as well as I can. And I make mistakes and I am also learning more every day." I understand that Louis remains true to his traditional identity when he provides a humble evaluation of his parenting effort. He tells me that he tries his best, however, he assures me that he makes mistakes and that he is far from perfect. He continues the narrative of *traditionalism* when he tells me how he continues to do the responsible thing: "It is just a mind change that you make and you say, Louis, the pub lunch that I had on Fridays with my buddies… I sacrifice that… it's actually irrelevant. It's just stupid. There's no need for such things. There are many other things." I understand that his continuation of the narrative of traditionalism has the *effect* that he must sacrifice his needs to be able to do the responsible thing as a parent.
As the interview drew to a close Louis evaluated his single parenthood experience as extremely positive and he considered himself very blessed. (Event 31)	Louis seems to evaluate his single fatherhood experience by stating: "I feel very privileged and I am very grateful. Very, very grateful that my life could work out like this. I simply can't imagine how it might have been otherwise." I understand that Louis positively evaluates the point that he is trying to establish throughout his narrative, namely that although he has sacrificed a great deal, it has been worth it and he therefore has no regrets. (Also see Event 21.)
Directly after providing a positive evaluation of single fatherhood, Louis mentioned his fears relating to single fatherhood. Despite his fears he continued to sacrifice his time for his daughter. (Event 32)	In this part of his narrative it seems that Louis continues the narrative of *apprehension*: "And I still have the fear that one day I will make a mistake with my child. That fear will always be there. The fear that she will go to her mother. Yes, I often think about what might happen, and so on. I try to pay as much attention as I can to the present." I understand from this that the narrative of apprehension continues to have the *effect* of sacrifice in Louis's life. As long as he continues to worry about and fear what the future might hold, he is sacrificing his own wellbeing.

	This section of Louis's narrative (Events 30-32) relates to the research question. In this section he continues to reflect on the impact that single fatherhood has had in his life.
Louis also started to involve his daughter more in his life to teach her about sacrifice. (Event 33)	Louis seems to end his narrative with the narrative of *self-care*. The narrative of *self-care* is implied when Louis says, "But then I must add that I also try to make my child get used to my life. The things that I do. Um, she must also experience what her father likes and she must be able to enjoy it with me" I understand that Louis is taking his needs into account when he wants to make his daughter used to his life, instead of always adapting to her life. He may be suggesting that his daughter might have to make some sacrifices in future for him to be able to do things that he enjoys.

Reflective Letter: Participant 2: Louis

Dear Louis

When I listened to your story I discovered that you seemed to be working very hard to bring your daughter up in a responsible way. Additionally, I got the impression that it was hard work to constantly worry about your child's wellbeing and whether you were doing the right thing as a parent. However, I also understood that this came 'naturally' to you as you were brought up in a family that placed a high premium on responsibility, accountability and sacrifice.

Although it must be hard work to constantly worry about someone else, you also told me that single fatherhood had been both tough and wonderful at the same time. You certainly convinced me that your daughter really was the best thing in your life and that you did not regret being a single father one bit.

However, all of this left me at a place where I wondered what happened to Louis the person (not the parent) in all of this. I found myself worrying about you, as you often seemed to worry about your child. It worried me because you seemed to sacrifice so much in the process of being such a devoted parent. At the same time I was curious to know if it would be possible for one to continue being such a devoted parent, whilst also taking care of himself.

Fortunately toward the end of our conversation I got the impression that you have started to explore the possibility of allowing yourself more space to be. To me this was very moving, not only because I felt that you deserved it, but also because it showed how much you have accomplished as a parent. You see, if you have reached a stage where you now felt more comfortable to look after yourself, your apprehension concerning your daughter might diminish. You don't need to worry about her so much, as she has become so much stronger.

You don't need to worry about losing her anymore, as you have developed such a strong bond with her. Thus, you can now start to worry about yourself.

You have accomplished a lot and I wish you the best with this 'new endeavour'. I am convinced that your daughter will welcome the opportunity to get to know her dad even better as you continue to involve her in *your* life.

I thank you for this opportunity to share my thoughts with you.

Now we look back on our vocational journey, because we need to keep the initial brief in mind when we make our final appointment. We take a critical stance, as we ask ourselves difficult questions about our recruitment techniques and standards. Thus, in this section of the report, I attempt to integrate the research results and the research narrative. This section also attends to possible limitations of the project as well as recommendations for future research.

CONCLUSION

I have now reached a fundamental stage in the research project where I have to ask myself if I have answered my research question for this project, which was: How do single fathers experience their fatherhood? This was a broad question with many possible answers, and indeed my aim was never to establish a single, everlasting 'truth'.

Literature

The research narrative distinguishes between fathers, fatherhood and single fatherhood. It indicates that a *father* may be considered the biological parent of a child, whereas *fatherhood* demands a social relationship with the child that could take many forms (Morrel & Richter, 2006).

Depending on the type of social relationship that a father has with his children, fathers may be described as good fathers, bad fathers and new fathers. Additionally, these descriptions depend upon a cultural and historical understanding of fatherhood. The question was asked whether fatherhood is undergoing a crisis as father's roles have altered and society's expectations of them have evolved over time (Knijn, 1995).

Single fatherhood is an example of the transformation that has occurred in the domain of fatherhood. Together with fathers appearing to accept more varied fatherhood roles than before (Lamb & Tamis-Lemonda, 2004), there also seems to be an upward trend in fathers embracing single parenthood (Statistics South Africa, 2001). Nevertheless, the research narrative makes it clear that single fatherhood is not necessarily an easy path to follow. These fathers often find themselves marginalised as they battle against societal perceptions and legal systems to justify their existence. Even when they win the battle, they often must go on proving their parental competency and ability to sceptics in the workplace, in their families, and amongst their friends.

However, the picture is not only negative. From the experiences of single fathers emerge narratives of hope, learning, sacrifice and intense devotion to their children. These narratives often have the effect of bringing joy and fulfilment into their lives and creating positive changes that touch entire families. I will now recapitulate these narratives, as explored in this study.

Research

In terms of the first participant, Kyle, I identified three narratives: the narrative of *being different*, the narrative of *being normal* and the narrative of *change*. Kyle introduced the narrative of *being different* early on when he told me that he was raised in a single parent family. During that time it could be argued that society viewed single mother families with the same misgiving that they today view single father families. Therefore it seemed that Kyle had an understanding of what it was like to be different to the norm. The narrative of difference was a thread woven into Kyle's narrative. This seemed to have a distinct impact on his experience of being a single father, yet it was clear that this thread did not constitute his full experience. In this sense, Kyle introduced the narrative of *being normal* almost immediately after he introduced the narrative of being different. It was as if he acknowledged that certain aspects of his life were different, but he wanted me to understand that his life was normal despite this.

As mentioned before (see chapter 4), narratives are told with the aim of making a point (Gergen, 1998). I understood that Kyle utilised the narrative of being different and the narrative of being normal to make the point that single fatherhood was different to dominant family types, yet they were also normal in terms of the way that they functioned on a daily basis. In short, it seemed that Kyle was saying to me that his family might be different in status, but that their everyday actions were entirely normal.

In addition to the narratives of being different and being normal, Kyle introduced a third narrative, namely the narrative of *change*. According to Gergen (1998), the endpoints of our narratives usually include an evaluative aspect that is positioned somewhere on a continuum between a positive and a negative pole. In this instance the narrative of *change* seemed to provide a positive evaluation for Kyle's narrative, because as members of a Western culture we usually place a high premium on personal transformation.

I understood that Kyle was saying that being a single father and being different taught him many valuable lessons and initiated his personal transformation, which now impacted his children in a positive manner. Thus, I understood that Kyle was not allowing his status (which happened to be different to norm) to dictate the way he lived his life and the way he raised his children.

The second participant, Louis, seemed to utilise three narratives to communicate his point. These were the narratives of *traditionalism*, a*pprehension* and *self-care*.

Louis introduced the narrative of *traditionalism* when he provided background information regarding his family of origin. He was brought up in a family with a traditional belief system and he has remained faithful to this belief system, placing a high value on responsibility and accountability. Then he introduced the narrative of *apprehension* when he discussed his relationship with his daughter. It seemed that his apprehension was built on his fear of losing his daughter, which meant that he went to great lengths to protect her and to maintain their parent-child relationship.

Louis used the narratives of traditionalism and apprehension to make his point about single fatherhood. His traditional values and high standards together with his fear of losing his daughter meant that he sacrificed a great deal to be the nurturing, caring parent that he wanted to be. Thus, Louis's point was that being a single father was a sacrifice. However, he also made sure to evaluate his experience as being hard, but worth it, providing continuous positive evaluations of single fatherhood throughout his narrative.

The third narrative that I identified made its appearance towards the end of Louis's narrative, and seemed to counter the effect of the narratives of traditionalism and apprehension. The narrative of *self-care* introduced the possibility that Louis was starting to take care of himself by acknowledging his needs, thereby countering the impact of sacrifice.

Louis's narrative made me aware that single parents will go to great lengths to ensure the wellbeing of their children – often to their own detriment. It made me aware that they will do this without regret, in order to protect the single most valuable thing to them – their children.

Summary

In conclusion, I found that there were areas of participant narrative that were in keeping with the research narrative on single fatherhood. Specifically, I refer to narratives that dealt with the legal system applicable to single fatherhood; the impact of single fatherhood on career, household and relationships; the importance of the father-child relationship; and cultural perceptions of parenting and single fatherhood.

However, the participants' narratives highlighted additional, subtle experiences that were not expressly portrayed in the research narrative. I also believe that these experiences were equally valuable for their contribution to the existing research narrative and for providing the participants with an opportunity to express their unique experiences.

Firstly, Kyle's narrative illustrated that society often missed the 'real story' because it struggled to look beyond the dominant story. His narrative made clear the effect of dominant cultural beliefs on an individual who did not fit perfectly into a dominant belief system. Although the existing research narrative explored both the 'differentness' of the single father family and the impact thereof on family members (e.g. the struggle with the legal system), it did not address the experience of fathers as they attempted to make sense of their 'differentness' within this society. In this sense I believe that this research project gave preference to Kyle's voice without excluding the culturally dominant voices.

In line with Louis's narrative, the research narrative firstly emphasised the importance of the parent-child relationship in single fatherhood; and secondly acknowledged the costs involved to establish and uphold this relationship. These fathers' sacrifices impact many facets of their lives, including their careers, social lives and personal wellbeing. These fathers permit this because they value a secure social bond with their children above anything else. Additionally, the research narrative pointed to the importance of self-care to counter the detrimental effects that single parenthood could have. However, Louis's experience highlighted an additional aspect of single fatherhood. The way in which he related the narratives of traditionalism, apprehension and self-care made me aware of just how difficult it could be for a parent to administer self-care under these circumstances. It was as if Louis could not allow self-care to enter his life before apprehension started to diminish. The fact that Louis was slowly reaching a point where he was considering self-care indicated to me that he has begun to address his apprehension, which is commendable.

Lastly, listening to the participants' narratives influenced me, as researcher-practitioner, in a specific way. Although the research narrative contributed significantly to my understanding of the single father context, it did not prepare me for the effect that the single fathers' narratives would have on me. Whereas I could set aside the research narrative rather easily after reading it, the participants' narratives remained with me long after the initial conversation had ended. Hearing their conversations over and over, taking them apart and then putting them back together again during the analysis, has taught me the valuable

skill of listening – *really* listening. It has made me aware that my listening can co-create a narrative and it has cautioned me against making assumptions about the meaning of people's experiences, as this constitutes *not* listening.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Method

The research material in this project was produced through interviews and consisted of first-person reports of the participants' own experiences. The advantages of this method was that it allowed me to explore in-depth accounts of the participants' experiences without getting distracted by large amounts of data and statistics. However, in this project I conducted only one interview with each participant. I would recommend that further research allows for at least three interviews with adequate time in between interviews to allow participants to become more comfortable with the interview process as well as to allow them time to reflect on their experiences between interviews (Polkinghorne, 2007).

Participants

Two single fathers were purposively selected to participate in this project. Purposive sampling allows the researcher to select participants that are more likely to provide sufficiently rich data that contribute to the understanding of the experience (Polkinghorne, 2005). By the same token, the limited number of participants served as a possible limitation to this project. Although the aim of this project was never to establish a generalisable truth, the fact that only two participants' narratives were presented limited the generalisablity of the results. Furthermore, both participants were from a similar cultural background. In order to enhance the overall validity and trustworthiness, I would recommend that further research be done with additional participants from diverse cultural backgrounds to allow for an expanded view of the experience under investigation.

Position

In this project I explored the narratives from a single position, namely that of a narrative inquiry. Although the narrative position is ideally suited to explore people's experience, it remains only one way of looking at experience and therefore has its own set of limitations (Polkinghorne, 2007). Thus, further research could benefit from utilising an additional, alternative qualitative position, for instance a phenomenological stance, to enhance the interpretative process.

Lastly, I am reminded that the final results in this project were based on my interpretations of the participants' narratives. These results should always remain open to other interpretations that might differ from those which were presented here. In this sense I feel it would have contributed to the overall validity if I had taken my interpretations back to the participants for clarification before finalising the results (Polkinghorne, 2007).

We have now reached the end of our vocational journey and I thank you for you willingness to join me in the recruitment centre. I am hopeful that we have made a successful appointment by matching the correct candidate to their ideal job opportunity. However, as is typical in the world of work, we will only truly know once the candidate sets foot in his new office.

REFERENCES

Anderson, D. (1997). *Men, reproduction and fatherhood* (Policy and Research Paper No. 12). Belgium: The International Union for the Scientific Study of Population (IUSSP).

Allen, G. & Crow, G. (2001). *Families, households and society*. New York: Palgrave.

Amato, P.R. & Sobolewski, J.M. (2004). The effects of divorce on fathers and children: Nonresidential fathers and stepfathers. In M. Lamb (Ed.), *The role of the father in child development (4th ed.) (pp. 341-367).* New York: John Wiley & Sons.

AMREF (African Medical and Research Foundation) (n.d.). HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis and STIs. Retrieved January 14, 2007 from: http://www.amref.org/index.asp

Bronstein, P. (1988). Father-child interaction: Implications of gender-role socialization. In P. Bronstein & C.P. Cowan (Eds.), *Fatherhood today: Men's changing role in the family (pp. 107-124).* New York: John Wiley & Sons.

Browning, D.S. & Rodriquez, G.G. (2002). *Reweaving the social tapestry. Toward a public philosophy and policy for families.* New York: W.W. Norton & Company.

Burr, V. (1995). *An introduction to social constructionism*. London: Routledge.

Clandinin, D.J. & Connelly, F.M. (2000). *Narrative inquiry. Experience and story in qualitative research*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Connell, R.W. (2000). *The men and the boys.* Berkeley: University of California Press.

Creswell, J.W. (1998). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five traditions*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Crossley, M.L. (2000). *Introducing narrative psychology: Self, trauma and the construction of meaning*. Buckingham: Open University Press.

Cummings, E.M., Goeke-Morey, M.C. & Raymond, J. (2004). Fathers in family context: Effects of marital quality and marital conflict. In M. Lamb (Ed.), *The role of the father in child development (4th ed.) (pp. 196-221).* New York: John Wiley & Sons.

Czarniawska, B. (2004). *Narratives in social science research*. London: Sage.

Davies, M.G. (1993). The divorced father as primary caregiver: A survey of the phenomena of male custodianship. Unpublished Master's dissertation, University of Port Elizabeth, South Africa.

Doucet, A. (2004). It's almost like I have a job, but I don't get paid: Fathers at home reconfiguring work, care, and masculinity. *Fathering: A Journal of Theory, Research & Practice About Men as Fathers, 2*(3), 277–303.

Easthope, A. (1990). *What a man's gotta do: The masculine myth in popular culture*. New York: Routledge.

Emmers-Sommer, T.M., Rhea, D., Triplett, L. & O'Neill, B. (2003). Accounts of single fatherhood: A qualitative study. *Marriage and Family Review, 35*(1), 99–115.

Fontana, A. & Frey, J.H. (2000). From structured questions to negotiated text. In N.K. Denzin & Y.S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research (pp. 645-668).* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Freedman, J. & Combs, G. (1996). *Narrative therapy: The social construction of preferred realities*. New York: W.W. Norton & Company.

Freeman, J., Epston, D. & Lobovits, D. (1997). *Playful approaches to serious problems: Narrative therapy with children and their families*. New York: W.W. Norton & Company.

Gallinetti, J. (2006). Legal aspects of fatherhood in South Africa. In L. Richter & R. Morrell (Eds.), *Baba. Men and fatherhood in South Africa. (pp. 201-215).* Cape Town: HSRC Press.

Gergen, K.J. (1998). *Narrative, moral identity and historical consciousness: A social constructionist account.* Retrieved on March 30, 2006 from: www.swarthmore.edu/Soc/Sci/kgergen1/web

Gilbert, L.A. (1993). *Two careers / one family: The promise of gender equality.* London: Sage.

Greif, G.L. (1985). *Single fathers*. Massachusetts: Lexington Books.

Greif, G.L. (1990). *The daddy track and the single father: Coping with kids, housework, a job, an ex-wife, a social life and the courts*. Massachusetts: Lexington Books.

Griffiths, J. (1997). *Fathercare: A guide for single resident fathers*. Cambridge: Colt Books.

Hamer, J. & Marchioro, K. (2002). Becoming custodial dads: Exploring parenting among low-income and working-class African American fathers. *Journal of Marriage and Family, 64*(2), 116-129.

Hardey, M. & Crow, G. (1991). *Lone parenthood: Coping with constraints and making opportunities in single-parent families*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

Hearn, J. & Morgan, D.H.J. (1990). Men, masculinities and social theory. In J. Hearn & D.H.J. Morgan (Eds), *Men, masculinities and social theory (pp. 1-18).* London: Unwin Hyman.

Hochschild, A.R. (1995). Understanding the future of fatherhood. The 'daddy hierarchy' and beyond. In C.P. van Dongen, G.A.B. Frinking & M.J.G. Jacobs, (Eds.), *Changing fatherhood: An interdisciplinary perspective (pp. 241-246).* Amsterdam: Thesis Publishers.

Jacobs, M. (1995). The wish to become a father: How do men decide in favour of parenthood? In C.P. van Dongen, G.A.B. Frinking & M.J.G. Jacobs, (Eds.), *Changing fatherhood: An interdisciplinary perspective (pp. 166-181).* Amsterdam: Thesis Publishers.

Kapsalis, C. & Tourigny, P. (2002). *Profiles and transitions of groups at risk of social exclusion: Lone parents.* Final Report for Applied Research Branch Strategic Policy Human Resource Development, Canada. SP-577-06-03E.

Kaslow, F.W., Greif, G.L. & Emad, F. (1989). Family law issues in family therapy practice: A longitudinal examination of mothers without custody: Implications for treatment. *American Journal of Family Therapy, 17*(2), 155-164.

Khunou, G. (2006). Fathers don't stand a chance. Experience of custody, access and maintenance. In L. Richter & R. Morrell (Eds.), *Baba. Men and fatherhood in South Africa*. (*pp. 265-280).* Cape Town: HSRC Press.

Knibiehler, Y. (1995). Fathers, patriarchy, paternity. In C.P. van Dongen, G.A.B. Frinking & M.J.G. Jacobs, (Eds.), *Changing fatherhood: An interdisciplinary perspective (pp. 66-87).* Amsterdam: Thesis Publishers.

Knijn, T. (1995). Towards post-paternalism? Social and theoretical changes in fatherhood. In C.P. van Dongen, G.A.B. Frinking & M.J.G. Jacobs, (Eds.), *Changing Fatherhood: An interdisciplinary perspective (pp. 15-32).* Amsterdam: Thesis Publishers.

Kumar, R. (2005). *Research methodology: A step by step guide for beginners (2*nd *ed.).* London: Sage.

Lamb, M. & C.S. Tamis-Lemonda, (2004). The role of the father: An introduction. In M. Lamb (Ed.), *The role of the father in child development (4*th *ed.) (pp. 1-31).* New York: John Wiley & Sons.

Lamb, M. (1995). Paternal influences on child development. In C.P. van Dongen, G.A.B. Frinking & M.J.G. Jacobs, (Eds.), *Changing fatherhood: An interdisciplinary perspective (pp. 149-165).* Amsterdam: Thesis Publishers.

Lewis, C. & O'Brien, M. (1987). *Reassessing fatherhood. New observations on fathers and the modern family*. London: Sage.

Mac an Ghaill, M. (1996). *Understanding masculinities: Social relations and cultural arenas.* Buckingham: Open University Press.

McBride, B.A. & Lutz, M.M. (2004). Intervention: Changing the nature and extent of father involvement. In M. Lamb (Ed.), *The role of the father in child development (4*th *ed.) (pp. 446-475).* New York: John Wiley & Sons.

McBride, B.A., & Mills, G. (1993). A comparison of mother and father involvement with their preschool age children. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly, 8,* 457-477.

McKee, L. & O'Brien, M. (1982). *The father figure*. London: Tavistock.

Merriam, S.B. & Associates (2002). *Qualitative research in practice: Examples for discussion and analysis*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Miller, R.L. & Brewer, J.D. (2003). T*he A-Z of social research: A dictionary of key social science research concepts*. London: Sage.

Mishler, E.G. (1986). *Research interviewing: Context and narrative.* Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Morrell, R. & Richter, L. (2006). Introduction. In L. Richter & R. Morrell (Eds.), *Baba. Men and fatherhood in South Africa (pp. 1-12).* Cape Town: HSRC Press.

Pleck, E.H. (2004). Two dimensions of fatherhood. In M. Lamb (Ed.), *The role of the father in child development (4th ed.) (pp. 32-57).* New York: John Wiley & Sons.

Pleck, J.H. & Masciadrelli, B.P. (2004). Paternal involvement by U.S. residential fathers: Levels, sources, and consequences. In M. Lamb (Ed.), *The role of the father in child development (4th ed.) (pp. 222-271).* New York: John Wiley & Sons.

Polkinghorne, D.E. (2005). Language and meaning: Data collection in qualitative research. *Journal of Counseling Psychology, 52*(2), 137-145. Retrieved June 5, 2008 from: www.usc.edu/projects/rehab/researchers/polkinhorne/

Polkinghorne, D.E. (2007). Validity issues in narrative research. *Qualitative Inquiry, 13*(4), 471-486.

Powers, R.S. (2003). Doing the daily grind: The effects of domestic labor on professionals, managerial and technical workers' earnings. *Gender Issues, 21*(1), 3-23.

Ramphele, M. & Richter, L. (2006). Migrancy, family dissolution and fatherhood. In L. Richter & R. Morrell (Eds.), *Baba. Men and fatherhood in South Africa (pp. 73-80)*. Cape Town: HSRC Press.

Renk, K. (2003). Mothers, fathers, gender role and time parents spend with their children. *Sex Roles: A Journal of Research.* Retrieved September 4, 2005, from: http://www.findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m2294/is_2003_April/ai_101 174061/pg2

Responsible Single Fathers (2001). Retrieved August 10, 2006 from: http://www.singlefather.org/

Riessman, C.K. (1993). *Narrative analysis* (Vol. 30). Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Risman, B.J. (1986). Can men "mother"? Life as a single father. *Family Relations*, *35*(1), 95-102. Retrieved January 15, 2007, from JSTOR database.

Roberts, A.R. (2000). Narrative and severe mental illness: What place do stories have in an evidence-based world? *Advances in Psychiatric Treatment*, *6*, 432-441.

Russel, G. & Hwang, C.P. (2004). The impact of workplace practices on father involvement. In M. Lamb (Ed.), *The role of the father in child development (4th ed.) (pp. 476-503).* New York: John Wiley & Sons.

Schwandt, T.A. (2000). Three epistemological stances for qualitative inquiry. In N.K. Denzin & Y.S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research (pp. 189-213).* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Sclater, S.D. (2003). What is the subject? *Narrative Inquiry*, *13*, 317-330.

Stainton-Rogers, W. & Stainton-Rogers, R. (2001). *The psychology of gender and sexuality*. Buckingham: Open University Press.

Statistics South Africa. (2001). *Census 2001: Stages in the life cycle of South Africans* (No. 03-02-46). Retrieved January 14, 2007, from StatsSA database.

Statistics South Africa (2005). *Marriages and divorces 2005* (No. P0307). Retrieved January 14, 2007, from StatsSA database.

Stiles, W.B. (1993). Quality control in qualitative research. *Clinical Psychology Review*, *13*, 595–618.

University of Pretoria (2008a). *Research.* Retrieved February 15, 2008 from: http://web.up.ac.za/default.asp?ipkCategoryID=1630

University of Pretoria (2008b). *Values, vision and mission*. Retrieved February 15, 2008 from http://web.up.ac.za/default.asp?ipkCategoryID=1861&sub=1&parentid=1380 &subid=1423&ipklookid=9

Van Dyk, A. (2001). *HIV/AIDS care & counselling: A multidisciplinary approach* (2nd ed.). Cape Town: Pearson Education.

Visser, P.J. & Potgieter, J.M. (1994). *Inleiding tot die familiereg*. Cape Town: Juta.

Watson, M.A. (1981). Custody alternatives: Defining the best interest of the children. *Family Relations, 30*(3), 474–479. Retrieved February 15, 2007 from JSTOR database.

Weitzman, E. (1996). *Let's talk about living with a single parent*. New York: Power Kids Press.

White, M. & Epston, D. (1990). *Narrative means to therapeutic ends*. New York: W.W. Norton.

Whitley, B.E. (2001). *Principles of research in behavioral sciences* (2nd ed.). Boston: McGraw Hill.

Wiles, J.L., Rosenberg, M.W. & Kearns, R.A. (2005). Narrative analysis as a strategy for understanding interview talk in geographic research. *Area, 37*(1), 89-99.

Willig, C. (2001). *Introducing qualitative research in psychology: Adventures in theory and method.* Buckingham: Open University Press.

APPENDIX A

Participant Information and Consent Form

Participant Information Sheet

Researcher: Izélle van Zyl

Research title: Single fathers' experience of fatherhood

Dear Sir,

I appreciate your willingness to be interviewed for the above mentioned research project. Please familiarise yourself with the information contained in this letter before signing the consent form. I shall contact you to arrange for a convenient time for the interviews to take place.

Purpose: The purpose of the research project is to explore how single fathers experience fatherhood.

Procedure: Your participation is requested for a maximum of four interviews of approximately one hour each. This should allow for sufficient time to gather the necessary information. The interviews will be conducted in the following manner:

Interview 1   :   Introduction.

Interview 2   :   The experience of being a single father.

Interview 3   :   The experience of being a single father.

Interview 4   :   Conclusion.

It is possible that less than four interviews will be sufficient, however, no more than four interviews will be requested of you. The interviews will be videotaped to allow for a complete and proper record of the conversations.

Risk: The nature of the interview process is such that it can possibly lead to emotional discomfort and vulnerability. The researcher will provide follow-up sessions should you feel that you are in need of such sessions due to the research project. This will be done at the cost of the researcher. The researcher will provide these sessions (if required) whilst under the supervision of a Registered Counselling Psychologist at her place of internship at the Tshwane University of Technology.

Benefits: There will be no financial gain for participating in this research project. However, it is hoped that in taking part in this study, you will experience some beneficial effect by sharing your experiences with the researcher.

Participant rights: Your involvement in this study is voluntary and you are not obligated to divulge information you would prefer to remain private. You may withdraw from the study at any time. Before any results are published in research articles, you will be asked to view the publications for final approval.

Confidentiality: The information you provide will be treated as confidential. You will not be identified in any documentation, including the interview transcripts, by your name. You will therefore be referred to in all documentation in such a way that you cannot be identified.

Data Storage: Research data will be stored in a durable format for a period of
                  fifteen (15) years. The researcher undertakes to ensure that storage
                  commences in a secure manner so as to restrict the access thereof
                  appropriately.

Informed Consent

Your signature below indicates that you have read and understood the above information
and that you agree to participate in this study as per the above mentioned conditions.

If you decide to participate, you remain free to withdraw your consent and to discontinue
participation at any time without prejudice.

Signed at _____ on this day_____

_____   _____
(Researcher)   (Participant)

_____   _____
(Please PRINT name)   (Please PRINT name)