FATHERS EXPERIENCES OF SINGLE PARENTING

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

DEDICATION

I dedicate this to my late brothers, Andrew, Barry and Juno. There is not a day that goes by that I do not think of you, you were even more present in my thoughts during this long haul to completion.

ABSTRACT

Fathers, specifically in South Africa, are generally stereotyped as either absent, deadbeat fathers who do not play an active role in their children's lives or as being present traditional breadwinners and authoritative fathers. The latter has given rise to the ideology that fathers are unable to construct nurturing and care giving roles normally associated with the mother's role. This study documents the unique lived experiences of six single fathers residing in the Cape Metropole area, and their roles as primary care givers to their children. Social Constructionism Theory and Hegemonic Masculinity Theory were applied as theoretical frameworks against which these fathers views and experiences were analysed.

The aim of this qualitative study was to explore and describe the lived parenting experiences of single fathers solely rearing their children. In-depth interviews, using a semi-structured interview guide, were conducted with six single fathers, who met the eligibility criteria of the study. The data was analysed using thematic analysis. Four themes emanated from this study, namely single fathers' definition of being a father; single fathers' parenting experiences; parenting roles taken on by single fathers; and personal perceptions about being a single father.

Furthermore, according to the findings, it is suggested that these single fathers faced many challenges and stresses in their roles as single parents, including adverse social and personal struggles when going against traditional masculine roles and fulfilling a more nurturing motherly role. Despite all these barriers and challenges, they were able to construct an alternative masculinity when taking on untraditional roles. This research will be valuable to future researchers and practitioners working in the field of fatherhood as it will provide guidance in developing understanding and interventions for this population group.

KEY WORDS

Family

Single fathers

Parenting

Hegemonic masculinity

Social constructionism

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Introduction

1.1.   Background

In recent years, there has been a shift from traditional two-parent families to more diverse forms of family structures, such as single parenting due to death of spouse, divorce, separation or unintended pregnancy. Single parenting is perceived as consisting of the mother – child relationship rather than the father – child relationship. The care giving routine within families has socially, economically and politically been diverted to mothers and little attention has been given to single father parenting. The proportion of children residing in single father family units is on the increase in South Africa. The results of census South Africa 2011 (City Press, 2012) revealed that single fathers living with their children formed 2% of families counted in South Africa while in a recent press release by the South African Institute of Race Relations in 2013, 4% of South Africa children are living with fathers (South African Institute of Race Relations, SAIRR, 2013).

The stereotypical role of a father within a heterosexual relationship is that of a breadwinner, provider and dispassionate leader and the desire to be a support to their partner On the other hand, "mothers are expected to be and play the expressive role; as she is expected to cement and provide emotional support and nurturing activities that ensure the household run smoothly" (Lindsey, 2005:6) Contrary to the above stereotype, fathers are taking on the role of rearing their children, resulting in the stereotypical role of the father evolving.

Fatherhood and fathering are concepts that can denote many forms of identities and practices and this study explored the views of single fathers from disrupted family unions and how hegemonic masculinity (Connell, 1995) contributes to these practices. It further provided single fathers with an opportunity to tell their stories and relate their experiences as single parents in an evolving South African context as well as provide a deeper understanding of this under-researched and growing family unit.

Becoming a father is a critical period of change in the life of men, with fatherhood having to be integrated into a male identity. The transitions to parenthood will very likely change fathers' relationships with their partners (Ahlborg, Misvaer & Moller, 2009) and their families (Bell, Goulet, Tribble, Paul, Boisclair & Tronick, 2007). It will also change their

habits of spending leisure time, affect their working lives, and is likely to transform them into individuals, who cherish interests and values that are different than those prior to this transition (Claxton & Pery-Jenkings, 2008; Nomaguchi & Bianchi, 2004). This study provides a description of how single fathers manage their newly acquired roles and their experiences.

Changes in the family structure, as well as the increased participation of women in the labour market, has called for a redefinition of the father's role in the family. This view is confirmed in research conducted by Brown and Barker (2004) that highlights this role change from a care perspective. These views partly emanate from the politics and scholarship of identity; is partly prompted by the changing nature of employment associated with post-industrial economics and globalisation; as well as by changes in the nature and composition of families (Lupton & Barclay, 1997). The roles of fathers within a family are ever changing and even more so for single fathers, as they acquire and construct new roles. These experiences and views will be detailed in Chapter 4 of this study.

1.2. Motivation for the study

A single father family is a concept that is relatively new to the family structure. For centuries across many cultures, men have been the breadwinners and the head of the family. The idea of fatherhood is still limited to stereotypes such as the ideal breadwinner, family man, or the deadbeat dad (Dienhart, 1998). In recent years, single fathers, single mothers and same-sex parenting has become much more of a reality in society. Due to the fact that there has been an increase in the number of non-traditional family structures, especially the single father family, an account must begin about their experiences, parenting styles and perceptions of their roles. It is imperative that we gain a better understanding and awareness of the single father, so that better support systems can be put in place, more consideration can be given to these fathers and to move away from the general stereotype that fathers cannot nurture and provide care for their children.

Unfortunately, to date, single fathers have not been the subjects of substantial research. Society and our culture still hold the family to such a high, idealistic standard (Coltrane, 1996). We still define what it means to be a man or woman through the expectations and roles of fathers and mothers within the family. Coltrane (1996) states that the concept of the

family conceals the fact that families have always differed in their makeup. This study strove to demonstrate how a man defines himself when his family does not fit the ideal mould, through roles, experiences and attuitudes.

This study was aimed to illuminate the direct voices and experiences of these men. The researcher will highlight the daily tasks, routines, and responsibilities of full-time single fathers. The research however, moves beyond the surface of their physical parental duties. The researcher will shed light on their emotions, feelings, and attitudes towards their parental duties. Through analysis of their parenting styles and their attitudes towards these duties, the researcher attempts to outline the different ways in which single fathers construct masculinity.   This study looks at individuals who do not conform to gender norms. Regardless of the circumstances behind their position, single fathers turn traditional gender roles upside down.

1.3. Aims and Objectives

An aim is defined as a broad statement of the desired outcome of a study or general inetentions of the study. A research aim is usually followed by a series of statements describing topics and issues a study plans to investigate, building on the main theme stated in the research aim (Thomas & Hodges, 2010).

The study's aim and objectives are defined below.

1.3.1. Study aim

This study aimed to develop an in-depth understanding and to report on the parenting experiences and strategies employed by single fathers.

1.3.2. Study objectives

The objectives of this study were:
- To explore and describe single fathers' definition of fathering.
- To explore and describe single fathers' experiences of solely rearing their child/ren.
- To explore and describe the parenting roles single fathers employ when fathering their child/ren.
- To explore and describe single fathers' personal perceptions of how they are perceived as single fathers.

1.4. Research questions

A research question is the fumdamental core of a research project, study or literature review. It focuses the study, the methodology, and guides all stages of inquiry, analysis and reporting (Biddid, 2009). The research questions for this study were:

- What are single fathers' experiences of solely rearing their child/ren?
- What roles are single fathers employing when fathering their child/ren?
- How does a single father define being a good father?
- Do single fathers feel that other people view them differently since they became single fathers, if so, how?

1.5. Theoretical framework

Theoretical frameworks provide a particular perspective or lens, through which to examine a topic. This section focuses on a summary of the theoretical framework research methodology used during this research which will be discussed. This is not an orientation to the methodology; an in-depth discussion will follow in chapter three of this study.

1.5.1. *Social constructionism as theoretical framework*

Constructionism is of the view that the human world is different from the natural and physical world. Constructionism assumes that there are multiple realities, which influence people's lives and interaction with others. People seek to understand the world they live in and they develop subjective meaning of their experiences directed towards certain objects or things; these experiences are unique to individuals. Interaction with others and historical and cultural norms of the individual construct subjective meanings. Consideration of participants'perceptions and social realities is therefore necessary (Creswell, 2013; Patton, 2002).

Social constructionism postulates that people actively construct their perceptions and use culture as a guide (Cronje, 2012). Reality is constructed in 3 moments: 1) externalisation, the way cultures, societies and social groups make sense of their social worlds; 2) objectification refers to how those constructs and social institutions are perceived as being naturally given; and 3) internalisation, the way in which the objectified social world becomes known and understood through the process of socialisation and enculturation (Beal & Steenberg, 1993).

Connell (2003) argues that what we consider to be natural and what we assume to be natural differences are actually cultural constructs that inform our conceptualisation of gender. A crucial key point mentioned by Cronje (2012) in explaining Connell's argument, is that if gender is solely based in biological difference, it would not have been possible for the new category – the transsexual – to be made or constructed, which implies strong external and cultural influence.

Men and women face different expectations throughout life and social constructionism predicts that single mothers and single fathers parent similarly whether male or female because they bear the sole responsibilities for providing for their children needs. Although these parents would limit the parenting to stereotypical female and male activities when they had a partner with whom they can do gender, they will take on the responsibilities traditionally acted out by the opposite sex if no partner is there to fill the role (Dufur, Howell, Downey, Ainsworth & Lapray, 2010).

Social constructionism argues that gender is interactional rather than individual, as it is developed through social interactions and circumstances and that these behaviours are continually modified and negotiated through social interactions and circumstances. Previous research detailing different kinds of typical mothering and fathering tasks has been linked to broader societal norms about appropriate behavior. Social constructionist theory provides a potential explanation as to why different parenting styles exist between mothers and fathers, by focusing on the hegemonic femininity and masculinity linked to parenting tasks (Hook & Chalasani, 2008). The social constructionist theory, which interrogates hegemonic masculinity, allows for the possibility for fathers to engage in tasks and roles that are traditionally associated with mothering, as it is argued that women's and men's roles are social constructs shaped by context and interaction and not a set of immutable traits linked to the sex (Cornwall & King, 2001). Social constructinism is relevant as the study explored the perceptions and experiences of single fathers and allowed for the possibility that fathers can take on tasks traditionally associated with mothering and vice versa. The participants based their perceptions on the realities of their daily experiences and their subjective meanings.

1.6. Research methodology

Research methodology is the systemetic, theorectical analysis of methods applied to a field of study. Rajasekar, Philominathan and Chinnathamb (2006) define research methodology as a science of studying how research is to be carried out. In the following sections of this chapter, a brief description of the procedures used will be covered. A more detailed discussion will be given in chapter three.

1.6.1 Qualitative approach

The methodology used for this research was the qualitative research approach as it is designed to answer questions and best reflect individuals' experience in the context of their everyday lives. It appeared best suited to achieve the aims and objectives which were to explore and describe the experiences of single fathers and their parenting styles. Quantitative research was not considered suitable for this research as it would not explore and describe the fathering experiences of single fathers but rather provide a statistical report with correlations, comparisons of means and statistical significance of findings (Johnson & Christensen, 2000), which was not applicable to this study. The rationale for this selection of research methodology is that qualitative research is inductive and looks at the settings and people holistically which is in line with the theoretical framework of this study.

In qualitative research, the researcher seeks to find data that are rich and deep (D'Cruz & Jones, 2004). The researcher used a qualitative research approach for the purpose of this study as it would answer questions about single fathers' parenting experiences from the participants' point of view.

1.6.2 Research design

For the purpose of this research, explorative and descriptive research designs were used. The aim of this research sought to explore and describe the experiences and parenting styles of single fathers. An explorative and descriptive design was deemed most applicable as descriptive research's main aim is the exploration and clarification of some phenomenon where accurate information is lacking (Babbie & Mouton, 2001).

The use of both designs was believed to be most applicable as both seek to explore and describe, giving the researcher a better understanding of a phenomenon, which in this study was the experience of parenting by single fathers.

A descriptive design examines the characteristics of a specific single population, for the purpose of this study, the characteristic of the parenting styles employed by single fathers were examined. This design was valid as it provides rich, meaningful descriptions of the experiences and parenting styles of single fathers. The researcher used descriptive research through classification, and narrative type descriptions which will be discussed in the findings of this research in chapter four.

An exploratory research design is used in order to gain new insight into a situation, phenomenon, community or individual. This research design can also be used where a lack of basic information on a new area of interest exists; to become informed with a situation; to formulate a problem; or to develop a hypothesis. This design was incorporated into the study as the researcher felt that in order to gather information relating to the lived experiences of single fathers, the topic of interest needed to be explored and unpacked with the single fathers. As single father parenting is a relatively new and under researched topic (Coltrane, 1996), the use of explorative design creates an opportunity for the researcher to gain an understanding of the phenomenon.

1.6.3. Population and Sampling

Pattern (2004) proposes that researchers frequently draw a sample from a population, which is the group in which researchers are ultimately interested. For the purpose of this study, the population was single fathers residing in the Cape Metropole area. The sampling approach used was purposive sampling as it selects information-rich cases for in-depth study (Patton 1990:182). Information-rich cases are those from which one can learn a great deal about issues of central importance to the purpose of the research (Patton 1990:173). This was relevant as the research intended to provide in-depth descriptions of single fathers' experiences and parenting styles.

A homogenous sampling strategy (Patton, 1990) was used when selecting participants for the research, as it involved picking a small homogenous sample, which were single fathers. The

purpose of this was to describe this particular subgroup in-depth. This sampling strategy was selected as it fitted the purpose of the study.

Single fathers were recruited through non-governmental organisations (NGOs) such as the Child Welfare Society (for the purpose of this study CWS), Fathers for Justice and Sonke Gender Justice. The first NGO, CWS, is a child protection agency and it was used as it has broad jurisdiction in the Cape Metropole area. The second organisation, Sonke Gender Justice Network, has a project - the Fatherhood project - that works and engages with fathers directly. The third choice of NGO - Fathers for Justice South Africa - is an organisation which works in empowering fathers. Enquiries were made regarding access to single fathers and an invitation was extended to suitable participants. Participants had to meet the following criteria: be single fathers and the primary care giver to their children for more than a year; and the dissolution of the union with the other parent should not have been too recent. The reason for the latter criterion was that there should not be any possible emotional constraints during the interview process due to dissolutions being too recent. During this study, the researcher experienced no major constraints that affected the interview process.

Sample size, as identified by Patton (1990), depends on what the researcher wants to know, the purpose of the inquiry, what is at stake and what will be useful and credible, as well as what can be done with the available time and resources. As the researcher sought to explore and describe experiences and parenting styles of single fathers, 6 single fathers across all cultures were invited to participate

1.6.4. Data collection procedures

Interviewing is the predominant mode of data collection in qualitative research. Individuals or groups, who the researcher expects to have knowledge about a phenomenon and able to contribute rich information, are used for interviews (De Poy & Gilson, 2008). After information was given on the project by using an information sheet (Annexure A), individual semi-structured interviews were conducted with each participant. Researchers use this method of interviewing in order to gain a detailed picture of a participant's beliefs about and perceptions or accounts of a particular topic. The researcher had an interview schedule (Annexure C) with pre-determined questions during the semi-structured interviews. The interview was however flexible and not dictated by the questions (Smith, Harré & Van

Langenhoven, 1995). The researcher asked the same questions of each single father. The semi-structured interview guided the researcher throughout the interviews. During the interviews, the researcher made use of interviewing techniques such as probing to get more detail on the perceptions of participants.

1.6.4.1. In-depth Interviewing

In-depth interviewing is a qualitative research technique that involves conducting intensive individual interviews with a small number of respondents to explore their perspectives on a particular idea, programme or situation (Boyce & Neil, 2006).

The researcher conducted in-depth interviews with single fathers as it it provided a way for the researcher to journey into the single father's perspective, and it was useful when the researcher wanted detailed information about the single father's thoughts and behaviours and to explore new issues in depth. Boyce and Neil (2006) highlight that the primary advantage of in-depth interviews, is that they provide much more detailed information than what is available through other data collection methods, such as surveys. Considering personal experiences and perspectives were discussed with particpants, the researcher needed to use a method that created and provided a more relaxed atmosphere and where single fathers felt comfortable to express themselves. It is suggested that people may feel more comfortable having a conversation about their experiences as opposed to filling out a survey (Boyce & Neil, 2006). It is for this reason that the researcher felt this method was the most appropriate to explore and describe single fathers' parenting experiences.

1.6.5. Data Analysis

The researcher used Creswell's (2013) data analysis spiral for the purpose of this study, as well as an external coder to ensure rich data. Once accuracy was confirmed, common themes were identified in a thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006) and conclusions drawn about the phenomenon of single father's experiences of parenting. When analysing the data, Creswell's (2013) steps were implemented. These steps are as follows;

a) Organise and prepare the data for analysis by transcribing all interviews. All interviews were transcribed by the researcher.

b) Read through all data to obtain a general sense of the information. Researcher read through the interviews and made notes in the margin to get a sense of the whole.

c) Begin a coding process by organising information into different categories/themes and labelling those categories/themes. The central task of data analysis is to identify common themes in people's descriptions of the experiences. (Leedy & Ormrod, 2013). For the purpose of this study, a detailed discussion of the identified themes conveyed the findings of the analysis.

d) Generate a description of the themes for analysis. Themes were developed for analysis.

e) Advance how the description of themes will be represented in the qualitative narrative. For this study, a narrative passage was used to provide a detailed discussion of several themes that has emerged.

f) Make an interpretation or meanings of the data. This was done by comparing the findings to the information gathered from the literature or existing theories.
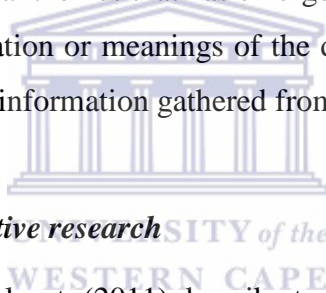
1.6.6. Trustworthiness in qualitative research

De Vos, Strydom, Fouché and Delport, (2011) describe trustworthiness as a mechanism used during the process of research to incrementally contribute to ensuring reliability and validity of the collected data. Furthermore, validity and reliability are two factors which any qualitative researcher should be concerned about while designing a study, analysing results and judging the quality of the study (Patton, 2002). Creswell, (2007) highlights that validity means the researcher checks the accuracy of the study by employing certain procedures. When measuring the trustworthiness of the data, three criteria were taken into account, namely credibility, dependability, and conformability (D'Cruz & Jones, 2004).

The following are brief descriptions of each of the strategies used to ensure trustworthiness, according to Patton (2002). A more detailed account is covered in chapter three.

Patton (2002) integrates constructivism and social constructionism, identifyies standards of quality and credibility as acknowledging and even embracing subjectivity. Single fathers' views and experiences are subjective, thus ensuring credibility of the study.

The researcher ensured credibility by using tactics to help ensure honesty by informants when contributing data. In particular, single fathers who were approached were each given the opportunity to refuse to participate in the research. This was done to ensure that the data collection process invovled only those who were genuinely willing to take part and prepared to offer data freely (Shenton, 2003). Member checks (Guba & Lincoln, 1989) are considered the most important provision that can be made to ensure credibility of the study.

Transcriptions were discussed with single fathers to ensure that they reflected their views and not those of the researcher. Previous research findings were examined to assess the degree to which the research results are congruent with previous findings (Shenton, 2003). Findings were contrasted and compared with existing literature; a description of this can be found in chapter four. Credibilty was also achieved through prolonged engagement with the single fathers.

In addressing the strategy of dependability, the researcher employs techniques to show that if the study is to be repeated, in the same context with the same methods and the same participants, similar results would be obtained (Shenton, 2003). To ensure credibility of the study, in-depth coverage of the research methodology used and its implementation is found in chapter three.
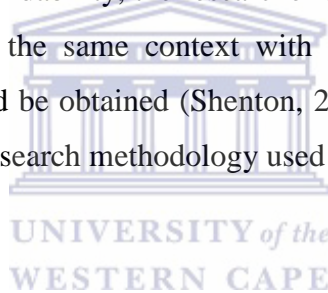
Transferability is achieved when the researcher provides sufficient information about the self and the research context, processes, participants and the researcher-participant relationships to enable the reader to decide how findings may transfer (Morrow, 2005). Transferability is ensured by providing a very detailed description of the research situation and methods applied which is found in chapter three.Direct quotations from the transcribed data in the findings are found in chapter four and literature strengthens the information in the quotations to ensure transferability in chapter two.

Finally, conformability is based on the acknowledgment that research is never objective. It addresses the core issue that "findings should represent, as far as is (humanly) possible, the situation being researched rather than the beliefs, pet theories, or biases of the researcher" (Gasson, 2004:93). Here, steps were taken to ensure that the findings of the research are the results of the experiences and ideas of the singles fathers. This was done by providing thick descriptions of the singles fathers' experiences through verbatim quotes.

1.7. Ethics considerations

The Senate Higher Degrees Committee of the University of the Western Cape approved the research and provided ethical clearance for the study. Participation was voluntary and participants gave permission for the use of a voice recorder during interviews. The researcher assured participants that they could withdraw from the research study at any stage. The researcher also prepared participants for possible emotional reactions due to the research and offered to refer them to another person for counselling if necessary. However, this did not occur in this study. There was no violation of privacy by the researcher. The researcher ensured anonymity and confidentiality during the study by using pseudonyms for the participants. Before interviews, participants were informed about the purpose of the study through an information sheet (Annexure A) and an informed consent form (Annexure B) was signed by participants The data was stored in a safe place and only the researcher had the password for the data.

1.8. Significance and limitations of the study

The limitations and significance of a study are those charecteristics of design methodology that will impact or influence the interpretation of findings (Price & Murman, 2004). The study is significant as it seeks to explore and describe the experiences of single father parenting in the Cape Metropole area. This is not a well researched topic and very limited literature is available on it. Therefore, this research will add to the literature on the topic and improve the knowledge base of professionals working in this area. It can contribute specifically to the development of programmes, support sytems and interventions for single fathers. A limitation of the study is that it focused on parenting experiences of single fathers in the Cape Metropole and therefore the findings of the study may only be applicable to this area. Another limitation of the study is that it excluded the views and perceptions of the children as only single fathers participated in the research. The sample size was intended to be comprised of eight single fathers but due to single fathers' lack of interest and the availability of single fathers, the study was limited to six fathers. The final limitation identified is that single father parenting is an understudied population resulting in limited available empirical research.

1.9. Definition of concepts

Family – A family is an intergenerational social group organised and governed by social norms, regarding descent and affinity, reproduction, and the nurturant socialisation of the young (White, 1991:7).

Family structure is the composition and membership of the family and the organisation and patterning of relationships among individual family members (Mosby's Medical Dictionary, 2013).

Parenting is the process of promoting and supporting the physical, emotional, social and intellectual development of a child from infancy to adulthood. It entails the activity of raising a child rather than biological relationships, which is usually done by the biological parents of the child in question (Draft Integrated Parenting Framework: Department of Social Development, 2011).

Parent-child relationship refers to the quality of the emotional bond between the child and the parents (mother and father or significant parental figure) and the degree to which this bond is mutual and sustained over time (Lezin, Rolleri, Bean & Taylor, 2004).
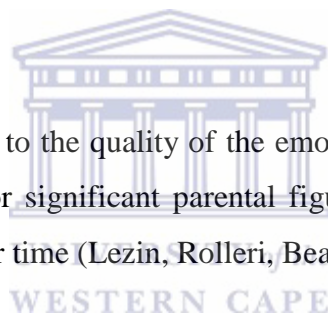
Child care is, where appropriate, to provide the child with suitable living place and conditions conducive to health, financial support, safegauarding and promoting well-being, protecting the child, guiding education, respecting the child's rights, and guiding behaviour (Childrens Act, 2005. No. 38 of 2005).

Single Parents – Single parenting can be defined as a parent not living with a spouse or partner due to divorce, death or separation or choice to solely rear children and who has most of the day-to-day responsibilities of raising a child or children.

Single Fathers – A single father is a male single parent. For the purpose of this study, the single father is an uncoupled individual who shoulders most or all of the day-to-day responsibilities for raising a child or children.

Fatherhood – Although fatherhood has become a popular area of research, there is no universally agreed upon definition of the term. Researchers distinguish between biological, economic (breadwinner) and social fatherhood (Burgess & Russell, 2003; Morrell, 2006).

Masculinity (also referred to as boyhood, manliness, or manhood) is a set of attributes, behaviours and roles generally associated with boys and men. Masculinity is made up of both socially-defined and biologically-created factors, distinct from the definition of the male biological sex (Van den Wijngaard, 1997).

Social constructionism – Social constructionism may be defined as a perspective that believes a great deal of human life exists as it does, due to social and interpersonal influences (Gergen 1985).

Hegomonic masculinity - The concept of hegemonic masculinity can be understood as the pattern of practices that allowed men's dominance over women (Connell, 2005).

1.10. Structure of the thesis

This chapter dealt with the introduction, theoretical background and rationale of the study. It provided a description of the research question, the goal and objectives as well as the research methodology, including the method of data collection and ethical issues considered. The following is a brief description of the five chapters:

Chapter One introduced single fatherhood and provided a context, as well as a background for the study. The chapter gave broad information about single father parenting in South Africa and the parenting experiences of single fathers. It also presented an overview on the importance of this study and the methodology that was used to conduct the study, by discussing the research questions, aims, objectives, theoretical background, definitions, motivation and the significance of the study.

Chapter Two explores the theoretical framework of the study. A discussion of the Social Constructionism Theory (Gergen, 1985) and Hegemonic Masculinity Theory (Connell, 2005) followed as theoretical frameworks. These theories are theoretically sound paradigms and are presented to provide a baseline and background to consider when discussing single father

parenting. The chapter provides an in-depth perspective on the literature pertaining to the study. This includes how single fathers construct different roles that influence the traditional perception of fathering roles. It further provides a global perspective on single father parenting, experiences and the roles employed by single fathers.

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Chapter Three describes the research design and methodology, which employed a qualitative research design with an interpretivist approach. The chapter also discusses sampling procedures, data collection, data analysis and the issues of trustworthiness, reflexivity and ethical considerations. It ultimately reaches a conclusion.

Chapter Four presents the findings and the discussion. It explores several themes and sub-themes related to fatherhood: the challenges of single fatherhood; experiences rearing their children, the roles employed. This section of the study will serve to illuminate the direct voices and experiences of these men. The researcher will highlight the daily tasks, routines, and responsibilities of single fathers. The research, however, moves beyond the surface of their physical parental duties and roles. Light will be shed on the emotions, feelings, and attitudes towards their parental duties and roles.

Chapter Five presents the conclusions, recommendations and suggestions for further research on this topic.
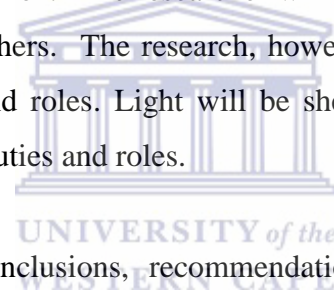
Chapter two

Literature Review

This chapter explores the theoretical framework utilised for this study and reviews of the emperical literature for the study. There are limited studies on single fathers which is why this study is an important addition.

In order to successfully advance the understanding of single fathering, it is important to consider that individuals form their behaviours and lives in terms of the experiences and expectations influencing them (Berger & Luckman, 1991). The first section of the chapter is a discussion of social constructionist theory (Gergen, 1985) and the theory of hegemonic masculinity (Connell, 2005) as theoretical frameworks. These theories are theoretically sound paradigms and are presented to provide a background and an in-depth perspective on how single fathers construct different roles that influence the traditional perceptions of fathering roles and masculinity, in particular, hegonomic masculinity.

The second section reviews empirical literature related to the study. In this section, a selection of viewpoints from both South African and international researchers and authors will be highlighted and discussed. It further provides a global perspective on family structures, single father parenting, experiences and roles employed by single fathers.
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2.1. Theorectical Framework

The theorectical framework is the structure that can hold or support a theory of a research. It introduces and describes the theory that explains why the research problem under study exists (Swanson & Chermack, 2013). The theoretical framework plays an important role in guiding the entire process of the research study. To follow is a detailed discussion of the theoretical framework used in this study.

2.1.1. Social Constructionism

Social constructionism accepts that there is an objective reality. It is concerned with how knowledge is constructed and understood. Social constructionists view knowledge and truth as created not discovered by the mind (Schwandt, 2003).

Craib (1997), a sociologist and psychotherapist, suggests that social constructionism is no more than a coping mechanism for dealing with rapid change; it embraces change in order to avoid having to defend or justify one's position on anything. This is relevant to this study, as it explains why and how single fathers take on and construct alternative roles when placed in a position of having to do so.

Social constructionism may be defined as a perspective which believes that a great deal of human life exists as it does due to social and interpersonal influences (Gergen, 1985). Gergen (1985) further proposes that everything people "know" or "see" as reality is partially socially situated.

In social constructionism, individuals are considered to be the experts about their own lives. Social constructionist theory is grounded on four key assumptions (Burr, 2003) which form the basis of the difference between post-modernism and traditional psychological perspectives. Firstly, social constructionist theory challenges conventional knowledge that has historically guided our understanding of how the world should be. Secondly, there is a belief that the language and concepts we use to generally understand the world are historical and cultural. Thirdly, knowledge is constructed through social processes and finally, negotiated understanding (social constructions) is considered to be practices that affect social life rather than being abstractions from it (Corey, 2012). The reason for the use of this framework is that all four key assumptions iilustrate roles single fathers construct as they solely rear and care for their children. Single fathers are seen as breadwinners and dispassionate leaders. Social constructionism challenges this conventional thinking. The argument here is that single fathers can construct certain behaviours when encountered with social process (Burr, 2003).

Butler (2006) suggests that when considering the social construction of gender, there is no inherent truth to gender; it is constructed by social expectations and gender performance. According to Butler (2006), "doing gender is not about acting in a particular way, but about embodying and believing certain gender norms and engaging in practices that map on to those norms".

Social Constructionists would say that gender is interactional rather than individual, as it is developed through social interactions. So, if individuals develop through interactions with

others, the construction of fathering and fathering roles could be expanded upon and the nurturing role that mothers only possess could be socialised and included in fathering. Ratele, Shefer and Clowes (2012) highlight that there is no single fathering model that will work for all men and that if adult men are invested in positive masculinity, and engage in care giving, it may shift dominant versions of masculinity to a more nurturant home experience. As stated by Corey (2012:362), for some social constructionists, the process of "knowing" includes a distrust of the dominant cultural positions that permeate families and society today, particularly when the dominant culture exerts a destructive impact on the lives of those who live beyond the margins of what is generally considered as normal.

Single father parenting, traditionally is not considered normal and the roles that these fathers employ are not considered to be part of the male gender norms.

Corey (2012) confirms this by implying that change begins by destroying the power of cultural narratives and then proceeds to the construction of a new life of meaning.

2.1.1.1 Social constructionism and single fathers

The social constructionism perspective argues that sex roles are not determined by nature but shaped by the world around us and daily interactions with others (Cornwall & King 2005; Risman 2004; West & Zimmerman 1987). In turn, masculine and feminine acts are not immutable traits but role requirements shaped by social expectations and interactions. Sequentially, single parenthood is likely accompanied by the practice of caregiving regardless of a lone parent's gender (Nord, Brimahall & West, 1997; Risman, 1986, 1998), and single fathers may take up the role of mother in the absence of a female partner. It suggests that single fathers engage in similar parent–child activities compared to single mothers or that they may engage more with children than their married male counterparts (Cheng & Wu, 2016). The "traditional" father is often defined by characteristics like authority, the breadwinner role and emotional distance. The "modern" father is a friend to his 'kids' and shares nurturing and housework with his spouse (Smidova, 2007). Social constructionism allows for single fathers to construct roles, traits and behaviours. This allows for a shift from the ideal where they were primarily involved in the economic support of the family, discipline and control of children to a view that fathers can play a direct role in the care of their children (Lamb, 1995).

2.1.2. Masculinities

Masculinity (also referred to as boyhood, manliness, or manhood) is a set of attributes, behaviours and roles generally associated with boys and men. Masculinity is made up of both socially-defined and biologically-created factors distinct from the definition of the male biological sex (Matin & Finn, 2010).

Masculinity as a term is an aspect of the theoretical frame of gender (West & Zimmerman, 1987). Connell (1995, 2000, 2005) further states that there are different masculinities within the system of gender and that they carry various degrees of influence with them, and that the relations between them are not solid but that they are subject to more or less change over time.

According to Connell (2000), societal models for gender identity connect femininity with the domestic regions of life and masculinity with the outside world and money. In a paper presented by Hill (2003) in the 1970s in Sweden, efforts were made to create a new role for males, emancipating them and making them more harmonious than they supposedly were before. Male groups were formed to discuss the male role, and how to evolve it and to engage in masculinity (Lundström, 2010). The Swedish government backed the following declaration of principles:

"*A policy which attempts to give women an equal place with men in economic life while at the same time confirming woman's traditional responsibility for the care of home and children have no prospect of fulfilling the first of these aims. This can be realised only if the man is also educated and encouraged to take an active part in parenthood and is given the same rights and duties as the woman in his parental capacity* (Sandlund 1968:4).*"

Here the social roles of women as well as men were questioned which gave birth to the concept of the new man, and came to epitomise the vision of a new child-oriented masculinity (Klinth, 2002). This new man concept was discussed in terms of liberation, but acquired a strong moral charge through its ties to conceptions of modernity, enlightenment, democracy, and health (Klinth, 2002).

This was opposed by many and did not have a significant effect on the discourse but it is worth mentioning as there was an attempt to change and alter perceptions and ideas on how male behaviour could and should best be carried out.

2.1.2.1. Hegemonic masculinity

In gender studies, hegemonic masculinity (Connell, 2005) is the gender practice that guarantees the dominant social position of men and the subordinate position of women. It embodies the most common way of being a man or a man's role in society and it requires all other men to position themselves in relation to it. According to Connell (2005), the concept of hegemonic masculinity can be understood as the pattern of practices that allowed men's dominance over women.

2.1.2.1.1. Hegemonic masculinity and single fathers

The critical studies of masculinities concern the position of men in a gender role and the relationship between fathering and masculinity is that the idea of a 'good father' has 3 core functions (Ruddicks, 1997) which are: provision, protection and authority. They are outlined as the following:

- Provision – the good father can be defined as the breadwinner or sole provider of his children.
- Protector – the good father can be defined as the primary protector of his children and home. Ruddick (1997) describes and links this component to 'ultimate sacrifice', where men are required to display qualities of strength, bravery and responsibility.
- Authority – the good father can be defined as the judge and disciplinarian of his children.

Ruddicks (1997) suggests that these components all play a particularly important role in hegemonic fatherhood (the traditional father) and constitutes hegemonic masculinity theory. Hegemonic masculinity (Connell 2005:77) has been defined as "the configuration of gender practice which embodies the currently accepted answer to the problems of the legitimation of patriarchy, which guarantees the dominant social position of men and the subordinate position of women". Connell further contends that the concept of hegemonic masculinity can be understood as the pattern of practices that allowed men's dominance over women. The traditional father role is dominated by hegemonic masculinity, as it requires men to distance

themselves from all feminine activities.   Since child care and nurturing is considered feminine, role strain is experienced by the traditional father. In his critique of hegemonic masculinity, Connell (2005:846) rejects the idea of hegemonic masculinities and states "hegemony works in part through production of exemplars, (e.g. professional sports stars); symbols that have authority despite the fact that most men and boys do not fully live up to them" He further proposes that hegemonic masculinity does not need to be the most traditional pattern in the everyday lives of men.

Fatherhood in the biological sense is related to hegemonic masculinity. Men and fathers are "boxed in" to certain roles and the constraints of hegemonic masculinity can cause internal conflict. This raises the question of whether these single fathers are able to include feminine associated elements, such as nurturing, in their fathering identities and roles.

Bekkengen (2003) adds that all men do not strive for identical ways of being men and that some seek alternative ways of life. Dowd (2000:183) on the other hand, ties "fathering to manliness only as a demonstration of virility - the ability to produce a child - not as the conduct of caretaking and nurturing". Ruddicks (1997) suggests that this is a particularly important role in hegemonic fatherhood as this is the role of the father because of the gender values that he is deemed to represent: man of reason versus a mother of emotion.

To understand how men experience single fathering and its unique issues, hegemonic masculinity needs to be explored in its fathering context. Hegemonic masculinity portrays a man to be a breadwinner, provider and dispassionate leader, hence the reason for little attention and research on issues experienced by single fathers. The performance of men as breadwinners and head of the family and home, ignoring the shift to a nurturing type of father, has been a key factor in many empirical studies (Hendrick, Swartz & Bhana, 2010; Mfecane, 2008; Morell, 2006; Ratele in Visser & Moleko, 2012). So the question of whether the practice of single fathering comes close to the normative ideal provided by the media of how a modern child-orientated father should be and should behave or whether it does not. Connell (1995, 2000) points out that femininity is strongly connected to the domestic regions of life and masculinity with the outside world and money. The sole financial burden could be seen as enhancing the single father on the one hand and changing his gender ideology on the other. In an article by Robb (2004), there is a discussion on issues in relation to fatherhood and identity. Robb (2004) suggests that the experiences of fatherhood that negotiate their

identities as fathers and as men, need to be understood psycho-socially. He further proposes that men's identities as fathers need to be viewed as the product of both social and internal processes, re-iterating the social constructionist view.

Hegemonic masculinity requires that all activities associated with women be avoided and since nurturing is constructed as feminine, it is unmanly for a man to nurture. Dowd (2000) envisages a redefined fatherhood where fathers will be more engrossed in nurturing activities, such as care giving, intimacy and emotional aspects and this would be healthier for men, as many men would not be rendered emotionally illiterate and starved of intimacy in friendships and sexual relationships.

2.2. Review of literature
2.2.1. Introduction

Society's contentment with the fact that fathers nurture their children far less than mothers do, reflects a view of the expectations and suggested role that a father should play in rearing their children (Dowd, 2000). In order to grasp single father parenting, a selection of viewpoints from both South African and international researchers and authors will be highlighted and discussed.   Furthermore, a global perspective is provided on family structures, single father parenting, experiences and roles employed by single fathers.

Literature relating to the family will firstly be explored, with attention given to alternative family forms and changes in family norms. After this discussion, the focus will move to fatherhood which explores areas relating to the legal rights of fathers, the phenomonen of single fathers and lastly, single fathers' parenting roles and experiences.

2.2.2. Defining a family

In many cultures of the world, the origin of the family is set in creation myths. Creation myths are defined as symbolic stories describing how the world began and how people first came to inhabit it. The task of defining the family is not a simple one and the difficulty is derived from the mythology surrounding the concept of family (Anderson & Sabatelli, 2011:4). In trying to define what constitutes a family, the most common definition of family which is of religious origin (Bala, 1994) is a hetrosexual couple living with their biological children under the same roof (Harris & Goodall, 2008).

The traditional 1950s' family structure that society believed in became academically known as the nuclear family: "the basic family building block, which consisted of a mother, father and at least one child" (Anderson & Sabatelli, 2011:18). This family depicted an expectation that the mother stayed at home with the children while the father went out to work. The traditional nuclear family has been the most normative family model in most Western societies and the most common family formation is between heterosexual adults. The Merriam Webster Online Dictionary (2013) provides a medical classification of family, describing it as "A family is the basic unit in society, traditionally consisting of two parents rearing their child / children". This has given rise to the belief that nuclear families in Western culture are flawless and are a very successful family form to rear children (Simon, 2011) as the couple is happily married and the children feel nurtured and supported and each member's physical and emotional needs are met (Anderson & Sabatelli, 2011).

However, this common heterosexual family has been disrupted and various alternative units have emerged due to circumstances, such as death of spouse, divorce, separation or unintended pregnancy. In South Africa, the HIV/AIDS pandemic has also contributed to the demise of the nuclear family. The Green Paper on Families Promoting Family Life and Strengthening Families in South Africa, (Department of Social Development 2011:16) affirms this by implying that the forces that have weakened family life are absent fathers, the HIV/AIDS epidemic as mentioned, high levels of poverty and inequality, gender inequalities, unwanted pregnancies and the high number of orphaned children. Social changes in the Western world have lead to changes in the above-mentioned definition. Broader definitions of the "family label" such as those proposed in Objective family Diversity School of Thought, e.g. associations, relationships, living, emotional and financial support, recognise that the definition of family are subjective and governed by social forces (Harris & Goodall, 2008).

Anderson & Sabatelli (2011) note that despite the diverse forms of families, families share common tasks that they must execute and they must develop unique interaction patterns and dynamics to manage these tasks. In efforts to highlight common features of families while embracing the complexity and diversity found within them, a family needs to be viewed as a system (Bowen, 1978). From a family systems perspective, a family is an interdependent group of individuals which has a shared sense of history, experiences some degree of

emotional bonding, and devises strategies for meeting the needs of individual members and groups as a whole (Anderson & Sabatelli, 2011:18). When viewed as a system, the family is defined by two central dimensions, structure and tasks. Structure refers to the composition and organisation of the family; composition referring to the persons that make up the family; and organisation refers to the unique set of rules governing the patterns of interaction. Tasks refer primarily to the common and essential responsibilities of the family members (Anderson & Sabatelli, 2011:6). From a systems theory perspective, the family is expected to be heterosexual whereas the social constructionists would interrogate this viewpoint.

2.2.3. Changes of family form norms over time in the South African context

There is a general consensus in defining families as social groups that are related by blood, marriage, adoption or affiliation with close emotional attachments to each other that continue over time and go beyond a physical residence (Amoateng & Ritcher, 2003).

In a multi-cultural, multiracial and evolving society, such as South Africa, this definition of the family is deemed most appropriate as there is a diversity of non-nuclear family systems. In most Western societies, the traditional nuclear family is the most normative family system and the most common family formation is between heterosexual adults. Therborn (2006) states that the African continent is of global interest for its salient and unique featuresof family systems. Within the South African context, polygamy and homosexual 'married' couples' right to adopt children (Civil Unions Act, 2006) have also added to the development of these alternative family units.

In a synopsis of South African family structures provided by the University of South Africa (2010), 5 major family structures were identified, namely nuclear, extended, child-headed, single–parenting and multi–generational families (Sherriff, Seedat & Suffla, 2010). Steyn (1995) conducted an investigation into urban family households' structures within South Africa. She reported that the "true nuclear family" which comprised of the husband, wife, and children was the most common family structure found amongst all population groups.

Robinson (1991:302) notes that as a South African society we have now moved beyond the nuclear family. Contributing factors are the HIV/AIDS epidemic, development of informal settlements, the increasing divorce rate, polygamous families and homosexual married couples' right to adopt children (Civil Unions Act, 2006). Dintwat (n.d.) noted an interesting

observation in a study conducted on family structure in Botswana. This observation is similar to the formation of family structures within the South African context and will be deliberated shortly. According to Dintwat (n.d.) there are a few considerable socio-economic changes that add to the altering of traditional family structures such as education, health care, employment and most commonly, enforced separation such as migration (Sunde & Bozalek, 1995). He points out that labour migration is a common factor that weakens the family structure, as husbands or fathers are separated from their families for long periods, resulting in the mother rearing the children, causing immense strain on the family structure and leading to breakdown of domestic control. These migrant workers then indulge in extramarital relationships, resulting in babies being born elsewhere which ultimately causes the dissolution of the union. The African continent is of global interest for its salient and unique features of family systems (Therborn, 2006) but similarities can be closely linked to the African-American family. The African-American family structure, which is based on two models, one in which the father is viewed as a patriarch and the sole breadwinner and the other with the mother who takes on a matriarchal role in a "broken" household as fathers often had to leave their homes to work. Researchers theorise that the low economic status of the freed slaves in the 1850s led to the current family structure of African-American families (Ruggles, 1994). Other contemporary forces that shaped African-American families were rural to urban migration, racism, poverty and urbanisation. These factors are similar to the formation of alternative family forms in the South African context.

Another contributing factor to the dissolution of the traditional nuclear family in South Africa is the apartheid government and the Group Areas Act. This mainly affected families which were not white. The Group Areas Act of 1950 (Act No. 41 of 1950) was implemented in South Africa on 27 April 1950. The Act relocated racial groups to separate residential and business sections in urban areas in the implementation of the system of apartheid. Apartheid provided the policy framework for the social, economic, political, and legal segregation of South African whites, blacks, Indians, and coloureds.

The definition of what constitutes a family differed according to the various departments dealing with different populations groups (Sunde & Bozalek, 1995) and the experiences of families were mediated by gender, race, class, language, age and ethnic power relations. During the apartheid era, the urban housing structure catered specifically for the needs of the nuclear family, which was commonly found amongst the "white culture" (Bester, 1994). This

resulted in a shortage of housing for the extended polygamous black family. Black families had to adjust and adapt to the apartheid system, which caused social problems such as overcrowding and the development and formation of townships and informal settlements. Migration and influx control laws (Bester, 1994) further contributed to the splitting up of families and formation of alternative family forms, such as single parenting as men/fathers were forced to seek employment in urban areas and women and the elderly were left behind in the rural areas to look after the children. The work of Morrell (2006: 74) asserts that the migrant labour system caused disruptions in all aspects of family life, including the formation of alternative family structures. Mathambo & Gibbs (2009) state that families are subjected to a number of social, economic, political and demographic challenges. The South African apartheid system inspired migration into urban areas for better educational and employment opportunities and as a result there has been the development of many informal settlements.

The HIV/AIDS pandemic has further impacted on this already disadvantaged community due to its far reaching social, economic and health consequences. The epidemic is equally a contributing factor in the formation of alternative family forms within South Africa with the elderly having to raise orphaned and abandoned grandchildren as well as the formation of single parent households and child-headed households due to AIDS-related deaths.

2.2.4. Alternative family systems - single parent family

For the purpose of this research, single parenting is viewed as the alternative family system. Single parenting can be defined as a parent not living with a spouse or partner due to divorce, death or separation or choice to solely rear children and who has most of the day-to-day responsibilities of raising a child or children (Ambert, 2006). Single parenting is on the increase in South Africa and in a recent press release by the South African Institute of Race Relations "Only 33% of South African children are growing up living with both parents. Just over 39% live with their mother and 4% with their father" (SAIR, 2011)

Bigombe and Gilbert (2004) perceptively state that South African apartheid policies in many forms impacted on family cohesion and that the high number of single parent households is a legacy of apartheid. Evidence of this legacy can be found in a post-apartheid study conducted between 1995 and 2003 by Keeton (2004) which found that there has been a significant increase in single parenting amongst all races between the ages of 25 and 35. Granted that

this is a common family system in South Africa, it is important to note that it is not confined to South Africa. The United States, followed by German and Austria, have the highest proportion of children born to single parents than any other Western countries (Gonzales, 2004).

Kotwal and Prabhakar (2009) highlight an interesting point by noting that in India, the main reason for the formation of single parent households is widowhood. In the 1970s and 1980s, most single parent families were a result of divorce and in the 2000s, most single parents never married and this is now considered the causative factor for the creation of single parent households. Single parents face considerable obstacles and challenges, irrespective of its formation. Some of the issues that the single parent may encounter are lack of financial support, task overload, reduced time for personal pursuits, changes in the children's behavior and issues with discipline. Often these tasks can be overwhelming for the single parent. The burden of child care, earning a living and parenting falls on one individual and the single parent often shoulders the responsibility of the other parent.

The work of Bigombe and Gilbert (2004) indicates that a prevalent coping strategy in many South African single parent families, especially those among the lower income group, are taking their children to live with relatives, particularly the grandparents. This adds to to formation of another alternative family system, known as a multigenerational family system.

There has been extensive research, internationally and locally, on the topic of single parenting, namely McLanahan (2007) and Swisher (1997) and more recently Kotwal and Probhakar (2009) and Dlamini (2006). However, most of the studies focused on the framework of single mothers. Throughout the world, there is a common stereotype that women are better suited to nurturing children. As early as the 1830s and based on the presumption that females are better suited in nurturing children, British law gave maternal preference to custody of children under the age of seven. In a study conducted in South Africa in Cape Town in 1990, it was found that 50% of black marriages, irrespective if customary or civil, ended in divorce and after separation, custody of almost two-thirds of children was awarded to the mother (Mills, 2003). Confirming these findings, Zulu & Sibanda (2005), found that children born out of wedlock, were more likely to stay with their mother than their father. The prevalence of single mothers as single parents and the primary care giver is part of traditional trends between mothers and fathers, locally and internationally. The inherent notion of the nuclear family as well as other patriarchal family

forms is the concept of women as natural care givers and men as natural providers (Sunde & Bozalek, 1995).

In South Africa and world-wide, families come in all shapes and sizes, and each family is of equal value to the next. As family systems are constantly changing and evolving and it can be said that no family system is better than the other as each system holds unique values and characteristics as well as an equal amount of problems and successes, which depend on the people involved and not the family type itself (Simon, 2011). The existence of alternative family systems needs to be recognised and whether nuclear or alternative, families share common tasks that they must execute and they develop unique interaction patterns and dynamics to manage these tasks. Sunde & Bozalek (1995: 63) remind us that one cannot speak about "the family" in South Africa as there are many family systems and hence the notion of "families" is more appropriate.

2.2.5. Fatherhood

To provide a brief clarification of fatherhood, Tanfer and Mott (1997) suggest that a man enters fatherhood and becomes a father when he has his first child. The connection between masculinity and fatherhood is intricate from the empahisis placed on men to be breadwinners to a father's role in developing a son's male identity (Krivickas, 2010).
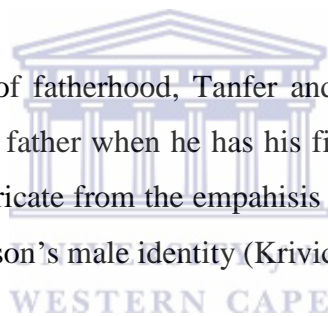
Over the past two centuries, Lamb (1995) claims that fatherhood has undergone significant transformation from the moral father to the breadwinner father, from gender role father to the new nurturing father. In the traditional model of fatherhood, fathers played a dominant role in the lives of their children. Rotundo (1985) describes the influence of the father in the traditional fatherhood model as pervasive and often exceeding the mother's responsibilities for the child.

Although child rearing roles, activities, duties and responsibilities that fathers are expected to perform and fulfil may change due to circumstances such as divorce or death of a spouse, he is always a father. The concept of the new man came to epitomise the vision of a new care-orientated masculinity (Klinth, 2002).

In the new involved father, active parenting was defined as the central component of fatherhood and also considered the index by which active parenting was assessed (Lamb,

1995). The new involved father was criticised for being a sensitive, caring and involved father because he was perceived as the father who learned to mother. Being an involved father can be defined in many more ways as suggested by Pleck and Masciadelli, (2004) and Marsiglio, Day and Lamb (2000). Father involvement enatils: a) direct interaction between a father and child, in playing and care taking; b) accessibility and how available the father is when the child needs him; c) responsibility or managing and providing resources for a child (doctors' appointments, daily tasks); and d) how fathers provide a support network for children as they grow up. Fathers' involvement can be both direct and indirect amd can change with age and developmental stages of the child. Palkovititz and Palm (2002) argue that a father can take on a more nurturing role with an infant child but act more as a teacher in the toddler years.

Jain, Saranga, Douglas, Betron and Fritz (2011), in a more recent study conducted in South Africa, state that men still face widespread pressures to express their manhood in more traditional ways and many men fear being mocked by other men and women for performing household duties or caring for their children. Regardless of this, more men are rejecting the traditional stereotype of fatherhood and manhood and challenging gender roles. This is a rejection of hegemonic masculinity. At the start of the nineteenth century, there was a shift from the agrarian to an industrial mode of production. Fathers now had to derive the status from the outside world and it is suggested that here is where the traditional paternal role began to erode (Tanfer & Mott, 1997).

Tanfer and Mott (1997) clarify and distinguish between the terminology fathering and fatherhood. Fatherhood is seen as a status attained by having a child and fathering includes the proactive act and all the child rearing roles that fathers must fulfil.

Ratele (in Visser & Moleko, 2012: 554) suggests that the fatherhood deficit discourse is further bolstered by psychological studies that are framed in a range of assumptions about what families should look like and how the gendered assumption that fathers play a significant and different role to the mothers in the parenting dyad.

2.2.6. Role of fathers in parenting

The normative ideas about how men and women, mothers and fathers as well as families should behave, shape parental responsibilities, and when society changes so do these ideas and norms change (Hirdman, 2001).

Parenting can basically be defined as the process of being a parent but the task is not that simple. Morrison (in Chan n.d.) defines it as a "process of developing and utilising the knowledge and skills appropriate to planning for, creating, giving birth to, rearing and/or providing for offspring". There are many diverse theories and opinions on what is considered the best way to parent or rear a child /children. One theory of parenting styles was developed by Baumrind (1991), where she proposed that parents fall in to three categories: Authoritarian – telling children what to do; Indulgent – allowing children to do whatever they wish; and Negligent – disregarding the children and focusing on their own needs and interest.

It is assumed that mothers and fathers pick up different parenting based on the sex of their child/ren. For instance, a father will employ strict authoritarian discipline on his son and milder and emotionally based discipline on his daughter.

The concept of 'role' is defined by Burgess (1995) as prescriptions and expectations of the self and others for behaviours that are required in particular situations. For many years, dating back to the Biblical era and other scriptural texts, fathers' primary role and responsibility were to ensure that their children grew up with an appropriate sense of values. Fathers play an important part in parenting and the degree of their involvement is sometimes dependent on cultural aspects. According to Lamb (1995), it was around the time of industrialisation that the primary focus shifted from moral leadership to breadwinning and economic support of the family.

Throughout the 20th century, fathers were urged to be involved (Griswold, 1993), and following feminist and scholarly critiques of masculinity and femininity, there emerged in the late 1970s a new concern with the new nurturing father, who played an active role in his children's lives (Lamb & LeMonde, 2004)

In contrast to previous theories of fathers' roles that mainly focused on the breadwinning role, scholars no longer believe that fathers fill an unidimensional and universal role in their

families and in their children's eyes. Researchers, theorists, and practitioners now recognise that fathers play a number of significant roles such as companions, care providers, spouses, protectors, models, moral guides, teachers, breadwinners. The importance of these roles varies across historical epochs and sub-cultural groups (Lamb & LeMonde, 2004).

According to Pleck (in Lamb, 1995), there are four different images of fathers that have been the focus over the past two centuries, namely:

The Moral Father: This father was perceived as dominated by responsibility for moral supervision and moral teaching. This father's role as a moral guardian was to ensure that the children were academically equipped to adopt and maintain Christian ways (Lamb, 1995).

The Breadwinner: This father's role came to be defined as the financial provider for the family. According to Pleck (1997), the conceptualisation of this father occurred in the nineteenth century during the Great Depression. Breadwinning became the most defining characteristic of fatherhood.

The Gender Role Model: The father's role as a moral father and breadwinner remained important roles but the focus shifted to the father's role as a gender model (Lamb, 1995). This was brought about after the Second World War when society became concerned that boys raised exclusively by women were becoming more feminised (Crouter, Perry-Jnkins, Huston & McHale, 2013). In response, family professionals called for fathers to become *buddies* with their sons, provide them with sexual education and serve as a model of masculine maturity.

The New Nurturant Father: This stage was reached in the mid-1970s (Lamb, 2004). It was during this time that fathers were beginning to be perceived as active, nurturing and care taking parents. Active parenting became the yardstick by which a good father would be assessed (Lamb, 1994). The new caring, sensitive and involved father was highly criticised and rejected by many scholars (Blankenhorn, 1995) as it appeared as though this father had learned to mother.

Theorists and social commentators have in the past emphasised only one paternal role at a time, with different functions attracting most attention during different historical epochs. The above descrriptions of the different images of fathers over time substantiates this. Fathers'

roles were altered and adjusted based on the situational need at the time. Although fathers have typically been perceived and judged by their breadwinning or provisioning, fathers fill other roles as well (Lamb & LeMonde, 2004).

Lamb (2004) furthermore adds that in the last decade, many scholars have moved beyond unidimensional characterisations of fathers as breadwinners or as persons who are dichotomously absent or present to acknowledging the numerous roles that fathers play in their families.

2.2.7. Change in idea of absent father

Contrary to the above, there are a significant number of children growing up in fatherless homes throughout the world. South African fathers have a notorious reputation of "being deadbeat fathers" and neglecting their paternal responsibilities (Ratele *et al*., 2012). According to Morrell and Ritcher (2006), in South Africa not all fathers are proud fathers and unfortunately, not all fathers want to participate in the lives of their children. However, this is not limited to South Africa. Studies in the United States and United Kingdom indicate a high prevalence of fatherless families (Blankenhorn, 1995; Dennis & Erdos, 2000). There is a stereotype that men are not interested in children and that fathers are "naturally ill-suited to parent" (Cronje, 2012).

Taking into account the reality of fatherless families, there are those fathers who are solely providing care to their children. The single father solely rearing his children is no longer considered a rare occurrence. Historically, death was assumed to be the key cause for the absence of a mother. Today, factors such as mothers' lack of interest in parenting, lost custody because of neglect and abuse, or when children actively desire to live with their fathers (Hook & Chalasani, 2008), have given rise to single father families. Today's father is no longer always the traditional married breadwinner and disciplinarian in the family, he can be single, a stay-at-home dad, adoptive or step-parent or gay, and certain factors have given rise to the changing role of the father.

2.2.8. The Phenomenon of Single Fathers

As countries experience an increase in the prevalence of marital dissolution, research on single-parent families rarely addresses single-father families because of the limited number of

lone fathers in society (Raymo, Park, Iwasawa & Zhou, 2014). In many Western countries, the mother is the main caretaker in most familes and the majority of parental separation cases.

Society's contentment with the fact that fathers nurture their children far less than mothers do, reflects a view of the expectations and suggested role that a father should play in rearing children. Fathers who raise their children on their own are an unusual phenomenon in many societies. The prevailing perception amongst fathers in society is that it is an unusual choice for men and one they were not raised and socialised to make (Silverstein, 1996; Hook & Chalasani, 2008) and they believe that single fathers are an understudied group that has much to tell us about gender and parenting. There are few detailed documented studies of single custodial fathers' experiences and parenting styles. Previous research on single fathers and their children has been limited in Africa but research was undertaken in the 1960s in Canada (Risman, 1986) and the USA (Chima, 1999). These studies not only focused on factual issues such as their social ecomonic profile and how they obtained custody but also explored their functioning and difficulites as fathers (Bronte-Tinkew, Scott & Lilja, 2010; Coles, 2015), their emotional adjustment and their relations with their children (Coles, 2015; Grief, 1995). Findings from these studies suggest that most fathers percieved their role as one of "Generative fathering" and attached supreme value to raising, education and nurturing their children on the same level as the mother (Powell & Downey, 1997). Ambert (2006) reported that the majority of these studies found that fathers delegate more responsibilities to their children snd at the same time enjoy greater respect from them. Single fathers were also less occupied with disciplinary matters and used more positive parenting behaviours and less authoritative behaviours (Hilton & Desrochers, 2000).

Early in the twentieth century, mothers were automatically granted custody of children, and this practice was sanctified in the doctrine of "the tender years" (Hook & Chalasani, 2008). This held the presumption that mothers were best suited to providing care for the child as their parenting skills were ordinarily superior to those of their husbands. Consideration is now given to what is in the best interest of the child. An interesting fact worth noting is that until the mid-nineteenth century, custody following a marital breakdown was typically awarded to fathers (Tanfer & Mott, 1997). Presently, in many Islamic countries, the father as a single parent is a common occurrence, that is because governments of these nations do not recognise the value and ability of women.

However these studies focused mainly on whether the single father was capable of solely caring and rearing their children and little attention was given to the lived challenges and experiences they faced. There is some evidence in a study conducted on single fathers by Chima (1999) that single fathers perceive a lack of social approval due to strong negative attitudes from family and professionals that only mothers are the proper primary caregivers.

In light of the above, father-custodian families still face unique problems because of fathers'/ males' status in society. The status exists in a clmate of prejudice, wariness and disapproval in the ability to perform as a single parent (Warshack, 1992).

As fathers are expected to be breadwinners and mothers are expected to be care givers, the ideology of intensive motherhood (Hays, 1996) sets standards for maternal care while defining male care givers as inadequate (Hook & Chalasani, 2008). The notion that maternal care is exclusive and that the primary caregiver has a gendered connotation, has been criticised by certain researchers. Hook and Chalasani (2008) report that single fathers face competing interactional pressures, to simultaneously act like mothers and also like men. McKeown (2001) confirms that by suggesting that many fathers experience the stress of having to combine investment with the involvement role, and being able to rely on the role model of their own father. As single fathers are now required to engage in the mothering role, they are considered to be in a unique position compared to other parent types. Single fathers have to face the pressure of being the sole primary care giver and sole primary breadwinner and are expected to modify their usual way of performing their parental role. In a traditional nuclear family, mothers are expected to supervise and care for the children while the father is at work, financially providing for the family. When single fathers are faced with the additional roles of providing supervision and protection to the child, homemaking and tending to the children's emotional needs, they have to make special psychological and sociological adjustments (Mendes, 1976). The nurturing aspect of fatherhood has been neglected due to the normative expectations of the good provider/father.

The role of the single father has not yet been institutionalised and these fathers perform their roles without role clarity and certainty. As when they became single fathers and assumed primary responsibility for child care and household maintenance, they are confronted with a lack of role clarity about their new parental status. Pollack (2000) suggests that men's nurturing urge, which is often suppressed in boy and adult socialisation tasks, can be stimulated dramatically by becoming a father.

Nevertheless, there are studies (Hilton & Desrochers, 2008) that found that becoming a single parent father can involve considerable role strain, such as role conflict and role overload as new roles are being added without others being taken away. Role strain refers to the amount of stress and individual experiences when the single father is unable to comply or has difficulty in complying with the expectations of a new role (Burr, 2003). It has been reported that single fathers cope better with the role of the provider than the role of the caretaker (Hilton & Desrochers, 2008) as men are more likely to have been socialised into the breadwinner role and women the caretaker role.

In a survey conducted in Canada on the role of a father as a single parent, Risman (1994) states that most men felt comfortable and competent as single parents, regardless of their financial status or their reason for attaining custody of children. Further findings in this survey suggest that single fathers are better situated than their female counterparts as they typically have higher education levels, are in the labour force and are well situated economically. Meyer and Garasky (1993) corroborated this survey, with a study conducted in the USA, which found that single fathers are more likely to be in the labour force and less likely to be poor than single mothers. More so than single mothers, single fathers are expected to be sole providers who are less likely to access government grants. However, McKeown (2001:24) does not support Meyer and Garasky's (1993) study as it is suggested that the reality of life for single fathers, as indeed for single mothers, is that most of them live in relatively disadvantaged circumstances; many of them have low levels of education and poor earning capacity; and many of them are not able to meet the cost of independently supporting a family.

While there is intervention and assistance by the state, such as grants and services to assist single parent families, McKeown (2001:6) notes that the predominant focus of services for families is on the mother rather than the father and there is a "good deal of research and practice to suggest that fathers tend to be avoided by professionals and possibly vice versa" Women are more willing to ask for help than men when a family problem arises and the low uptake of family services by men may be due as much to the way those services are designed and delivered (McKeown, 2001). This is corroborated in a limited study conducted by Chima (1999), where single fathers expressed that they experienced strong negative attitudes among family, teachers and professionals in that only mothers are proper primary care givers.

McKeown (2001: 6) expressed that not only do single fathers face exclusion from the labour force, which is an important source of identity and fulfilment but they also face a "deeper form of social exclusion from family life and an irreplaceable stakeholding in society through parenting their children either as breadwinners or homemakers or both". McKeown (2001) closely examines the factors which excludes single fathers from family life and identifies four barriers, namely: Ideological barriers which take the form of seeing single families from either a mother's perspective or a child's perspective but rarely from a father's perspective; Legal barriers which take the form of excluding the single father from full parental rights; Income support barriers which see to the administration of child support grants which supplant rather than support the breadwinning fathering role; and finally barriers through the absence of family support services for the parenting role of single fathers.

There is general agreement that single fathers are more involved with their children than married fathers (Cooksey & Fondell, 1996; Hawkins *et al*., 2006). However, these findings conflict with studies on the comparison of single mothers' and fathers' involvement.

Pleck and Masciadrelli (2004) conducted a study on parental time in engagement and accessibility, with engagement encompassing all forms of direct contact between parents and child, such as care and play; and accessibility which encompasses parents' availability. It was found that there are contradictory factors pushing fathers away and towards mothering, such as employment characteristics, household compositions and care arrangements.

Previous research on single fathers and their children has been limited and began in the 1960s in Canada (Risman, 1986). These studies focused mainly on whether the single father was capable of solely caring and rearing the child/children and little attention was given to the lived challenges and experiences they faced. Risman (1986) claims that single fathers are often expected to fulfil social roles for which they have not been trained or socialised. This raises the question of whether these single fathers feel competent to raise their children or whether their male sex role socialisation has been so overwhelmingly consistent that by adulthood, fathers have neither inclination nor aptitude to provide care for young children (Bandura & Walters, 1963). Jackson (1987) argues that fathers who express non traditional beliefs about parenting roles feel more competent in their roles as single parents. This suggests that all too often single fathers are put under the umbrella term, single parents. This is problematic since single fathers represent a unique group, with experiences, challenges that are different from that of their single mother counterparts.

2.2.9. Defining a good father

Researchers have been trying to decipher what being a good father entails. There is some controversy around whether it can be defined as a good provider, a good cook, a nurturer or a father that spends quality time with his children. Exum-Ferary (2012) draws attention to the notion that if men like to cook or nurture, it makes a man less of a man and threatens his masculinity as these activities are normally performed by females. She further suggests that financially providing for children is a key factor in being a father and a father who is not able to fully provide for his children is often looked upon as a bad father (Exum-Ferary, 2012).

Single fathers face distinctive problems because of their status in our culture. Warshack (1992) suggests that it creates difficulties in several domains and many people express doubts about fathers' ability to perform as single parents. Lamb (2004) points out that a good father is expected to be close but not too close, strong but not overwhelming. There has been a shift from the good father being concerned primarily with provider/breadwinner role to embracing a more ambiguous expectation of emotional involvement and responsiveness. There is no clear and distinct definition of a good father and there is no single father role to which single fathers should aspire. Lamb (2004) suggests that a successful father should be defined in terms of his child/children's development in which his role performance matches the demands and prescriptions of his socio-cultural context. Single fatherhood cannot be compared to single motherhood nor can it be defined in a similar context as when the norm is that father's role is solely that of a breadwinner it does not allow room for any other roles. When society is organised around the single earner model (Espring-Anderson, 1990), this self-image is held by the single father and he is likely to be in line, strive and aim for it. There needs to be a shift from the traditional view of fathering to a more accommodating perception so fathers' ideas and perceptions of their role within a family can be shifted.

2.2.10. The legal rights of single fathers

In a custody case, Van der Linde vs Van der Linde, 1996 3 SA 509 (O), a judicial precedent was created when the court held that "mothering" is indicative of a function rather than a persona and that a father is as capable of mothering a child as a mother (BKM, n.d.). Although this case set a precedent in South African law and fathers' rights, the number of fathers who want to be involved in their children's lives is still modest. Ratele *et al*. (2012) in an article, Talking South African Fathers, points out an understanding of this. It is

understood that there is a strong policy-based perception that South African family life is under pressure and a dominant view that South African fathers are not playing their role and that this perception is supported by a variety of scholarly and governmental sources (Ratele *et al* 2012: 553).

In section 19 of the Children's Act of 2005, parental rights and responsibilities is conferred upon mothers and sections 20 and 21 stipulate that fathers have the right to acquire these rights and responsibilities. It could be argued that the law discriminates between biological mothers and fathers, based on the assumption that the mother automatically attains rights and responsibilities based on their biological relationship to the child and fathers have to acquire these rights and responsibilities based on the outcome of a so-called "screening test". These provisions are stipulated in sections 20 and 21 of the Children's Act of 2005. Louw (2010: 13) implies that the discrimination against fathers has rather been found to lie in the prejudicial treatment of fathers arising out of their parenting roles and is thus based on gender. She further states that assigning parental responsibilities and rights to all mothers and not all fathers at birth is deemed discriminatory because it perpetuates harmful stereotypes and reinforces the message that the law still communicates the message that child care is a mother's duty and that fathers should not concern themselves with child care simply because it is not their job and they are incapable and unsuited for it (Louw, 2010: 15-16). On an international scale, this idea is still considered widespread. In an interview with American court judges, Artis (2004) found that half expressed support for mothers citing "mothers have natural instincts", and preference is still given to mothers.

To overcome the gender discrimination, Louw (2010) suggests affording fathers of children the same rights as mothers by abolishing the maternal preference and this will encourage fathers to play a more active role.

In the South African context and law, a number of Acts, namely the Constitution of South Africa, Act 108 of 1996, the Convention on the Rights of the Child of 1995 and the Childrens Act of 2005, emphasise the rights and interest of the child. These stipulate that the child's best interest is of paramount importance and that every child has a basic right to family and parental care, nutrition, shelter, protection against maltreatment, neglect and abuse. It does not suggest that only the mother can provide this but that any parent who is able to promote and ensure the child's physical, moral, emotional and spiritual welfare will be in the best interest of the child.

Throughout the world, there is a common typecast that women are better suited to nurturing children. The majority of research is focused on single mothers and single father research is limited to only a few studies. In South Africa, this new family system, has been evolving since 2007 with the injunction in the case of Van der Linde vs Van der Linde, 1996 3 SA 509 (O) where judicial precedent was created when the court held that 'mothering' is indicative of a function rather than a persona and that a father is as capable of mothering a child as a mother. Fathers have been made more aware of their rights and also wish to assert them.

2.2.11. The single father as a nurturer

In spite of women's dominance in taking care of the emotional responsibility of children, there is increasing evidence (Coltrane, 1996; Daly, 1993; Lupton & Barday, 1997; Pruett, 2000) that fathers can also be nurturing, affectionate, responsive and active with their children (Doucet, 2004). The findings about fathers' capabilities were evident in a Canadian study (Doucet, 2004) which found fathers capable of nurturing. Doucet (2004) identifies four aspects of nurturing, namely fun and playful side, physical and outdoor approach to caring, promoting children's independence and the encouragement of risk taking. One facet of the father's emotional connection with children is their role in facilitating processes of autonomy in children. It was found that fathers play a strong role in promoting the children's physical, emotional and intellectual independence. The majority of fathers involved in the study said that they responded differently from their female counterparts when children fell down or hurt themselves, either through physical play or through exploring (Doucet, 2004: 4).

The other aspect examined was risk taking. Doucet (2004) states that risk taking is closely linked with children's independence. Fathers present more masculine qualities in caring, as they would encourage their children to take risks rather than a cautious parental approach which is often displayed by mothers. In this study, three reasons emerge for single fathers having this approach. These are: the residue of gendered upbringing; strong beliefs held by mothers and fathers that mothering and fathering are inherently different as identities; and lastly, fathers mentioned social taboos around men and physical touching. Furthermore, fathers in this study expressed deep-seated differences between mother and father caregiving styles and perceived mothers as having a greater propensity towards emotional connection, nurturing and protection. In the everyday life of parents (Doucet, 2004), there is a great deal of emotional responsibility which is often assumed by the mother and it is frequently

expected that the mother will more readily take on the emotional responsibility for children. However, when mothers are not available, fathers do come to take on and fill that powerful and protective space and emotional responsibility is taken on. Doucet (2004) points out that when families are thrown into situations, mothers and fathers will act in ways that change their own deeply felt beliefs about nurturing and emotional responsibility.

Evidence of this was found in Doucet's (2004) study where single fathers admitted to becoming a different kind of father as a result of being on their own with their children. Fathers displayed care and nurture in ways that demonstrate qualities that would generally be considered masculine, for example physical play, outdoor sports, promotion of independence and risk taking. However, it was not clear whether these differences were differences in actions or differences in their deeply held beliefs about how men should act. Doucet (2004) explains that the perceptual weight attached to gender differences may at times supersede practices as there are deeply held gender scripts and discourses around mothers as the primary caregiver and fathers as the breadwinner (Luxton & Corman, 2011).

2.2.12. Single father's parenting experiences

Single parenthood in general has its own challenges. Research (Kowtal & Prabhakar, 2009) suggests that single parenting, especially when the household is headed by a woman, is a challenging duty for the single parent. There is very limited research on the actual experiences single fathers encounter when solely rearing their children. A common stressor found amongst single-parent households is that of financial burden. The financial burden, responsibility and upbringing of the child lie solely on the single parent. In South Africa, single mothers bear the financial burden of caring for their children because of the high maintenance default by fathers (Mills, 2003).

As single fathers are seen to be in a better financial position than females, they are less likely to experience a financial burden, attention will be drawn to the actual experiences and day-to-day practicalities single fathers encounter when assuming the primary caregiver role. There is very limited research on how men construct meaning for their caring activities and the circumstances under which they do so.

2.2.13. Parenting styles of the single father

According to Wickstroom (2010), men are socialised to be assertive rather than nurturing, breadwinners rather than caregivers, independent rather than orientated. Taking this into account, the process can be difficult as men have to adapt their socialised way of being to accommodate parenting. Parenting styles vary according to the individual chosen method of rearing their children. Schoppe-Sullivan, McBride and Ho (2004) suggest that there are a variety of conceptions reflecting fathers' involvement in rearing their children, namely engagement, accessibility, responsibility, communication, teaching, monitoring thought processes, errands, child-related maintenance, availability, providing affection, protection, caregiving, emotional support and planning. Single fathers and the parenting styles they employ are evaluated in this study against all these concepts.

Parenting styles can be categorised as permissive, authoritarian, authoritative, neglectful and indulgent (Baumrind, 1991). Permissive parents respond to their children's desires and behaviours in an accepting, affirmative and non-punitive manner. Neglectful and indulgent parents exert little control and display limited amounts of warmth and affection towards children (Lamborn, Mounts, Steinberg & Dornbusch, 1991). Authoritarian parents hold their children to an absolute standard of conduct and use forceful measures to ensure children by the rules, while authoritative parents value children's self-will and discipline and rely on reason and parental power to achieve desired child behaviour (Baumrind, 1991).

Research (McLanahan, 2007) reflects that in general single parents are more likely to use ineffective parenting practices, provide less supervision and parental control and be less involved than married parents. However, some research suggests that single fathers parent act differently to their counterparts, single mothers, as single fathers are more likely to allow their children to participate with their peers and try activities on their own, are less permissive and less likely to allow children to control them (Bronte- Tinkew *et al*., 2010).

These authors found significant differences in parenting styles between single fathers and their family arrangements. Single fathers exhibited less authoritarian and authoritative parenting and more permissive parenting styles. Further findings suggest that single custodial father families did not differ from other family forms in terms of routine except in the case

where a partner was present, and the household had the lowest levels of family routines (Bronte-Tinkew *et al*., 2010).

2.3. Conclusion

This chapter discussed the theoretical framework applied in this sudy and the existing empirical literetaure relating to families, alternative family forms, fatherhood and roles of single fathers. The majority of previous research on single fathers focused on the ability of fathers to construct nurturing and mothering roles and little attention was given to their experiences. There appears to be an apparent gap on research that provides a comprehensive account of single fathers' parenting experiences. The researcher used existing literature of how men construct femine roles in dual-parent households and their experience as a base. This research explored the parenting experinces of single fathers and can therefore contribute to knowledge by illustrating their experiences through their narratives.

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Chapter three

Research methodology

3.1   Introduction

Research methodology implies more than simply the methods used to collect data. It is the procedure by which researchers go about their work of describing, explaining and predicting phenomena (Rajesekar, 2006). In chapter two, existing literature was reviewed on single father parenting to gain a better understanding of the study topic. Following a brief overview given in Chapter one, Chapter three aims to describe the best suited research methodology applied to this study. Detailed attention will be given to the research question, the study's aims and objectives, the best suited approach, the study's design, the target population and sample as well as data collection procedures and instruments used to achieve the research aims.

3.2   Research question

According to White (2009), the research question guides the investigation into a narrow topic and also guides every aspect of the research project, which includes the literature search, research design, data collection, data analysis, interpretation of results, and the direction of the discussion. In this study on single fathers' parenting experiences, the researcher identified the following as the fundamental research questions:

- What are the single fathers' experiences of solely rearing their child/ren?
- What roles are single fathers employing when fathering their child/ren?
- How does a single father define being a good father?
- Do single fathers feel that other people view them differently since they became single fathers, if so, how?

3.3   Aim of the study

The research aim is defined by Bryman (2004: 46) as a broad statement of desired outcomes, or as the general intentions of what the research would like to achieve. With specific reference to this current study, the aim of the research was to develop an in-depth

understanding of and to report on parenting experiences and strategies employed by single fathers.

3.4   Research objectives

McCuen (1996) defines the research objectives as the specific outcomes of the research project and should summarise what the researcher hopes to achieve (Wheeldon & Ahlberg, 2012). With reference to this study, the objectives of this study were:

- To explore and describe single fathers' definition of fathering.
- To explore and describe single fathers' experiences of solely rearing their child/ren.
- To explore and describe the parenting roles single fathers employ when fathering their child/ren.
- To explore and describe single fathers' personal perceptions of how they are perceived as single fathers.

3.5   Research Approach

Many scholars (Domegan & Fleming, 2007; Henning, 2004; Denzin & Lincoln, 2000; Richardson, 1996) argue that human learning is best researched by using qualitative data. The methodology used for this research was a qualitative approach as it is designed to answer questions and best reflect individuals' experiences in the context of their everyday lives. A qualitative approach was best suited in achieving the aims and objectives which were to explore and describe the experiences of single fathering and parenting styles. Quantitative research was not considered suitable for this research as it would not explore and describe the fathering experiences of single fathers but rather provide generalisable findings that could be applied to other populations. It also provides stastical relations rather than pattern features and themes (Johnson & Christensen, 2000), which is not appropriate to this study. The rationale for this selection of research methodology is that qualitative research is inductive and looks at the settings and people holistically which is in line with the theoretical framework of this study.

In qualitative research, the researcher seeks to find data that are rich and deep (D'Cruz & Jones, 2007). The researcher used a qualitative research approach for the purpose of this study as it sought to answer questions about single fathers' parenting experiences from the participants' point of view. Quantitive was not appropriate as the final report would be that

of a statistical report with correlations, comparisons of means and statistical significances of findings (Johnson & Christensen, 2008). This study seeks to provide a narrative report on the parenting experiences of single fathers, illuminating direct quoations in order to provide contextual descriptions, and using a quanitative approach would not have provided this.

A qualitative approach creates the opportunity to answer questions about the complex phenomena, with the purpose of describing and understanding them from the participants' points of view. The qualitative researcher thus seeks a better understanding of the complex situation or issue (De Vos *et al',* 2011).

Qualitative researchers come to embrace their involvement and role within the research process. Patton (2002) supports this notion, as researchers' involvement and immersion into the research is important as the real world is subject to change and therefore the researcher must be present to record the change, both before and after. The credibility of qualitative research is dependent on the researcher as they are the instrument (Patton, 2002).

Qualitative research sets less formal relationships with the participants than quantitative research as participants engage in reciprocal communication styles with the researcher, elaborating their responses and in greater detail (Boeije, 2010; Creswell, 2007). This allowed the researcher to explore certain areas with participants in more detail and created opportunity for elaboration on pertinent responses. Creswell (2007) states that by using a qualitative approach, researchers keep the focus on learning the opinions the participants hold about the issue concerned. Creswell (2007) further suggests that qualitative research holds an assumption that individuals have an active role in the construction of social reality. In social constructionism, the individual is considered the expert on their own lives and it challenges conventional knowledge that has guided our understanding of how the world should be. Patton (2002) suggests that qualitative research uses a naturalistic approach that seeks to understand a phenomenon in a context specific setting and where the researcher does not attempt to manipulate the phenomena of interest and come to embrace their involvement and role with the research process.

Qualitative approach appeared best suited in achieving the aims and objectives of the study and staying within the realms of the study's theorectical framework, as it is designed to answer questions and best reflect an individual's experience in the context of their everyday

life. According to De Vos *et al*. (1998), during the interaction between the researcher and the participant, the informant's world is discovered and interpreted by means of qualitative methods. By using this approach the research was able to understand and interpret social interactions amongst single fathers.

According to Anderson (2006), qualitative research can be applied through in-depth interviews, focus groups, observations and case studies that generate rich, detailed data that contributes to in-depth understanding of the research problem. For the purpose of this study, the researcher used the qualitative research approach through semi-structured in-depth interviews, interviewing single fathers in order to get a personal meaning and understanding of their parenting experiences and roles. By using this approach, the researcher was able to create a space where participants could feel free to express themselves and in return the researcher was able to gain an accurate understanding of these single fathers' perceptions and experiences, which is pertinent to this study.

3.5.1 Research design

For the purpose of this research, explorative and descriptive research design were used. The aim of this research seeks to explore and describe the experiences and parenting styles of single fathers. An explorative and descriptive design is deemed most applicable as descriptive research's main aim is the exploration and clarification of some phenomenon where accurate information is lacking (Babbie & Mouton, 2009). An explorative design is conducted in order to gain a better understanding of a situation, which in this study was fathers experiences of single parenting. This design is also used in order to gain new insight into a situation, phenomenon, community or individual. This research design can also be used where there is a lack of basic information on a new area of interest or to become informed with a situation to formulate a problem or develop a hypothesis. Even though single father parenting is not a common family unit, it does exist within society. More attention and research is given to their counterpart single mothers and there is little research pertaining to this phenomonen of single fathers. Using this design helped bridge the gaps in this area.

A descriptive design examines the characteristics of a specific single population. In this regard, the characteristics of the parenting styles employed by single fathers are described. This design was considered valid as it will provide rich, meaningful descriptions into the

experiences and parenting styles of single fathers. The researcher felt it was necessary to use both an exploratory and descriptive research design.

With this study, the researcher hopes to contribute to the growing phenomenon of the single father family unit. It is for the above mentioned reasons that both explorative and descriptive research design were used in this study.

Babbie & Mouton (2009) describe a research design as a blueprint of how the research will be conducted. Through an explorative research design, the researcher aimed to generate new information, make preliminary investigations or gain insight into the studied phenomenon and focus on the "what" questions (De Vos *et al*.,2011; Terre Blanche, Durrheim & Painter, 2006). The researcher wanted to gain new data and insight into the experiences and roles single fathers employ and how they construct masculinity while taking on a more nurturing role. Babbie & Mouton (2009) explain that although an explorative research design leads to insight, it may not be sufficiently descriptive and it is for this reason that descriptive research design was integrated into this study. While explorative studies aim at generating new information, descriptive studies seek to accurately describe a phenomenon (De Vos *et al*., 2011; Terre Blanche *et al*., 2006). The descriptive research design is also more organised than the explorative research design as it aims at attaining a deeper understanding of a phenomenon to achieve rich data, which could possibly inform an accurate description of the phenomenon (Terre Blanche *et al*., 2006; Babbie & Mouton, 2009).

3.6 Population and sample of study

Patton (2002) proposes that researchers frequently draw a sample from a population, which is the group that researchers are ultimately interested in. A population refers to the entirety of elements such as people or organisations (Daymon & Holloway, 2011). For the purpose of this study, the population were single fathers residing in the Cape Metropole area. The sampling approach used was purposive sampling as it selected information-rich cases for in-depth study (Patton 1990: 182). Information-rich cases are those from which one can learn a great deal about issues of central importance to the purpose of the research (Patton 1990: 173). This was applicable as this research intended to provide in-depth descriptions of single fathers' experiences and parenting styles.

3.6.1 Sample and sample size

Sample size, as identified by Patton (1990), depends on what the researcher wants to know, the purpose of the inquiry, what is at stake and what will be useful and credible, and what can be done with the available time and resources. Patton (1990) further emphasises that there are no rules for sampling size in a qualitative inquiry. Since the researcher sought to explore and describe experiences and parenting styles of single fathers, 6 single fathers across different cultures were participated. The sample size was deemed sufficient as data was representative of the participants' experiences of single parenting at an individual level.

3.6.2 Sampling procedure

Sampling is a process of selecting a few members (sample) from a bigger group (sampling population) to be the basis for studying the unknown information or situation regarding the bigger group (Kumar, 2011). In other words, it is simply the process of selecting the actual research participants from the identified population to produce a sample (De Vos *et al*., 2011). A homogenous sampling strategy (Patton, 1990) was used when selecting participants for the research, as it involved selecting a small homogenous sample, which was single fathers. The purpose of this was to describe this particular subgroup in depth. This sampling strategy was selected as it fits the purpose of the study.

Single fathers were recruited through NGOs such as Child Welfare Society (for the purpose of this proposal CWS), Fathers for Justice, Sonke Gender Justice and Parent Centre. The first NGO, CWS is a child protection agency and it was used as it has a broader jurisdiction in the Cape Metropole area. The second organisation, Sonke Gender Justice Network, has a project. the Fatherhood project, that works and engages with fathers directly. The third choice of NGO, Fathers for Justice South Africa, is an organisation which works in empowering fathers. Inquiries were made with regards to access to single fathers and an invitation was extended to suitable participants. The fouth orgsnisation approached was Parent Centre. This organisation's mission is to promote the well-being of the whole child, parent and care giver. It also has a division that focuses on fathers with specialised programmes and support groups for fathers.

Participants had to meet the following criteria: be single fathers and the primary care giver to their children for more than a year; and the dissolution of the union with the other parent

should not have been too recent. The reason for this criterion was that there should not be any possible emotional constraints during the interview process due to dissolutions being too recent. Fortunately, during this study, the researcher experienced no constraints during the interview process. Initially, the rsearcher identified 10 potential participants, however only 6 were willing to participate. Reasons for the other 4 particpants' unwillingness to participate are unknown; no reasons or apologies for not attending scheduled appointments were provided.

Telephonic contact was made with CWS and Sonke Gender Justice and the purpose of the research was explained and emailed to contact persons. The contact persons at both of the said NGOs provided the researcher with potential candidates and three of the candidates proved to be reliable. Fathers for Justice was unable to assist as they did not have any candidates on their database residing in the Cape Metropole area. A meeting was scheduled with the coordinator of the fathers' programme at the Parent Centre. The meeting proved to be satisfactory as the coordinator provided the researcher with three reliable candidates. Telephonic contact was made with the 6 candidates and appointments were scheduled and interviews were conducted.
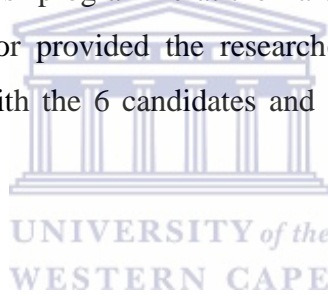
3.7   Data collection process

Creswell (2013) describes data collection as a process of acquiring information through structured or semi-structured interviews, observation and visual material. In this particular study, data was collected through semi-structured in-depth interviewing. Interviews were conducted on a one-on-one basis with each participant. Semi-structured interviews were deemed the most appropriate method as they allowed the researcher to explore and probe areas of concern. The researcher used open-ended questions as well as probing questions.

Semi-structured interviews allow for the relationship between the researcher and particpants to be flexible. De vos *et al.* (2011) encourages this sort of relationhip as it allows the researcher to follow up on pertinent areas emerging from the interview and creates opportunity for partipants to share information more closely.

3.7.1 The preparation of participants

Following the guidelines of De Vos *et al*. (2011), the researcher, before commencement of each interview session, fully prepared the participants for the interviews. As part of the preparation process, the researcher explained the purpose of the interview to the participants and placed emphasis on confidentiality and that they could withdraw at any stage of the interview. Interviews were conducted in the participants' choice of language and venue to ensure that the participants felt relaxed and comfortable during the interviews. Two of the participants felt comfortable and preferred conducting the interviews in their own homes and the other four participants preferred an outside venue. This was a dilemma for the researcher for security reasons but the researcher's office space was used. Permission to audio record the interview was requested from the participants before the onset of the interviews. Each participant was also informed about the nature of the research, as well as other ethical considerations as stated in chapter one (1.7) and annexure A. The interview process went smoothly and participants contributed fully. One participant, at the beginning of his interview, expressed some ill feelings towards his ex-partner. The interview was put on hold for a few minutes as one of the criteria for participating in the research was that participants should be out of the relationship with their children's mothers for more than a year to prevent any constraints in the interview process.
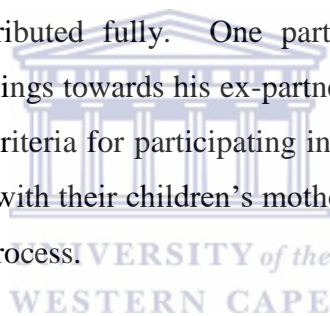
These concerns were addressed and the purpose of the interview was clarified. The participant was given the opportunity to withdraw from the interview but he opted to continue. The researcher allowed the interview to continue bearing in mind that should the participants drift from the purpose of the interview, the interview would be stopped. This however, did not prove necessary as the participants' feelings did not impact on the interview process.

3.7.2. Course of the interviews

Each interview took approximately 45-60 minutes, depending on how much information the participant wanted to share. The interviews were conducted in English as participants only conversed in English.

These interviews were recorded through an audio recorder; the use of an audio recorder allowed the researcher to devote her full attention to the participants as well as on the

interview process (Babbie & Mouton, 2009). Field notes were made during the interviews which included the participants' non-verbal cues and pertinent points mentioned during the course of the interview. The researcher incorporated excellent interviewing and communication skills to elicit in-depth information from the participants. This was beneficial to the process as points of interest were explored in detail.

The interview commenced with general non-threating questions (Babbie & Mouton, 2009) and questions to gather background information from participants. This was done so that rapport could be established between the researcher and the participant. The researcher then moved to more sensitive and in-depth questions.

Consistent and regular clarification and reflection of responses were done in order to ensure credibility of the responses as the researcher intended to categorise responses into possible themes. This also added to credibility of the research.

3.7.3. Instrumentations used during data collection

Monnette, Sullivan and De Jong (2005) state that an interview schedule provides the researcher with a set of predetermined questions that might be used as an appropriate instrument to engage the participant and designate the narrative terrain. Even though the interview was guided by an interview guide, questions were adapted throughout the research project. This was done to ensure all areas of interest were covered and that participants fully understood the questions asked and in accordance with expected reading level of the participants (De Vos *et al*., 2011).

For the purpose of the study an interview guide with 63 open- ended questions was developed (Annexure D). The following aspects were covered:

    i)   Background information of the participants;

    ii)   Respondent's definition of what entails a good father;

    iii)   Single father's parenting experiences;

iv) Single father's roles employed;

v) Single father's challenges experienced;

vi) Discipline and protection of child/children; and

vii) Perceptions of single fathers.

3.8.   Interview techniques

Interviewing is the predominant mode of data collection in qualitative research. Individuals or groups are used for interviews, who the researcher expects to have knowledge of a phenomenon and be able to contribute rich information (De Poy & Gilson, 2008). After information was given on the research by using an information sheet (Annexure A), semi-structured, one-on-one interviews were conducted with all participants. Researchers use this method of interviewing in order to gain a detailed picture of a participant's beliefs about, or perceptions or accounts of a particular topic. The researcher had an interview guide (Annexure C) with predetermined questions during the semi-structured interviews. The interview was however flexible and not dictated by questions (Smith *et al*., 1995). The researcher asked the same questions to all single fathers. The semi-structured interview guided the researcher throughout the interviews. During the interviews, the researcher made use of interviewing techniques such as probing to get more detail on the perceptions of the participants.

The method of data collection to elicit data from participants was individual in-depth interviews. Kumar (2005) defines an interview as any person-to-person interaction between two or more individuals with a specific purpose in mind. Interviews can either be considered flexible or inflexible. For the purpose of this study, flexible semi-structured in-depth interviews were conducted with the participants. The interviewing approach that the researcher used was the interviewing guide; a list of questions was compiled still allowing the freedom to formulate questions as they came to mind around the single fathering. By using this guide, questions can be developed and sequenced appropriately. The main reason for this method was that participants were adult males, and it allowed the researcher the opportunity to probe, explore and ask questions that adults would be able to understand and build a

conversation that was able to elucidate their experiences and the effects. In-depth interview allows for rich, thick descriptive data to be extracted from single fathers solely rearing their children. In turn, this provided a descriptive account of their experiences. The questions focused on parenting experiences and challenges, as well as the single fathers' definition of being a good father and roles employed during parenting.

The single fathers openly responded to all questions asked. On a few occasions, the single fathers required clarification on certain questions and were unable to respond due to lack of experience in those areas. There was no hesistation in the responses from single fathers and they provided thorough and rich responses. The single fathers expressed that the interview presented them with an opportunity to express themselves and talk about their experiences as single fathers.

Furthermore, Kumar (2005) defines in-depth interviewing as repeated face-to-face encounters between the researcher and informants directed towards understanding the informants' perspectives on their lives, experiences or situations as expressed in their own words.

By using this method, singles fathers were afforded the opportunity to express themselves and this enhanced rapport between the researcher and the single fathers, which in turn led to an accurate and thorough account of the single fathers' perspectives of their lives, experiences and situations.

Each interview was unique and interesting in its own way; single fathers described their experiences with passion and a sense of pride. They appeared confident in their responses and their abilities as single parents. This is what makes the data truly qualitative (Corbin & Strauss, 2008) in that they are personal stories and lived experiences of individual single fathers.

3.9.   Data analysis method

Babbie (2010) and De Vos *et al*. (2011) describe qualitative data analysis as a process that includes coding and analysing the data after it has been collected. This is also referred to as the categorisation, ordering and summarising of data to obtain answers to research questions. During the interview process, the researcher made notes on certain behaviours and non-verbal cues displayed by participants. This assisted the researcher during the transcribing and

categorising of common themes. Once accuracy was confirmed, common themes were identified using a thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006). A thematic analysis is a flexible approach to analysing data and enables patterns or themes to be identified (Braun & Clarke, 2006). It reflects reality, by reporting and examining the experiences of the participants and their construction of the meaning (Braun & Clarke, 2006). From the identified themes, sub-themes were established and correlated with the hard data, which were verbatim quotes from the single fathers. For the analysis of the data, the researcher applied the eight stages of data analysis as indicated in Creswell (2009) when doing data analysis.

These steps were implemented as follows:

Step 1: Firstly, in preparation for the analysis, the researcher transcribed verbatim each interview and thoroughly perused each transcript a number of times, keeping in mind the notes and observations made during the interview process. This was done to gain a general sense of the information to enable the researcher to reflect on its overall meaning (Creswell, 2009).

Step 2: Secondly, the researcher immersed herself in the transcripts. Immersion is a process of becoming thoroughly familiar with the topic which involves careful reflection and interpretation on an intuitive level as opposed to using analytical techniques (Terre Blanche *et al.*, 2005). The researcher made notes of possible arising themes, thoughts and views (Cresswell, 2009). This was helpful during the analysis process as the researcher was able to identify which themes were present. The researcher applied step two to all the transcripts.

Step 3: Once the researcher had studied all the data of the transcripts, notes made on the various transcripts were reviewed and clustered together. This aided the process of identifying and clustering themes of interest.

Steps 4: According to Creswell (2009), this stage is the beginning of a detailed analysis with a coding process. The notes made on the transcripts guided the process of categorising the themes. This made the process easier for the researcher when coding was done. Once themes were identified, the researcher used a colour coding method, where the researcher colour coded common themes.

Step 5: Creswell (2009) describes this stage as the stage where researchers provide descriptive wording for the already noted topics identified in the third stage. In this study, the researcher used a colour coding method. The researcher used descriptive words to categorise topics, each topic was colour coded accordingly. Once categories were established, data was grouped accordingly. An example of descriptive words used is empowered parenting and coded with the colour red.

Step 6: In this stage, the researcher clustered and grouped the colours codes together so that categories was grouped in related codes. The list of categories was condensed to form themes and sub-themes.

Step 7: The categorisation of data into themes and sub-themes allowed the researcher to analyse and initiate discussions and arguments, using direct quotes from the single fathers while comparing and contrasting findings to the respective existing literature.

Step 8: In the final stage, the researcher recoded the existing data.

Data verification and trustworthiness are imperative to ensure the validity of this study. After analysing the data, the researcher had to verify and authenticate the data collected. This is deliberated in the next section.

3.10. Data verification

Patton (2002) emphasises that validity and reliability are two factors which any qualitative researcher should be concerned about while designing a study, analysing results and judging the quality of the study. Validity and reliability are more for quantitative research. whereas trustworthiness is required for qualitiativ. To ensure these two factors in this study, the examination of trustworthiness was crucial. Validity means the researcher checks the accuracy of the study by employing certain quantitative procedures (Creswell, 2007). Four criteria were used to measure the trustworthiness of the data, namely credibility, dependability, transferability and confirmability (D'Cruz & Jones, 2004).

Credibility seeks to answer how compatible the findings are with reality (Babbie, 2010). To ensure credibility, a comprehensive review of literature relating to single fathers' experiences deepened the understanding of the subject and also built a coherent justification for common themes. Secondly, participant checking was used. In-depth interviews with single fathers were transcribed and returned to participants to confirm accuracy. Through the use of tape recordings of interviews and verbatim transcriptions, increased accuracy of single fathers' description of experiences was attained. The interview process with single fathers enhanced the credibility as single fathers' interpretations and portrayals of the experiences were consistently verified throughout the process. According to Krefting (1991), the authority of the researcher can also be used to ensure credibility. In this case the researcher is a social worker who has extensive experience in the field of child and family relations.

Dependability is met through securing credibility of the findings (Streubert & Carpenter, 1999). This was done by providing a detailed description of the processes within the study which was interpreted in Chapter 2, the research methodology section. This ensured that if the study should be repeated in the same context, with the same methods, and with the same participants, similar results would be achieved (Shenton, 2004). To ensure dependability the researcher applied the same interview schedule, research approach and methodology with all single fathers. The researcher was consistent in the type of questions asked and when necessary was flexible in her interviewing style. This ensured that the research process maintained a level of consistency and was carried out in accordance with qualitative principles (Ulin, Robinson & Tolley, 2005).

Transferability is relative and depends entirely on the degree to which salient conditions overlap or match (Crawford, Leybourne & Arnott, 2000). If the findings of the research can apply to others contexts or respondents, transferability exits. The specific context defines the findings in which they occur; therefore the researcher does not claim that the knowledge gained in a particular context will necessarily have relevance in another context or for the same context in another timeframe. The researcher ensured transferability through thick descriptions of the research methodology used during the study in chapter four of this document. The researcher used quotations, from the transcribed interviews, in the findings chapter (Chapter four). Literature strengthened the information in the quotations to ensure transferability. Purposive sampling contributed also to transferability. Through purposive sampling, the researcher purposefully selected the locations and informants that differed from one another and thereby maximised the range of specific information.

Conformability is the need to show that data, interpretations and findings of the research are rooted in contexts and persons that are not figments of the researcher's imagination (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). All data obtained, analysed and transcribed is attached as an annexure and was available for scrutiny by participants. Conformability is also the researcher's ability to use reflexivity in identifying own personal and social positions and power issues in research (D' Cruz & Jones, 2004). To ensure conformability, Patton (2002) suggests that researchers should ask themselves certain reflexive questions. In this instance, the researcher did introspection and considered a number of aspects that could affect conformability. This is discussed in the following section.

3.11.   Self-Reflexivity

Patton (2002) argues that it is of utmost importance in qualitative research and especially from a social constructionist paradigm that researchers recognise how their own personal experiences and background influence and affect their understanding of the topic under discussion. In this instance, the researcher is a female conducting research with all male participants, a single mother and a social worker. The researcher kept in mind that this could affect the process and her understanding and interpretations of the single father's experiences. Throughout the process the researcher used reflexivity and in some instances, the researcher consulted her supervisor when it was necessary.

Initially, the researcher was concerned about her gender and her professional capacity as a social worker, having an impact on the contentment of single fathers during the data collection process. The researcher was concerned that single fathers would feel intimidated by her presence and therefore not openly respond during the interview.

During the sample process, the researcher did experience difficulties in recruiting participants, as one potential participant withdrew from the process when the researcher identified herself as a social worker. Another participant wanted to know if the interview would impact of him having custody of his children. This was disappointing as the researcher realised there was a negative connotation associated with the duties of a social worker, and even though this discipline falls within the helping professions category, many still believe that social workers take children away from their families. The researcher considered the option of withholding her professional capacity from the participants during the initial stages of contact, and to rather identify herself as a researcher. The researcher decided that starting the interview without being completely open and honest with participants would affect the establishment of rapport with single fathers. The researcher chose instead to elucidate the fact that the researcher is first and foremost a researcher and that should any concerns with regards to neglect and abuse of the children surface during the interview, the researcher was not obligated to refer the case. As a researcher, you have to maintain confidence; only if there are threats to somebody's life would there be a need to refer. This is covered in the Social Work Code of Ethics. The participants were at ease and comfortable with this.

With regards to the gender of the researcher, there were initial concerns that it could affect the trustworthiness of the study. In the beginning, the researcher was concerned that single fathers would alter and adjust their responses in order to please the researcher and that the researcher would not be able to gain a true reflection of their experiences. It was evident in some instances during the interview process that hegemonic masculinity traits surfaced and single fathers responded in a manner that empowered them rather than identifying their weakness. The researcher had to decide to develop a questioning style that would not threaten single father's position and created an environment where these fathers could openly express themselves.

During the process, the researcher showed empathy and respect for their views as information shared by the single fathers was sensitive, as well as private.

The researcher identified herself as a single parent to single fathers. On the one hand, this put single fathers at ease as the researcher had an understanding of the challenges they experienced and on the other hand, this information could negatively affect the responses considering these single fathers had to construct nurturing traits and being a female, it is considered a natural instinct of the researcher. Nevertheless, the researcher used her status a single parent to gain confidence and trust in her ability to correctly convey single fathers' experiences.

As a single parent knowing the challenges of solely rearing a child or children, these fathers' experiences and circumstances impacted on the researcher on a personal level, but the researcher maintained neutrality and objectivity throughout the process. This was a difficult experience for the researcher but it was maintained. The researcher made use of self-reflection thoroughout the research process, to ensure emphatic responses and objectivity (Cho & Trent, 2006: 321).

3.12.   Ethics considerations

As men are reared not to express weakness, studying the personal experiences and accounts of single fathers solely rearing their children can be of a complex nature. Self-esteem and confidence in their own ability to successfully rear their children in a manner accepted by society puts an immense amount of pressure on these single fathers. Babbie & Mouton (2009), state that the participants often reveal in a research environment, personal

information that is unknown to their friends and associates. It is for this reason the ethics considerations were honoured by the researcher throughout the research process.

It is important to mention that the researcher had the privilege of being grounded and schooled in the code of ethics set out by the South African Council for Social Service Professions (SACSSP). The researcher is a social worker and has been working in the field for more than thirteen years and therefore had a thorough grounding in the importance of ethics when practising social work.

Prior to the commencement of the research study, a proposal had to be submitted for approval to the Senate Higher Degrees Committee of UWC, before the researcher was able to continue with this research. Once approval was obtained, the researcher sampled potential candidates to partake in the research.

Informed consent was obtained from the single fathers and the researcher explained the research purpose, aims and objectives of the study thoroughly, allowing time for questions and concerns to be addressed. Additionally, the single fathers were given an information sheet detailing the purpose, aims, objectives and research questions of the study (Annexures A & C). Single fathers were required to read and sign an informed consent sheet before the commencement of the interview (Annexure B).

Single fathers were assured of the principle of confidentiality and privacy. Each single father was informed that everything that was discussed during the interview would remain confidential. Single fathers were also informed that on completion of the research recordings and transcripts will be destroyed. Single fathers were advised to give pseudonyms on the consent form but they expressed a preference to use their own names. Single fathers were informed that the interviews would be transcribed and that pseudonyms would be allocated to ensure anonymity. Anonymity was ensured by concealing single fathers' identities in written and verbal reports of the results, as well as in informal discussions with the supervisor and fellow students. Beneficence was ensured by informing single fathers that they would not be harmed or deceived in any way and that the study would provide them with an opportunity to have their voices heard. If they did feel uncomfortable, there was the option of being referred to a counsellor.

3.13. Conclusion

In this chapter, the researcher has deliberated the researcher methodology used in this study. Chapter three provides a comprehensive explanation of the research methodology and its implementation. In discussing the research methodology, the researcher focused on the different processes followed from planning right through to the end phases of the research. The researcher emphasised the relevancy and advantages of a qualitative approach rather than a quantitative approach. The challenges experienced during the sampling, data collection and analysis process were unpacked in order to provide a detailed account of the progression of the research.

Chapter Four

Findings of the study

4.1. Introduction

In this chapter, the researcher will present the findings of the data obtained from six individual interviews that were conducted with single fathers solely rearing their children. The subjective experiences of the fathers will be discussed and compared with reference to the main aim of research, which is to explore and describe the experiences of single fathers solely rearing their children. The descriptions that emerge reflect the single fathers' experiences, roles and responsibilities and expectations about the nurturing and emotional aspect of parenting. The findings will serve to illuminate the direct voices and experiences of these single fathers in line with social constructionist theory. The research, however, moves beyond the surface of physical parental duties and it covers areas that focus on the emotional and nurturing side of parental duties which are normally considered to be the role of the mother. Through the analysis of their parenting styles and their experiences, the researcher will attempt to delineate the different ways single fathers construct masculinity while solely rearing their children.
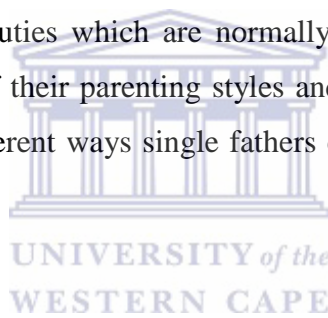
4.2 Demographic information

In order to give a complete overview of the participants, a summary of the demographic information of the participants is provided in Table 1. The table includes the following information: the participant's gender, age, ethnic group, number and age of children in their custody, and the length of the time they have been solely rearing their children. All six participants who took part in the study were from areas around the Cape Metropole and all were recruited by means of non-probability purposive sampling methods, and participated in one-on-one semi-structured interviews. Following the table, the researcher will briefly discuss the background information pertaining to each participant in the study in order to illustrate their respective backgrounds and their present situations. For increased readability and confidentiality, the fathers are given pseudonyms.

Table 1: Overview of the demographics of the research participants

Name	Age	Ethnic group	# children	Age of child		Years as single parent
				Female	Male	
Barry	38	Coloured	3	13, 4	8	13
Andrew	38	Coloured	1	1	-----	3
Freddy	41	Coloured	2	20, 17	-----	14
Juno	35	Coloured	2	10	4	3
Banju	44	Black	3	-----	12,10,7	5
Jason	35	Coloured	2	7	4	5

In the next section of this chapter, a brief overview of the background of each father will be discussed. Information relating to their circumstances and reasons for them becoming single parents will be discussed.
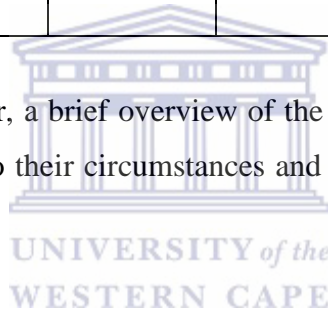
4.2.1. Barry

Barry is a 38 year old father of two girls, Mia, thirteen years old and Mika, fours years old and one son, Tyrell who is 8 years old. He has been a single father to Mia since she was two years old. He was never married to the mother of Mia. Mia's mother was unable to care for her as she had a severe drug addiction and lived a very nomadic lifestyle. Barry applied for custody of Mia and assumed full responsibility for his daughter. When Mia was five years old, Barry entered into a relationship with his two younger children's mother. The relationship lasted about three years and dissolved shortly after the birth of Mika, the youngest child. The mother of Mika and Tyrell initially cared for the children but subsequently left the children in the care of a relative. Barry decided to approach social services with his case and requested that the children stay with him. Due to their mother's drug addiction, an arrangement was made for a period of one year, giving the mother an opportunity to improve her circumstances and the children came to stay with Barry. He

assumed full rearing responsibility for Mika since she was 9 months old and Tyrell since he was 4 years old. Barry has been solely rearing his children for four years.

Barry started his own business to provide for his children. This allowed him the ability to be flexible but he experienced financial difficulties and had to seek alternative employment which impacted on his flexibility, routine and schedule.

4.2.2. Andrew

Andrew is a 38 year old coloured father of a 5 year old daughter, Hannah-Mae. Andrew was never married to the mother of his child nor did they ever live together during their union. The union with the mother was dissolved during the latter part of the pregnancy; however Andrew maintained regular contact with the mother to enquire about the child's well-being during the pregnancy. Andrew assumed full responsibility for Hannah-Mae from birth. The mother was unable to provide and care for their daughter and it was a mutual decision that Andrew assumes full responsibility for Hannah-Mae. The mother has very little contact with their daughter and Andrew does not receive any form of support from her. Andrew cares full-time for Hannah-Mae; however during the time the interview was conducted, Andrew was on training to become a lay counsellor. His mother assisted him with caring for his daughter while he was away for a period of 6 weeks. He is committed to improving his life for the sake of his daughter.

4.2.3. Banju

Banju is a 44 year old, black father to three sons, Lyle 12 years old, Scott 10 years and Joshua 7 years old. Banju was married to the mother of his sons for 5 years before they separated. Lyle, the oldest child, is not Banju's biological son. He is a child from the mother's previous relationship who Banju accepted as his own. The relationship between Banju and the mother dissolved when the mother had an extramarital affair and moved in with her partner. She left Lyle, Scott and Joshua in Banju's care. Banju tried to restore his relationship with the mother but was unsuccessful. The mother was planning to emigrate to another country and wanted to take the children with her but Banju refused consent. The mother later emigrated without her children. Banju has been solely caring for his children for the past five years with no support and very limited contact with the mother.

4.2.4. Juno

Juno is a 35 year old coloured father to a daughter, Leila 10 years old and son Luke, 4 years old. He was previously married to the mother of their children. The union dissolved due to the mother's substance addiction and abusive behaviour. As a result of the abuse experienced during the marriage, Juno suffered from depression and is currently in counselling to deal with this. Juno obtained full custody of Luke and Leila during the divorce because of the mother's substance abuse habits and abusive behaviour. Juno has been a single father for the past three years and the children initially had very limited contact with the mother but that has improved over the past year. The children reside with him on a full-time basis and they have contact with their mother every alternate weekend. Juno is employed full-time as a programmer and solely caring for his children; the mother is obliged to financially support the children as part of the divorce agreement, but this is inconsistent and irregular. The financial burden falls solely on Juno.

4.2.5. Freddy

Freddy is a 41 year old coloured single father to two daughters, Jade 20 years old and Skye 17 years old. Freddy was previously married to the mother of his daughters. The couple divorced shortly after he was retrenched from his job. According to Freddy, he previously had a stable job with a high income and was the breadwinner in their family. The mother never worked and was a stay-at-home mother. Freddy believes that the marriage ended because he was unable to provide the lifestyle his ex-wife to which she had become accustomed to. Prior to the divorce, the couple had an argument and the mother moved out of their home to reside with her family. She left the children, Jade 6 and Skye 3 years old at the time with Freddy. Since that day, the children have been residing with him. Freddy has been a single father for 14 years. He struggled to find employment for many years and received financial support from his brother over the years. It is only recently that Freddy was employed as an HIV lay counsellor at a local NGO. He still receives financial support from his brother as his salary is not sufficient to maintain his family.

4.2.6. Jason

Jason is a 35 year old coloured single father to a son, Matthew, 4 years old and daughter Luca, 7 years old. Jason was previously in a co-habitating relationship with the mother of his children for 4 years. The couple decided to end their relationship when Matthew was 1 year

old. Jason recalls that the mother of his children left one evening without her children after a heated argument. She never returned nor fought for custody of the children. The mother has very limited contact with the children and does not stick to the scheduled contact visits. Jason does not receive any financial support from the mother and did not attempt to apply for maintenance as she has always been unemployed and not interested in working. Jason suspects that the mother is abusing drugs and involved with dangerous elements and he prefers that the children have limited contact with their mother. Jason is employed as a technician at a reputable cell phone company and earns a relatively good salary. He expressed that he is currently not experiencing any financial constraints.

4.3. Discussion of themes

For the purpose of this study, the researcher interviewed 6 men who describe themselves as single fathers. For the sake of this study, a single father is defined as the parent who is the primary care giver of his children; the single fathers may share contact with the mother but they are primarily responsible for everyday child care and household duties. The data that was collected during the individual semi-structured interviews was transcribed and then analysed according to the framework of data analysis for qualitative research by Tesch (in Creswell 2009).
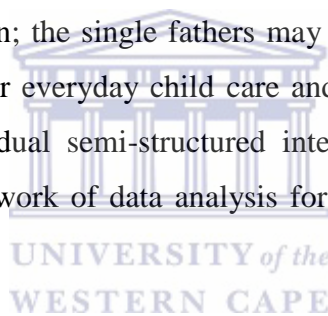
The researcher will now discuss the findings of the study according to themes and sub-themes. The themes and sub-themes are supported by direct quotations from the participants and also compared and contrasted with relevant literature.

Presented in the form of a table, a summary of the themes and sub themes that emerged in the study is given in Table 2.

Table 2: Summary of themes and sub-themes

Themes	Sub themes
Single fathers' definition of being a good father	*Single fathers' definition of being a good father: constructing as the provider and protector*
	Single fathers' definition of being a good father: constructing as supportive and involved fathers
	Impact of negative experience of how they were fathered on single fathers
Single fathers' parenting experiences	*Single fathers adapting to being parents*
	Authoritative vs Authoritarian: parenting styles of single fathers
	Managing work and single fathering
Parenting roles taken on by single fathers	*Role challenges of single fathers*
	Constructions of nurturing of single fathers
Personal perceptions of being a single father	*Others' perceptions of single fathers*

4.3.1. Single fathers' definition of being a good father

In this section, an overview is given of how these single fathers describe and define their understanding of being a good father; their feelings around being a father; what particular qualities a good father should have; and how their role as a single father impacts on their role as a male in society.

The interviews began with a discussion on fathers defining being a good father. These questions were posed to determine single fathers' understanding and definition of what it entails to be a "good father" and whether these single fathers have a hegemonic

predisposition with regards to their understanding of the term good father. What became evident from the data obtained was that these fathers included traditional fathering traits as well as traditional mother traits such as being supportive and involved. Most fathers described being a good father as one who is able to provide and protect their children. They also included components relating to the nurturing aspect of mothering. Throughout these narratives and the analysis, it became clear that the fathers' definitions varied according to the circumstances that led them to solely rearing their children and that social influence on masculinity theory impacted and informed these fathers' understanding and perceptions of a good father.

4.3.1.1. Single fathers' definition of being a good father: constructing as the provider and protector

The discussion of the single fathers' definition of what entailed a good father varied in situations but all shared the same descriptive characteristics. All the fathers in this study described a good father to be a father that is a protector and provider but also included characteristics such as being supportive and present in their children's lives, which will be discussed later. The definitions of provider and protector, which also form part of the characteristics of traditional father role, are illustrated in the direct quotations below.

> *"So the role of a good father is obviously to be there in terms of security for your kids, the provider etc. Like a pillar of strength and maybe perhaps a good leader."* (Barry).

> *"And a good father needs to provide for his kids, a good father needs to have finance."* (Freddy).
> *"A good father should know when to remove his children from a bad situation."* (Juno).

> *"I think a good father, I think it's a father that cares and show love to their children and provide, to provide and support them."* (Banju).

> *"A good father needs to provide for his children but also be there for them on other level as well, like physically, emotional."* (Jason).

"I believe that your presence means a lot, how you raise your child, teaching her how to work for things, teach her the right path. Protecting your child, because I am a guy, I can teach her things." (Andrew).

All fathers expressed in this study and defined a good father as someone who provides and protects their children. A provider and protector appeared as inherent requirements in their definitions. According to Ruddicks (1997), masculinities concern the position of men in a gender role. The relationship between fathering and masculinity is that the idea of a 'good father' has 3 core functions which are provision, protection and authority (Ruddicks, 1997). These fathers incorporated all three functions into their definition. It is suggested that these fathers fit their understanding into the traditional norms of masculinity and what a father's role is within a family. Ruddicks (1997) suggests that this component plays a particularly important role in hegemonic fatherhood (the traditional father) and constitutes hegemonic masculinity.

In a critique by Cornell (2005) he rejects the idea of hegemonic masculinity and proposes that it does not need to be the most traditional pattern in the everyday lives of men. Even though these fathers defined their understanding of a good father as one that protects and provides for his children, they included in the definition of a good father activities that are normally considered feminine. Hegemonic masculinity encourages men to distance themselves from things that are considered feminine. The fathers in this study opposed this and this is illustrated in the following sub-theme below.

4.3.1.2. Single fathers' definition of being a good father: constructing as supportive and involved fathers

All of these fathers' definitions given above concur with the typical characteristic of the traditional role of the father, which is to protect and provide for their children. Although it forms the basis of their understanding, characteristics such as loving, caring and being supportive were included in their descriptions. Freddy and Banju outlined particularly the need to be supportive for a good father as illustrated in the quotes below:

"I would describe a good father must listen to their children, they must be part activities, especially in their education, must have patience with them. A good father must learn their children all the things that they can. A good father must learn his

children of the environment around them, to be alert, and don't talk to strangers."
(Freddy).

"It's not only about providing for that child, but emotional is also important to me. So I think it's important to be supportive and present in a child's life. I think that is what I am trying to do with my kids now, that's the only thing I am really sticking to. First of all a father would always make time to be with their children, talk to their children, play with them, the simplest things, to play with them." (Banju).

Although Freddy described his understanding of a good father as a protector, ensuring a child's safety, he also speaks about a father who listens and is involved in his child's life. This common thread was also found in Banju's definition. He integrates the emotional aspect into his definition, emphasising its importanceto him. To be a present, involved and empathetic father is what Banju strives for with his children. It appears that Freddy and Banju integrated the components normally associated with the role of the mother in their understanding and definition of a good father. Traditionally, mothers are normally considered the attentive, emotionally involved and open parent towards their children but in this study, single fathers felt that is was of great importance for it to be included in their definition.

This appeared in Jason's definition as well, where he is concerned about the emotional well-being of his children. Jason felt that to be defined as a good father, fathers need to provide for their children financially, protect their children from harm both physically and emotionally. This is illustrated in Jason's quote below:

A good father needs to make sure his children are always protected, from the dangers out there and from anything that is going to hurt them emotionally." (Jason).

Both these fathers were concerned with the emotional well-being of their children. The role of the protector went beyond the realms of the norm, namely the display of strength and bravery. Fathers took time to consider the emotional impact traumatic situations would have on their children. Social constructionism allows for single fathers to construct roles, traits and behaviours as it argues that sex roles are not pre-determined by nature but are shaped by the world around us (Cornwall & King 2005; Risman 1987; West & Zimmerman 1987) and the situations in which we find ourselves. These fathers have adapted normal traits associated

with fathers and played a direct role in the protection of their children, including a more holistic view of the term protection.

Fathers expressed that they also felt that a father should also play a more nurturing role by listening to children and being understanding and less strict towards them.

Freddy stated: "a *good father should be caring, understanding listen to his kids and less strict."* This is typical of the role of a nurturer, which is traditionally the role of the mother. Jason also felt that a good father should be more emotionally involved and attentive to their children's well-being. Jason stated that "a *good father should know when there is something wrong; he should be able to sense it".* This relates to the expression "a mother's instinct". Jason describes this as part of his understanding of a good father and has made it an expectation in his understanding of a good father.

Lamb (1997) points out that there has been a shift from the good father being concerned primarily with the provider/ breadwinner role to one of embracing a more ambiguous expectation of emotional involvement and responsiveness. There is no clear and distinct definition of a good father and there is no single father role to which single fathers should aspire. These fathers felt that being actively involved in their children's lives, emotionally and physically, contributed to the definition of a good father. Fathers felt being a good father did not only entail being a provider and protector but that it had to be infused with qualities of care giving, nurturing, good listener and being supportive. This suggests a deconstruction of hegemonic masculinity where men are expected to be decision-makers etc. The fact that most of the men in the study are coloured men could have an impact on the way that they see their children. Most coloured men are not from a dominant culture and would therefore not necessarily follow what that culture would do when dealing with children.

The Fathering Indicators Framework (Morrell, 2006) identifies a number of categories in which fathers can be defined and classified. The one that links particularly to this sub-theme is outlined as "supportive and co-operative parenting…" (Morrell, 2006: 158).

In this study, fathers combined two roles in their definitions of being a good father. Fathers expressed that while it was essential to provide and protect their children, being involved,

supportive and caring towards their children is an inherent requirement in being a good father. In spite of women's perceived dominance in taking care of the emotional responsibility for children, there is increasing evidence (Coltrane, 1996; Daly, 1993; Lupton and Barday, 1997; Prunnet, 2000) that fathers can also be nurturing, affectionately responsive and active with their children (Doucet, 2004). These fathers' definitions fall in line with the New Nurturing Father, a father who is perceived as an active nurturing and care taking parent (Lamb, 1995). Lamb & LeMonde, (1995) highlight that fathers constantly alter and adjust their role based on the situational need at the time. It appears as though single fathers' understanding and definition of a good father has been constructed according to their circumstances. Ultimately, this relates to social constructionist theory which views knowledge and truth as created not discovered by the mind (Schwandt, 2003).

4.3.1.3. Impact of negative experiences of how they were fathered on single fathers.

Most fathers reflected on their own childhood and their fathers as a reference point for their own parenting styles and idea of a good father. It appears that these experiences encouraged the more nurturing role of parenting. The fact that some of these fathers were raised in single-mother households encouraged the nurturing side in their parenting style. This again highlights how coloured children grow up in certain communities where 'absent fathers' area common occurrence. It is assumed that if their fathers were present, their roles would be much more traditional in the sense that their fathers would have played a more traditional hegemonic masculinity role. Participants who had fathers at home expressed that their fathers lacked the caring and supportive characteristics but they saw these as an essential requirement. These fathers believed that if they were able to include these characteristics in their fathering it would make them better fathers. In the discussion about what they lacked from their fathers, Freddy talked about his father who never listened, displayed careless attitudes and was too strict.
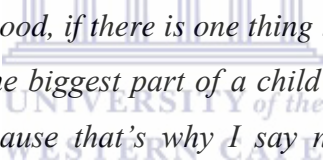
> *"He should be caring, understanding, listening to his kids, not to be like my father was with me, too strict, you need to give your children also space."* (Freddy)

Freddy recounted his own negative experience of being fathered and based his fathering qualities on that. He constructed a new way of dealing with his children. Furthermore, he considered his own father to be too strict and not allowing him space to develop as a child.

He wanted to give his children the opportunity of having what he had yearned for as a child. It appears that Freddy's father was a traditional father and Freddy felt that he did not benefit from this as a child and took the stance of including it in his style of parenting.

Banju expressed a similar experience. He reflected that his own upbringing impacted on how he reared his children. He mentioned that he had lacked a present father in his childhood. He expressed the importance of this and how it impacted on him as a child. He longed for a father figure, and wanted someone who he could go to and with whom he could bond. Banju expressed this as a disadvantage in his childhood and that it had impacted on his understanding of the role of a father. It was for this reason that he vowed to always be present and available for his children. Banju further expressed that the fact that he was solely reared in a single-mother household allowed him to be more emotionally involved in his children;s lives as he had learnt a lot from his mother.

Banju related the following:

> *"Taking back to my childhood, if there is one thing that I missed from my childhood is a present father. I think the biggest part of a child's life is a father that is present. I didn't get that bond, because that's why I say now, my children and I are very bonded, because I gave them, being there for them especially emotionally. Yes I think definitely, maybe it could be the fact that maybe I tried so hard to fix what I missed as a child, so in my children's lives, I told myself this is one thing that I should get right. I need to get right is to be best very good father."*

Even though these fathers were reared under different circumstances, it seems that it all contributed to their way of rearing their own children. These single fathers developed a new understanding and perception of a good father based of their own experience with their fathers. They took their own experience and constructed a perception and awareness, which falls into the paradigm of social constructionism.

While fathers did consider a good father to be one who provides, protects and the authority of the home (Ruddicks, 1997), it is apparent that their understanding went beyond this. Lamb (1997) writes of a shift from the good father being concerned primarily with the

provider/breadwinner role to one that embraces more ambiguous expectations of emotional involvement and responsiveness. Perhaps these single fathers were in this transition; their ideas and perceptions changed once their role and responsibilities changed. In South Africa, the media also plays a role in changing perceptions about fatherhood. Social media, including twitter, has contributed to a different understanding of how men should parent and be fathers. These include examples of gay fathers and lesbian mothers.

4.3.2. Single fathers' parenting experiences

Parenting, and single parenting in particular, requires sacrifices and adaptions to one's life. This section covers participants' issues surrounding adjustment to their current circumstances in order to find some grounding in their lives, discipline and work schedule conflicts. It became clear in the analysis as it did in the previous section that the influence of social constructionism impacted and informed single fathers' perspectives and decisions on adapting to their circumstances, discipline and work. The most consistent factor that appeared throughout the analysis is that single fathers proved that they could achieve success in solely rearing their children, and would not let their male pride and ego hinder the process. Asking for help with parenting was an option for the fathers.

4.3.2.1. Single fathers adapting to being parents

This sub-theme illustrates single fathers' initial response to their becoming single parents. All fathers in this study did not choose to become single fathers but some were left with the responsibility to care for their children as the mothers were not in a position to do so. Initially all fathers in this study found it difficult to cope but once they found their feet they managed effectively, according to their standards. Most of the fathers stated that they did not have an issue with asking for help and would use whatever means necessary to provide efficiently for their children. Single fathers were asked to describe their initial experiences and whether or how they overcame the obstacles in their path. Andrew described his initial experience below:

> *"It was challenging, when she was small, there was certain things I didn't know about. Like when she had a fever, she got a rash, I didn't know what to do about it. When she was teething, her stomach was running, I didn't know whether I should go left or go right, but then I educated myself, I asked my mother, my sister, and then*

things were fine…. Now I know when she has a running tummy or a rash, it's because she is teething."

Freddy described his experience as a learning process:

"It was not easy, it was hard for me to make that change, I feel is it a curse that did come over me, like really it's like I am in a cage most of the time so what I did, I educated myself, I couldn't cook or do anything in the house, so what I have done, I went on courses, baking courses. Afterwards I started developing and enjoying it. It's a learning process, just like the role of a new mother, I am still learning."

For Freddy, he initially felt trapped and caged in and did not see a way out. He decided that the best way to overcome his obstacles was to educate himself, just as Andrew had explained. He went on a cooking course to learn how to cook and fulfil that role and also expressed that he started enjoying preparing meals for his children. Freddy felt that his experience was an ongoing learning process. He compared it to a first time mother, who initially has no idea of how to be a mother but learns as time goes by. This suggests that Freddy is open to constructing new roles and sees the whole experience as a learning process.

Barry also expressed that initially it was a shock to him and he found it difficult to manage until he put a strict routine in place.

"I would say it was something new, it was like a bomb just hit me, because it was like new responsibilities added in my life now I have to play the role of a mother now as well. And yes it did affect me in all areas…… my time schedule was messed up because now I have to work around these kids, but I managed it with a routine. I worked out a schedule which I stick to religiously."

Barry developed a system that suited both him and his children. He felt putting this in place helped manage his time and schedule and eased his burden.

Juno sought assistance from a psychologist after he almost experienced a burnout.

"Eventually I started burning out and that's when I stated going, looking for help by my psychologist, just to get my way of thinking, my head you know. The change in therapy, helped me to cope."

Juno was able to identify that his circumstances were taking a negative toll on his life and decided to seek professional help.

Banju also described his experience as difficult and an adjustment.

"For me it was difficult, it was difficult because I was never exposed to it before… I could cook, because before I was married I stayed on my own, but now it's different, with me I could just eat bread, now I have to make nutritious meals. I relied on what I learnt from my mother and I educated myself…… I asked…."

There are studies (including Hilton & Desrochers, 2008) that found that becoming a single parent father can involve considerable role strain, such as role conflict and role overload as new roles are being added without others being taken away. This was experienced by all the fathers. Barry identified with this when he explained that it was like a bomb that hit him when new roles and responsibilities were added. This was expressed by Juno, who sought professional help after almost experiencing burnout, and Andrew, who described his experiences as not knowing whether he was coming or going.

When faced with the additional roles of providing, supervision and protection to the child, homemaking and tending to emotional needs of the children, they made special psychological and sociological adjustments (Mendes, 1976). These fathers improved their situations and circumstances and made special provision in order to manage their new roles. Hook and Chalasani (2008) suggest that it is common when single fathers are faced with the pressure to be sole primary care giver and sole primary breadwinner they modify their usual way of performing their parental role. These fathers performed under tremendous amount of pressure as they performed these roles without clarity and certainty. Irrespectively, these fathers made the adjustment and educated themselves and sought the help they need to transform their investment role to an involvement role (McKeown, 2001). The coping mechanisms that these fathers constructed are in line with agency that some women find within their relationships when men demonstrate hegemonic masculinity (Butler, 1995).

4.3.2.2. Authoritative vs Authoritarian: parenting styles of single fathers

Two parenting styles surfaced in this study, authoritative and authoritarian (Baumrind, 1991) Authoritative parent is demanding and responsive while Authoritarian parenting is demanding but not responsive. As men are socialised to be more assertive than nurturing, a breadwinner rather than care giver, independent rather than orientated (Wickstroom, 2010), it was expected that single fathers would incorporate this into their parenting styles. Typically, it was assumed that single fathers would apply an authoritarian style of parenting which is in line with the traditional father model and Ruddicks' (1997) core functions of a father. Instead, 4 out of the 6 single fathers parented the opposite to what was assumed. Four fathers applied the authoritative parenting style. In this parenting style parents are normally warm and nurturing toward the child, which is normally linked with the mothering role. These fathers understood how their children were feeling and taught them how to control their feelings as well as help them find appropriate outlets to solve problems (Baumrind, 1991). This is typical of authoritative parents and mothers as it suggests more expressive and involved behaviours. These characteristics and styles are illustrated in the direct quotations below:

> *"If there is something wrong with them, I will correct it with them, if my daughters have a problem, maybe she is teasing the other one, I will always try to use Bible to bring things over to them."* (Freddy)

Freddy engaged his children with issues needing to be resolved. He would use teachings from the Bible to help his children understand that their misbehaviours were inappropriate and find ways to correct them through the scriptures.

Banju also engaged in discussion with his children when it came to discipline. He felt that making his children aware of their actions had more of an influence on them than physical consequences.

> *"I will talk to them about mistakes that they made. I will make them understand what is good for them and not good and they would…"* (Banju)

Andrew often felt that putting measures in place such as taking certain toys away until behaviour were improved was a better alternative than corporal punishment. However, talking about the incident was his first preference.

> *"I talk to my daughter, I don't hit her, you see the things is, I always tell her, that's not the way you do things and today you not going to play with your dolls, almost like grounding. I teach her to apologise, if you did something wrong, you say you are sorry."* (Andrew)

These three fathers expressed a more nurturing and caring style when it came to disciplining their children. They did not feel that being in an authoritative position helped in their cases and did not feel the need to enforce this position. On the other hand, two other single fathers, Barry and Jason were not willing to negotiate their position. Both fathers felt that talking did not work and that a stronger method needed to be applied in order to get appropriate behaviour from their children. Barry's dominant parenting style was that of the authoritarian parent. Authoritarian parenting is a preventive, punishment-heavy parenting. Barry described this as follows:

> *"I raise my voice every single day, if they are rude, and disrespectful, I will give them a spanking on their bum or hand of which they know they won't do it again."*

When asked about the effectiveness of this method and why he chose not to discuss their behaviour Barry responded;

> *"I'm sure you can speak to them and explain the situation but I am that kind of person. It's more effective doing it the way I am doing it."*

Jason also preferred a more authoritarian approach. He said he preferred attending to the problem immediately and did not want to spend or rather waste time getting to the root of the problem. That, he felt was more for the mothers to do and his role was to show them that there are boundaries and ways to behave. This is a very common characteristic of authoritarian parent and the traditional father. He described this as follows:

"Like I have seen other mommies sit with their children and they will be like, no Matthew, you shouldn't do it, it is wrong and explains the whole wrongness behind it. I don't think I have time for that kind of thing. I just put my foot down, maybe I am instilling fear, I don't know."

In both Jason and Barry's parenting style when it comes to disciplining their children there is an inherent need for these fathers to control the behaviour of their children. Although Jason and Barry expressed a more nurturing aspect in their definition of a good father it appears that they are not willing to construct alternative roles when disciplining their children. It is apparent that Jason and Barry engage in traits of hegemonic masculinity when they feel they need to be dominant but also construct elements of an alternative masculinity where nurturing and caring are predominant.

4.3.2.3. Managing work and single fathering

Discussions of issues surrounding adjustment and discipline lead to further discussions detailing how single fathers manoeuvered and balanced their work schedules and solely caring for their children. This section examines the experiences of single fathers reconfiguring their work schedule around their children. In describing their challenges of balancing work and personal schedule, getting their children to and from school, cooking and cleaning and other household chores, these fathers expressed that they struggled in the beginning. Expanding on Jason's experience, one of the struggles he experienced was getting to work on time.

"Initially my work suffered, I couldn't juggle both, I needed help, especially in the morning, getting them ready for school. I was always late for work, I had to stay out when the child was sick, it affected me because I couldn't get the job done, I needed help so I got a nanny." (Jason)

As mentioned previously, one of the struggles many fathers found adjustments of working around their children. Once fathers set a schedule, they expressed that the process ran smoothly. Fathers put in place a routine for their children in order to manage their single lives effectively. For some fathers it was extremely difficult to manage work schedule and

rearing their children. Banju describes his difficulties with managing his work responsibilities and the responsibility of caring for his children.

> *"The one I struggled with most was work. I was always late for work because I had to make sure the kids were bathed in the morning. So before I could go to work and come back home, there was a wife that has cooked and kids have bathed, but this time, I wanted to get home as fast as I can, kids needed to be bathed, supper needs to be made. So it was hard…"*. (Banju)

Banju suggested that he felt stressed out getting the job done and rearing his children and this affected his performance at work. It was a constant rush for him and he felt that many did not understand his situation. Banju mentioned that his supervisor, who he expected to understand his situation as she was a woman, did not really understand and felt that he was using it as an excuse. Banju reflected this in another quote;

> *"My supervisor, who was a woman, and when I told her my child is sick, the first times, she would ask me, why can't your wife take off. I arranged with my supervisor to work flexible hours, my supervisor in the beginning, you know they think you using it as an excuse every time, I don't think it is that easy for them to understand."*

Even though Banju was faced with criticism at his workplace, it did not deter him. In dealing with this dilemma he arranged with his supervisor to work flexi-hours which helped with the strain. This appeared to be a difficult time for Banju, reorganising his work schedule so he could accommodate his children. Jason and Juno, both expressed challenges when configuring their work schedule and solely raising their children. Initially, they found it extremely difficult to balance the two. These fathers had to make special arrangements at work to the extent of reorganising their work schedule so they could experience fewer stressors. Concessions were made in all areas of these fathers' lives. This is outlined in the example below:

> *"Sometimes when I have a lot on my mind, I struggle at work….., when you have a list from one to ten and you look at the end of the day and you only at 6, then you allow it to stand over to the next day and the next day and next day, You become mentally*

tired. I sit up and think quiet abit and I slept very bad…… then when I come to work I lose track of the day." (Juno)

Juno experienced pressure in his job as his work was falling behind. He expressed that because of the many things on his mind he was not performing to his full capacity at work. Juno further stated that travelling and being away from home is an inherent requirement for his job. In order to work around his work schedule and children, he compressed all his travelling into one day a week, resulting in him putting an immense amount of pressure on himself. At the time, Juno thought it would work but he started to lag behind and it caused a problem. This is reflected below:

"In the beginning I would travel only on a Wednesday but when the Wednesday thing fell away I was stuck and sometimes my clients my customers can't see me on a Wednesday. I would take the 10am flight to PE and fly back again, then I can still take them to school in the morning and get the ma to fetch them." (Juno)

"Initially my work suffered, I could not juggle both, I needed help, especially with getting children ready in the morning. I work in town and have to leave very early for work because of traffic and the school only opens at 7 and there was no morning care. I had to stay out when my child was sick. I couldn't any more, I had to get a nanny." (Jason)

Barry, who was self-employed at the beginning of him assuming full rearing responsibilities of his children, expressed that even though he was flexible with his time, he still experienced constraints as his company functioned mostly in the evening. He experienced most challenges in the evening when he had to find someone to look after his children. As a result he could not take on as much work as he would have liked to and ran into financial difficulty. Barry decided to go back to a full-time 09:00-17:00 job. He expressed that this also created challenges for him;

"It has affected my work as well, I have to get home, I don't have time to concentrate on my own work, except after hours when the kids were done or after I sort them out, then I can sit and complete the tasks for the day."

Even though Barry explained that he now had a stable job he was still experiencing challenges getting the job done. His day was cut short as he had to rush home to attend to his children leaving him with uncompleted tasks, which is similar to Juno's experience. Either way, whether having a flexible job or full-time job, Barry experienced challenges reconfiguring his work schedule.

One father in this study expressed that he did not experience any work conflicts as he worked a 09:00-12:00 job and his daughter attended day care from 09:00-17:00. He described his work schedule as suitable and favourable for his situation.

"Because at crèche I can fetch her any time between 12 and 5. So if I have anything to do like cleaning washing, I can do and then I go fetch her, and I don't have much to do and I can focus on her." (Andrew)

It appears that having working hours like Andrew's allows fathers to cope more effectively and manage their time. But this is not always possible for single fathers. Andrew was fortunate enough to be able to afford this opportunity.

Most single fathers experienced work-related conflicts and felt that solely rearing their children did impact on the working lives. Even though they wanted to successfully rear their children on their own, they had no alternative but to seek help. The balancing of work and family has always been a problem for parents in general, but for single parents this balancing act is exacerbated (Ciabattari 2007; Nomagutchi, 2007). This is because there are more demands associated with single parenting and less social and financial resources available than is the case with dual households. It is suggested by Dyk (2005) and Mall and Arnold (2007) that these conflicts create guilt, stress, anxiety and increased time constraints. This was expressed by most fathers in this study. They all experienced challenges balancing family and work schedules. The majority of the fathers expressed the stress related to work schedules and not having enough time to complete their tasks. Research on single mothers (Ciabattari, 2007) found similar experiences found in this study with single fathers. It is suggested that this is a common experience by both single mothers and single fathers but that single fathers' experiences are more heightened. While attempting to be full-time single fathers, they felt the social gendered pressures of maintaining the provider role and being successful in their work (Esbesen, 2014). As men, the traditional place is within the

workplace and not the home; it could be argued that they experienced these challenges as their socialised roles were conflicting with these new roles. Women are considered to be the ones who are able to multi-task and are socialised to take on many roles. As Connell (1995) would argue, these particular men were interrogating hegemonic masculinity by taking on multiple tasks associated with women. Women within hegemonic masculinity are subordinated so by taking on these roles, the participants were challenging the order of hegemonic masculinity.

According to Coles (2002, 2009), the amount of stress can be decreased by the use of outside assistance. These fathers made alternative arrangements to lessen the stress levels and put things in place to assist them such as accessing the services of child care, negotiating flexible working hours and changing employment.

The next section will look at the theme of single fathers' parenting roles. The role challenges experienced by single fathers and how these fathers construct masculinities and engage in nurturing roles are discussed.

4.3.3. Parenting roles taken on by single fathers

In the classic work of Parsons and Bale's (1955), parenting roles were divided into two primary categories; instrumental and expressive (Finely & Schwartz, 2004).Some fathers in this study expressed that they initially experienced role challenges when attempting to engage in the expressive role. Two sub-themes emerged during this discussion with single fathers, which are discussed in the following sections. Questions exploring the roles fathers employed while rearing their children and their level of involvement and engagement in tasks related to child rearing were posed to single fathers.

Motivation for the successful engagement of tasks was the responses they received from their children. This ultimately encouraged fathers to get the job done and this is illustrated in the response from one father below:

> *"It is a nice feeling being there for her, showing her I care and I do want to know what she is doing, that I am interested in her life, for me that is just wow, it's an amazing feeling."* (Andrew)

4.3.3.1. Role challenges of single fathers

Cole (2009) suggests that fathers struggle with a constant need to reaffirm their masculinity and the feeling that they no longer fit the traditional masculine male role. This was expressed by three fathers in this study; direct quotations will be discussed below. Some men addressed these personal struggles with gender roles (mothering and fathering) by changing how they view and conduct these roles, while others attempted to dismiss or ignore them altogether (Cole, 2009).

Three fathers had a mixed response when answering questions relating to the role challenges they experienced. The initial idea of being a father changed once they became single fathers. Barry reflected how his role had changed in terms of responsibility as he stated in this quote:

> *"My understanding now is quite different to what I thought it would be or what I thought it was. Now I am looking at it in a different light because now I have to play the role of a mother now as well. Now that role has change for me because now I have become like the mother."*

In Freddy's case, he was struggling to identify with his role as father and that of a mother and often felt that his fatherly role was being replaced with a more feminine role.

Fathers said that they initially felt overwhelming feelings about caring for their children. Freddy said that the responsibility was a 'curse' and he felt 'caged'.

> *"Because I am alone with my kids, sometimes I feel is it a curse that did come over me, because I cannot move on with my life, I cannot, like really it's like I am in a cage most of the time. Really I feel hurt, man."*

A construction of different roles can often be misinterpreted and rejected by fathers because they are socialised to reject all things that appear feminine (Connell, 2005). Caring, emotiona and nurturing are all considered feminine traits and when men express any of these traits they feel they have not fulfilled their role as a man. In Juno's situation, he felt he failed as a good father when he was unable to protect his child from a situation that he had deemed harmful. Even though Juno expressed a protective role towards his children, as he described an

incident between himself and the mother, his interpretation of it was different. He felt he failed because he had not psychologically protected his child.

> *"He should know when to be able to remove his children from a situation, I pinned my wife, my ex-wife down over there, half by the kitchen and stuff, she was trying to take an overdose again, umm, and then I was pinning her down asking her to stop, and then my daughter came out and my son and they were screaming and stuff and she was like scavenging for the tablets and then I asked my daughter to help me take the tablets away from her mommy and I saw the look on her face and I went, what have I done, I just asked them to go back inside and then restrained her harder because I had her pinned down on the ground because she was trying to take an overdose again. And that is something, a good father would have known, would never have put his children in that situation."*(Juno)

As Juno explains above, his role was to protect his children from a situation that he deemed harmful to their well-being. When being unable to do so, he felt that he had put his children at a disadvantage and failed in his fatherly role as a protector. Juno experienced inadequacies as a father when he was unable to protect them from a harmful traumatic situation. Juno was concerned with the more emotional impact the exposure would have on his children. It could be argued that Juno was constructing an alternative role in this process and his experience therefore was not that of inadequacy but of role conflict. Hilton and Desrochers (2008) found that becoming a single parent father can involve considerable role strain, such as role conflict and role overload as new roles are being added without others being taken away. Role strain refers to the amount of stress and individual experiences when a single father is unable to comply or has difficulty in complying with the expectations of a new role (Burr, 2000).

The feelings of entrapment these single fathers experienced are a result of role strain and the inability to perform male as well as female roles within parenting. Dufur *et al.* (2010) conclude that traditionally there have been separate roles allocated to mothers and fathers. They argue that mothers contribute daily care, routines and nurturing and fathers provide protection, economic and disciplinary facets of parenting.

For men, there is also a general struggle over their identities as fathers and when in a single parent situation there is a drive to "prove" themselves capable of traditional mothering roles

(Coles, 2009). Single fathers in this study expressed that initially they found it very difficult to engage in the emotional and nurturing aspect of parenting. This is illustrated in the quotes below:

> *"At times it was difficult, especially when she is sick, I don't know what to do. In the beginning, I didn't know that children are talking (when they sick) and it would frustrate me because my child is talkative."* (Andrew)

Andrew described his ignorance of how to deal with an unresponsive sick child as frustrating. He was not aware of the normal behaviours sick children present. This affected his level of patience and also increased his concern.

Banju described his most difficult challenge as engaging in emotional aspects and fulfilling the role the mother had previously filled.

> *"The first year was the hardest, as I had to learn to do all these things and play all these roles…… What was challenging for me was the homework time as this was the time we spoke about the mother…. You see the mother normally did this with the children….. and it would bring some issues and sadness. Sometimes I would avoid doing the homework, it wasn't easy."*

Homework time for Banju and his children also evoked emotions. Banju initially did not feel comfortable during this time as he would have been required to address and deal with his children's emotions and he struggled with responding to them appropriately.

Jason struggled initially as well. He found it most difficult engaging in the expressive emotional attentive role as he felt stuck not knowing what to do when his children were sad.

> *"Sometimes they would cry and be sad and I would give them a sweet or chocolate and ask them to stop. I never thought to ask why; I just wanted her to stop. I couldn't deal with it and I didn't know how to respond to her crying, giving her a sweet was the best I could do."* (Jason)

Barry expressed a similar response but directly related it to being a man;

"As a male we tend to want to get to the bottom of the problem immediately and sometimes when it comes to children it takes time, takes patience, it takes a lot and that is something I would say a man, myself does not have. So that is what I am learning to do on a daily basis."

Through Barry's and Jason's narratives, they appear aware of the societal definitions of what a man is supposed to be and how he should behave in society. Both fathers were unable to engage with their children on an emotional level. They clearly expressed that being emotionally attentive to their children was something that required development.

As suggested by Cole (2009), fathers both address and construct nurturing angles, or they dismiss and ignore them altogether when addressing personal struggles with gender roles. The typical role of a man and father in society is that of a provider and protector. Even though these fathers associate these with their role in the family, they are willing to construct alternative roles, normally associated with the mother in order to make a success of their single fathering role. Some fathers expressed at some point feeling incapable of being highly nurturing or showing emotions openly as this did not come naturally to them. Nevertheless, these single fathers willingly altered their gendered roles and fully embraced them in their daily lives with their children. This is evident in the following sub-theme that emerged.

4.3.3.2. Constructions of nurturing of single fathers

The social constructionist theory, which interrogates hegemonic masculinity, allows for the possibility for fathers to engage in tasks and roles that are traditionally associated with mothering, as it is argued that women and men's roles are social constructs shaped by context and interaction and not a set of immutable traits linked to the specific sex (Cornwall & King, 2001). Single fathers in this study showed that it is possible. Irrespective of the constraints and challenges they experienced while doing so, they have proven it is possible.

Being present, grounded, contained, focused, potent and dynamic are core characteristics of masculinity and being free, spontaneous, intuitive, sceptical, accepting and nurturing are core feminist characteristics (Phoenix, 2017). This section provides a description of how single fathers construct certain feminine characteristics within the role of a father. Questions relating to single fathers' involvement and attentiveness, in terms of reading, homework,

emotional support and providing affection were posed to single fathers. Most single fathers felt that their initial response to solely rearing their children was a challenge but as time passed they became more comfortable with their new roles and found it easy to construct these roles. Single fathers expressed that they felt comfortable engaging in these tasks, this is reflected in quotes below.

"If my child gets hurt, I will kiss her on that spot, hold her and give her hugs, I will also try to find other ways to make her happy….. I read most when she has difficulty sleeping, I enjoy reading to her….. that time is precious, I always watch her sleep." (Andrew)

"I'm a little bit obsessed….. I would hug them, play with them, take them out, spend quality time with them so we can bond." (Banju)

"Before I became a single parent, I was never involved in affection but now, I am always hugging my kids, kiss them good night and tell them I love them." (Freddy)

All the single fathers treasured the quality time they spent with their children and saw it as an opportunity to strengthen their bond with them. Theories (Brandth & Kvande, 1998) that explore alternative masculinities in relation to fatherhood are termed "masculine care". In these studies the fathering role was considered highly important and being involved and engaged with their children was based on some adaptation to adopt the mothering role (Brandth & Kvande, 1998). In relation to the fathers in this study, fathers initially struggled to engage in affectionate nurturing activities but nevertheless they adopted new roles. Men and women face different expectations throughout life and social constructionism predicts that single mothers and single fathers parent similarly, whether male or female because they bear the sole responsibilities for providing for their children needs. Although these parents would limit the parenting to stereotypical female and male activities when they had a partner with whom they can do gender, they will take on the responsibilities traditionally acted out by the opposite sex if no partner is there to fill the role (Dufur *et al*., 2010). It is suggested that fathers in this study identified the gaps in parenting which resulted in changing their role perspectives. Single fathers expressed a desire to be available to their children on all levels and even though challenges exist, this remained the ultimate goal and what they strived towards. These fathers switched roles unknowingly as reflected in Freddy's narrative:

"All I can say is sometimes, when I'm in the kitchen busy making food, then I laugh to myself because I think I did become a woman. I am doing all the things a woman do." (Freddy)

"It made me do things that I have never done before in my life, things like what mothers or what the mothers use to do. Things like bathing, putting them to sleep reading them a story…… And just being there for them emotionally." (Barry)

"That whole testosterone vibe thing. Men do this and men do that. I find myself cleaning the bath, mopping the floor." (Juno)

All three fathers expressed that their traditional role of a father was being replaced with a more nurturing role. They identified with the emotional role which traditionally is considered displayed mainly by the mother as they described a noticeable change in their behaviour and roles. In the work of Phoenix (2017), it is suggested that the way for men to move forward is to develop their own norms based on core masculine characteristics and their responses to cultural conditioning and to move away from dominant cultural rules. Phoenix further suggests that although there are specific gender characteristics available to males and females to use, it should not be how we grow and not specify how we behave (Phoenix, 2017). These single fathers integrate both masculine and feminine characteristics into the child care activities. In contrast to studies conducted by Doucet (2004), where the father's emotional connection to the child is facilitated through autonomy, single fathers in this study expressed similar nurturing concerns such as those normally displayed by a mother. In Doucet's (2004) study, he found that fathers played a strong role in promoting children's psychical, emotional and intellectual independence. The majority of the fathers in that study rejected the traditional role of psychical, emotional autonomy and responding similarly to their counterparts when their children fell down and got hurt. In this study, single fathers constructed nurturing angles, attending to their children on more of an emotional affectionate and caring level. They responded with kisses, hugs and expressions of love. Doucet (2004) points out that when families are thrown into situations, mothers and fathers will act in ways that change their own deeply felt beliefs about nurturing and emotional responsibility. Evidence of this was found in this study where single fathers admitted to becoming a different kind of father as a result of being on their own with their children. This suggests that gender is a social construction and that men and women can easily take on different roles

when called upon. It is only socialisation that has forced men and women to adopt particular roles in their families. These participants appear to have abandoned those socialised roles when dealing with their children due to pressure to succeed as single fathers.

This widespread pressure also impacted on how single fathers behaved in front of their children. Even though single fathers showed affection and emotion when responding to their children's needs, it still remained difficult for them to show weakness in front of them. One father felt that he did not want it to rub off on his children and therefore never showed when he was sad or angry.

> *"I just don't show it in front of them, I don't show them when I am worried and I don't show them when I am sad. I am scared it would rub off on them and they would….I just want them to know everything is fine."* (Barry)

Banju and Freddy both expressed that they would cry but it would not be in the presence of their children, they did want their children to see them as weak.

> *"If I am worried, I go to the toilet and cry there first. But I do not cry in front of them, I always want to be strong in front of them."* (Freddy)

> *I use to cry a lot, but I always made sure I would never cry in front of them, I felt that it would break them. I would make sure when I am with them, I am the strongest I can be."* (Banju)

Banju, Freddy and Barry appear mindful of what it means to be a man in society, even though these fathers were able to construct a nurturing role when rearing their children certain hegemonic masculine traits like no emotion or crying were not compromised. It is a common assumption that men do not cry and for these fathers, they adhered to this expectation. This indicates that Barry, Freddy and Banju, did not want to dismiss all forms of hegemonic masculinity for themselves and their children. It could be argued that it was done to maintain some aspect of masculinity as they constructed their nurturing roles. The projection of dominance and toughness, are fundamental characteristics associated with the masculine identity (Anderson, 1999; Kimmel, 2000 and Messerschmidt, 1993). What is not clear is

whether men or other women who saw participants as female would regard them as gay. This was not clearly articulated by the participants and was not explored by the researcher

Most fathers also expressed an increase in their level of awareness when it came to the safety of their children. This is a typical mothering characteristic, the constant worrying about their children's safety and whereabouts. Single fathers related their construction of this characteristic in the quotes below:

"My level of awareness has increased, if she is out of my care for example, going on a outing with crèche, I want to know where she is going, with who, how long, what kind of place are they want to go to, are they going to be safe, even the weather outside, I always put a jacket in anyway." (Andrew)

"When I was married, I was never this was aware of things around me, that was the mother's role, I went to work and back. Since I became a single father and at home I became more aware of a lot of things, like who comes into the house. I just want to protect my kids. I am also worried what if someone is watching them because this community is unhealthy." (Freddy)

"I think I'm a little bit obsessed because to me it's important to know what time they come home, when they go to a friend, I want to know who they are going to, I was more concerned, I want to make sure I knew where they are. It's like you are trying to ensure nothing happens." (Banju)

"I became more aware of their surroundings that they in, I needed to know everything about where they are going, I needed to know so I could know that they are safe." (Jason)

"One metre… I sound a bit bad…. He can run but only where I can see him but my daughter, she is never out of my sight, always in front of me, a metre or two metres." (Juno)

The above narratives reflect an obvious increase in single fathers' level of awareness. Mothers in general are more likely have a higher level of awareness than fathers. In spite of

women's dominance in relation to providing a protective space for their children and in taking care of the emotional responsibility of children, there is increasing evidence (Coltrane, 1996; Daly, 1993; Lupton & Barday, 1997 ; Prunnet, 2000) that fathers can also be nurturing, affectionately responsive and active with their children (Doucet, 2004). However, these finding focused on single fathers incorporating a caring nurturing aspect that demonstrated qualities in ways that would still be considered masculine. Doucet (2004) identified these four aspects as fun and playful side; physical and outdoor approach to caring; promoting children's independence; and the encouragement of risk taking. Doucet (2004) argues that there is a great deal of emotional responsibility that is often associated with the mother like mothers, for example providing a protective space for children and the constant worrying that goes along with being a mother. The majority of fathers involved in this study said that they responded that they constantly worried about their children and whether they were safe and took extreme measures to ensure the safety and peace of mind. For the purpose of this sub-theme, risk taking is contrasted. Doucet (2004) states fathers present more masculine qualities in caring, as they would encourage their children to take risks rather than a cautious parent approach which is often displayed by mothers. Single fathers in this study expressed a rejection of risk taking and were more concerned with the well-being and safety of their children. Knowing that their children were safe was more of a priority than encouraging them to become independent. However, it is not clear in the study whether fathers would be more risk-taking with their sons rather than with their daughters.

4.3.4. Personal perceptions about being a single father

All of the single fathers were asked if they had changed the way they viewed themselves as a man within society and what their opinions were of how others viewed them as single fathers. Their answers were all unique, however all fathers expressed that they were applauded and praised for the work they did and for solely rearing their children by family and close friends. Single fathers related this to the negative connotation of some fathers being deadbeat absent fathers (Ratele *et al.*, 2012). Three fathers, Barry, Freddy and Banju expressed that they believed that other males, outside of the family and friends circle perceived them in a negative light, this was not openly expressed by others but it was observed through non-verbal cues by these other fathers.

4.3.4.1. Others' perceptions of single fathers

Single fathers expressed that many people applauded and praised them for caring for their children. Below, Juno explained that when people heard his story, they perceived him as doing something extraordinary.

> *"You know people, people when they hear this story and they hear the situation, they, they tell me I am a good father, I will always tell them I am a father……when some tells you they proud of you or when someone says that they admire you, what you become, that makes me thumbs up myself."*

> *"They see me as a strong father, a care taker, the responsible one….. You doing a great job."* (Andrew)

> *"They would praise me, because you stepping outside of the normal boundaries."* (Barry)

Going beyond the normal fatherly duties and being acknowledged for it is what inspired these single fathers. These fathers expressed such compliments as positive and did not feel less masculine. Thes newly acquired responsibilities and roles redefined these fathers' perceptions and that fact that they were being acknowledged for it assisted them with embracing their masculinity.

Three other fathers expressed a different view when it came to the perceptions of others. They felt that they were perceived negatively by other males and that solely rearing their children was a fault on their part. Banju spoke about how his culture and societal norms impacted on the way he was perceived.

> *"I think in my thing, I think sometimes, culture itself has its own expectations, for example if a father is a single parent or single, there is this assumption that there is something wrong with the man. I am mentioning this because some people ask me, why you not with your wife. What did you do wrong? It is always the first question that they will ask. Because in society, people think it's easier if children are with their mother, because people ask why don't you let the children be with their mother."*

Banju experienced judgement from others and this impacted on whether he felt he was doing the right thing, solely caring for his children. He felt that it is the perception that mothers are best suited for caring for the children and that he would be frowned upon because he is a male wanting to care for his children. Hirdman (2001) refers to these perceptions as normative ideas that shape parental responsibilities and also dictate how mothers and fathers, as well as families should behave. These views would be argued by men who are supportive of hegemonic masculinity as the predominant masculinity.

Society has placed expectations on males, which shaped these single fathers' idea of good fathers and what their roles are. Barry and Freddy expressed similar negative perceptions to Banju as they believed that other men did not see them as doing something good but rather that they were seen as acting like females. This is illustrated below.

> *"To the general public, I don't think they understand, so guy friends, male friends, I would not say make fun, but will say you probably have the kids, you probably have to do this that. It's almost like you making excuses, you like a girl in other words, it's what I pick up…… they would say you a mate because you doing all female things."* *(Barry)*
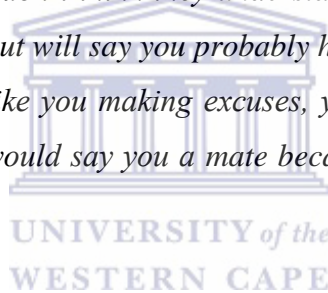
Barry uses the term "mate" which is coloured South African slang term used to describe men who act more like women.

> *"I think people must think Yor, that I am a woman man."* (Freddy)

> *"In one word they would describe single fathers as a failure. The first thing they would ask you is what did you do wrong, they not use to the fact that a father can raise children. They would assume it is my fault. People wouldn't say that I can pick it up."* (Banju)

All the above narratives relate single fathers being negatively perceived by others. In trying to understand why some fathers would perceive that others would see them in a positive light and others negative. Jain *et al*. (2011) shed some light on this. It is suggested that men still face a widespread pressure to express their manhood and many men fear being mocked by other men and women for performing household duties or caring for their children. As these

perceptions were not verbalised to single fathers but rather single fathers' opinions of how they are being perceived, a parallel can be drawn.

4.4. Summary of findings

The interview process covered four main themes, namely single fathers' understanding of a good father, their parenting experiences, the roles employed and how they are viewed as single parents. During the data analysis process four themes emerged and out of those themes, various sub-themes emerged. Each theme and sub-theme was discussed and contrasted in this chapter. This chapter concludes with a brief summary of the main findings in this study, this will be elaborated on in the final chapter, Chapter 5.

Single fathers' definitions of a good father varied according to the circumstances that led them to solely rearing their children and the social influence of masculinity theory as well as own fathering experience impacted and informed single fathers' understanding and perceptions. Nevertheless, single fathers were able to include traditional fathering traits as well as traditional mother traits such as support and being involved into their understanding.

The influence of social constructionism and hegemonic masculinity impacted and informed single fathers' perspectives and decisions on adapting to their circumstances, discipline and work. Single fathers experienced daily challenges with regards to child rearing and work but developed abilities to manoeuvre around their struggles. This suggests agency in response to hegemonic masculinity as outlined by Butler (1995).

Most single fathers felt that their initial response to solely rearing their children was a challenge but as time passed they became more comfortable with their new roles and found it easy to construct these roles. This was further interrogation of hegemonic masculinity.

Single fathers' level of awareness increased since becoming single fathers and they embraced and welcomed the opportunity to change and emerge as more compassionate nurturing individuals. The contrast to their own experience with their own fathers was clear.

Single fathers concluded the findings with the opinions of how they are perceived as single parents. Both negative and positive perceptions were expressed by single fathers. These

findings highlight how some single fathers daily have to confront hegemonic masculinity where they work and play. This leads to negative perceptions of self and aligns them with women who experience rejection daily. This could lead to subordination within masculinities.

In conclusion, Pollack (1995) suggests that men's nurturing urge, which is often suppressed in boy and adult socialisation tasks, can be stimulated dramatically by becoming a father, arguably more so when becoming a single father, as illustrated in the findings of this research.

Chapter Five

Conclusion

5.1. Introduction

This study manifests an attempt to prove that single fathers are capable of the more maternal parental role than what society assumes. As mothers and fathers traditionally hold different roles within our society, societal norms often create the assumption that fathers in general are not capable of solely rearing their children, due to their inability to nurture, provide emotional and child care of a standard set by their counterparts, mothers.

In this chapter the researcher presents the conclusions and recommendations that originated from this study, which aimed to explore and describe single fathers parenting experiences residing in the Cape Metropole area.

With this chapter, the researcher intends to provide a summary of the aims and objectives of the study, a brief overview of the research methodology used. Furthermore, the conclusions aim to provide a summary of the literature reviewed and an overview of the main themes that emerged. Finally, the researcher will discuss the limitations in the study and make suitable recommendations and suggestions for future researchers, practitioners and policy makers.

5.2. Summary of the aims and objectives of the study

The aim of this study was to explore and describe the parenting experiences and styles of single fathers solely rearing their children in order to provide an in-depth understanding and account of their experiences. Within this broad aim, four objectives were engaged: 1) how single fathers define being a father; 2) what experiences they encountered when solely rearing their children; 3) the roles they employed while solely rearing their children; and 4) what their perceptions are of how they are viewed by others, since becoming single parents. A qualitative approach was used in this study and it successfully met the objectives of the study. Further more, a qualitative approach was deemed most appropriate as it stayed within the realms of the study's theoretical framework. By utilising this approach, an in-depth reflection of single fathers' experiences was obtained.

5.3. Summary of the literature reviewed

The findings of this study were controlled and contrasted utilising social constructionist theory (Gergen, 1985) and the theory of hegemonic masculinity (Connell, 2005). These theories are theoretically sound paradigms and were used as the theoretical framework in order to provide a background and an in-depth perspective on how single fathers construct different roles that influence the traditional perception of fathering roles and masculinity, in particular, hegemonic masculinity. Empirical literature detailing a selection of viewpoints from both South African and international researchers and authors was reviewed to provide a global perspective on different family structures, single father parenting, experiences and roles employed by single fathers.

5.4. Overview of the main themes

Four major themes of interest originated from this study with a total of 9 sub-themes. Below is a list of the themes and sub-themes that emanated from this study. Following this is a summary of the findings for each major theme.

Theme 1

Single fathers' definition of being a good father

- *Single fathers' definition of being a good father: Constructing as the provider and protector.*
- *Single fathers definition of being a good father: Constructing as supportive and involved fathers*
- *Impact of the negative experience of they were fathered on single fathers.*

Theme 2

Single fathers' parenting experiences

- *Single fathers adapting to being single fathers.*
- *Authoritative vs Authoritarian: Parenting styles of single fathers.*
- *Managing work and single fathering.*

Theme 3

Parenting roles taken on by single fathers.

- *Roles and challenges of single fathers.*
- *Constructions of nurturing of single fathers.*

Theme 4

Personal perceptions about being a single father.

- *Others' perceptions of a single father*

5.4.1. Theme 1

Single fathers' definition of being a good father

All single fathers in this study described being a good father as one who is able to provide for and protect their children. Single fathers' definitions varied according to the circumstances that led them to solely rearing their children and there was a clear indication that the social influence on masculinity theory impacted and informed these fathers' understanding and perceptions of a good father. Although single fathers' definitions varied from father to father, they all shared the same descriptive characteristics associated with masculinity theory. A provider and protector appeared as inherent requirements in their definitions and formed the basis for their understanding of a good father.

Four of the six single fathers included components relating to the nurturing aspect of mothering, as well as characteristics such as being supportive and present in their children's lives. The single fathers who included characteristics normally associated with the mother, expressed a particular need to be supportive and involved in their children's lives and child rearing activities. Most single fathers' definitions were influenced by their own childhood and they used their own fathers as a reference point for their own parenting styles and idea of a good father. Some of these references were negative, as their fathers had played a minimal role in raising them or were absent.

The findings of this study indicate that single fathers felt being a good father did not only entail being a provider and protector but that it had to be infused with qualities of care giving, nurturing, good listening and being supportive. The findings also show that single fathers'

own fathering experiences of their own upbringing encouraged the nurturing side in their parenting style. This highlights how some single fathers interrogated hegemonic masculinity as they engaged with their children.

5.4.2. Theme 2

Single fathers' parenting experiences

All single fathers' perspectives and decisions on adapting to their circumstances, discipline and work were influenced by their changing circumstances in terms of parenting. Most constructed their parenting experiences from an alternative masculinity perspective.

In the initial stages of single parenting, all fathers found it difficult to cope but once they found their feet in their new roles they managed effectively. Most of the fathers indicated that they did not have an issue with asking for help and would use whatever means necessary to provide efficiently for their children. All single fathers indicated that their parenting experience was an ongoing learning process and were open to constructing new roles. The majority of the single fathers showed evidence of role strain and role conflict and had to make adjustments to schedules, educate themselves and seek help in order to manage their new roles.

Single fathers constructed two parenting styles in this study, namely authoritative and authoritarian. Four fathers engaged in the authoritative parenting styles and the remaining two in authoritarian parenting styles.

The four single fathers who engaged in authoritative parenting styles expressed a more nurturing and caring style when it came to disciplining their children. They did not feel that being in an authoritative position helped in their cases and did not feel the need to enforce this position. The two fathers who engaged in authoritarian parenting styles indicated that they were not willing to negotiate their position. These fathers felt that stronger methods needed to be applied in order to ensure appropriate behaviours from their children. These single fathers indicated that when it came to disciplining their children there was an inherent need to control the behaviour of their children. This style appears to resonate with hegemonic masculinity. It also suggests confusion with the kind of style that would be appropriate for

rearing their children. There is likely to be some modelling of their own childhood experiences with their parents.

Five of the six single fathers indicated they initially experienced challenges of balancing work and personal schedules, getting their children to and from school, cooking and cleaning and other household chores. Many single fathers struggled in adjusting their work schedule and found it to be extremely difficult to balance the two. All single fathers put in place a routine for their children in order to manage their single lives effectively and also made special arrangements at work, to the extent of reorganising their work schedule and seeking additional help in child care so they could experience fewer stressors and balance their lifestyles. These findings articulate an alternative masculinity as these men are adapting to their new roles as carer and are including 'feminine' roles in their repertoire of parenting.

The findings of this study showed that single fathers were determined to achieve success in solely rearing their children and would not let male pride and ego hinder the process.

5.4.3. Theme 3

Parenting roles taken on by single fathers

The majority of single fathers expressed that they initially experienced role challenges when attempting to engage in the expressive role. Three fathers had mixed responses when answering questions relating to role challenges they experienced. These fathers exhibited overwhelming feelings in caring for their children coupled with feelings of entrapment.

Most single fathers felt that their initial response to solely rearing their children was a challenge but as time passed they became more comfortable with their new roles and found it easy to construct these roles. Role confusion was likely to be prevalent as they had to take on 'feminine' roles for which they were not socislised. This again reflects on their ability to interrogate hegemonic masculinity where men are mostly dominant and women subordinated.

All the single fathers indicated that they treasured the quality time they spent with their children and saw it as an opportunity to strengthen their bond with them. These single fathers expressed a desire to be available to their children on all levels and even though challenges existed, this remained the ultimate goal and what they strived towards. Most single fathers

expressed that the responses from their children influenced and motivated them to engage in tasks and get the job done. The positive responses from their children would have encouraged them further to construct an alternative masculinity.

Three fathers indicated that since become a single father, their traditional role of a father was being replaced with a more nurturing role. They identified with the emotional role which traditionally is considered displayed mainly by the mother and indicated a noticeable change in their behaviour and roles. Gender is deconstructed when there are no clear roles for men and women. In this instance, emotional connection came naturally to these men as there were no women to provide that support.

Most fathers indicated that there was an increase in their level of awareness when it came to the safety of their children. They indicated how they were more worried about their children and whether they were safe and took extreme measures to ensure the safety and peace of mind. Single fathers rejected the concept of risk taking and were more concerned with the well-being and safety of their children. It was not clear whether this awareness was directed at the male children or the female children.

The findings of this study show that single fathers integrated both masculine and feminine characteristics into child care activities and constructed nurturing angles when attending to their children. The findings also indicated that there was an increase in awareness since becoming single fathers.

5.4.4. Theme 4

Personal perceptions about being a single father

All fathers indicated that they received positive feedback from other parents since becoming single fathers. However, three fathers out of the six also indicated that they believed that other males, outside of the family and friends circle perceived them in a negative light as feminine. Men who engage in hegemonic masculinity would be likely to reject men who took on 'feminine roles' and would subordinate them as they do with women.

Going beyond the normal fatherly duties and being acknowledged for it is what inspired these single fathers and how these fathers saw their responsibility. The newly acquired

responsibilities and roles redefined these fathers' perceptions and encouraged them to embrace their alternative masculinity. Three other fathers expressed a different view when it came to the perceptions of others. They felt they were perceived negatively by other males and that solely rearing their children was a fault on their part. As highlighted, this is how women often feel when rearing their children as they are subordinated within the hegemonic masculine hierarchy. These fathers did not feel that it influenced or impacted on their parenting styles or child rearing.

5.5. Limitations of the study

All studies have limitations no matter how well structured and constructed. The researcher has therefore noted the following limitations:

- *Population Sample*

    A limitation in this regard is that this study focused on parenting experiences of single fathers and therefore the findings of the study may only be applicable to this area, namely the Cape Metropolitan area. These findings were very descriptive and successfully met the objectives of the study. However they may not be translated to fathers in dual-parent households or fathers in general.

    Another limitation of the study is that it excluded the views and perceptions of the children as only single fathers participated in the research.

- *Lack of available data*

    Initially, the sample size comprised of eight single fathers but due to single fathers' lack of interest and the availability of single fathers, the study was limited to six fathers. However, reliable data was obtained from the six fathers. Recommendations have been made to overcome this limitation for future research.

- *Lack of prior research studies on the topic*

    Single father parenting is an understudied population resulting in limited available empirical research. Nevertheless, the researcher used existing literature of how men construct feminine roles in dual-parent households and their experience as a base and this is deemed sufficient.

5.6. Recommendations and suggestions

In light of the limitations identified and the findings of this study, the researcher has developed three (3) sets of recommendations for a) practitioners; b) policy makers; and c) for future research on single father parents.

5.6.1. Recommendations for practitioners

There is a general assumption that services and practices available to single parents should predominantly focus on the mother rather than the father. It is therefore recommended that this study guide practitioners in developing interventions specifically for single fathers, which would encourage the social acceptance of single fathers. It is further recommended that practitioners dismiss the idea of ideal gendered roles in successful parenting. Alternative masculinity must be promoted as it is clear from this study that fathers adapt well to this kind of construction.

5.6.2. Recommendations for policy makers

South African law has observed an increase in fathers' involvement in their children's lives since 2007, in terms of the injunction of the Children's Act of 2005. Fathers have been made more aware of their rights and wish to assert them. However, it is understood that there is still a strong policy-based perception that South African fathers are not playing their role and that this perception is supported by a variety of scholarly and governmental sources (Ratele in Visser & Moleko, 2012:553). The following recommendations should be considered to eradicate this and enhance these fathers:

- In section 19 of the Children's Act of 2005, parental rights and responsibilities are conferred upon mothers and sections 20 and 21 stipulate that fathers have the right to acquire these rights and responsibilities. This is based on the prejudicial treatment of fathers arising out of their parenting roles and gendered stereotypes. It is recommended that the Act should be amended to refer to mothers and fathers equally and not provide special privisions for fathers.

- Development of a national single father parenting strategy that includes intervention and support services for single fathers. Furthermore, there needs to be training on

alternative masculinity within social work services so that hegemonic masculinity is not encouraged.

- Development of employment policies that encourages places of work to be more family friendly and accepting of diverse families (including gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender single parents). This will alleviate some of the work-related struggles single fathers face.

5.6.2. Recommendations for future research

This study explored and described the parenting experiences of single fathers which is considered to be an area of minimal research. It is recommended that single fathers should be explored further in future studies from multiple angles. It is further recommended that the population be expanded to a larger sample and geographical location. This would add greater significance to the body of this research. It would also be of greater value if the research sample would include a more diverse racial group to gain better perspectives on the impact of race and culture on single fathers' constructing alternative roles.
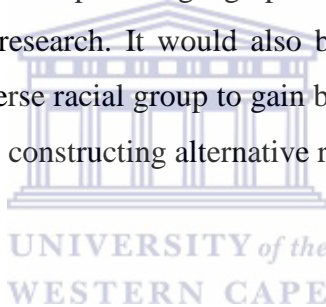
5.7. Conclusion

This study was aimed to illuminate the direct voices and experiences of single fathers. The objectives appear truly measureable in the findings of this study as they highlight the daily tasks, parenting experiences and the way in which single fathers construct non-traditional gendered parenting roles.

The findings of this study indicate that these single fathers faced many challenges and stresses in their roles as single parents, including adverse social and personal struggles when going against traditional masculine roles and fulfilling a more nurturing motherly role. Despite all these barriers and challenges, these single fathers were determined to successfully solely rear their children. The manner in which these fathers challenged the ideals of masculinity theory, in particular hegemonic masculinity, are clearly depicted throughout the findings. Although the number of single father families may still be small and cannot be generalised, full-time single fathers families do exist and if we can recognise the abilities of fathers to take on duties that are traditionally assigned to mothers, we can break down rigid gender roles and expectations for the betterment of these fathers and men in general.

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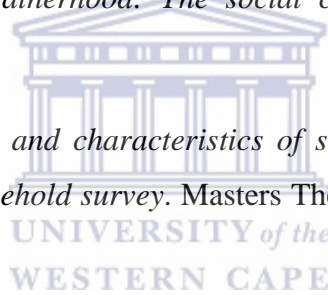
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UNIVERSITY OF THE WESTERN CAPE

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INFORMATION SHEET

Project Title: "*Fathers experiences of single parenting***".**

What is the study about?

This research project is conducted by Glenda Cable from the University of the Western Cape. You are being invited to participate in this research project because you are a single father solely rearing your child/children. The purpose of this study is to provide a subjective description of single fathers parenting experiences and parenting styles**.**

What will I be asked to do if I agree to participate?

You will be asked to answer a few questions about your roles and the styles employed whilst rearing your child/ children on your own. The interview questions will pertain to your experiences of providing sole care to your children. The interview will not take more than 45 – 60 minutes.

Would my participation in the study be kept confidential?

I will do my best to keep your personal information confidential, to help protect your confidentiality; no names will be included in or on the data collected. If I write a report or article about this research project, your identity will be protected to the maximum extent possible, false names will be given.

In accordance with legal requirements and/or professional standards, I will disclose to the appropriate individual and/or authorities information that comes to my attention concerning child abuse or neglect or potential harms to you or others.

What is the risk of this research?

There is no known risk in participating in this study.

What are the benefits of this research?

There is no financial gain or other benefits to you personally, but the results may assist the researcher to understand the experiences single fathers' encounter when solely rearing their children as well as under what circumstance they do so. It will be of significant value to the social work field, especially to agencies rendering services to single fathers and their children.

Am I obliged to participate in this research and may I stop participating at any time?

Your participation in this research is completely voluntary. You may choose not to take part at all. If you do decide not to participate in this research, you may withdraw at any time. You will not be penalised when you decide to stop participating in the study.

Am I allowed to ask questions?

This research is being conducted by Glenda Cable from the University of the Western Cape. If you have any question about the research study, please contact me, Glenda Cable at 0716836681 or e-mail: glendacable@gmail.com.

Should you have any questions about this study and your rights as a research participant or if you wish to report any problems you will be experiencing in relation to the study, please contact:

Head of Department	Prof C Schenk
	021-9592011
	email:cschenk@uwc.ac.za
Dean of the Faculty of Community and Health Sciences	Prof J. Frantz
	021- 9592631
	jfrantz@uwc.ac.za
	University of the Western Cape
	Private Bag X17
	Bellville 7535

This research project has been approved by the Senate Higher Degrees Committee and Ethics Committee of the University of the Western Cape.

Annexure B Letter of request to participate in the study

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E-mail: glendacable@gmail.com

CONSENT FORM

Title of Research Project: Fathers experiences of single parenting

The study has been described to me in language that I understand and I freely and voluntarily agree to participate. My questions about the study have been answered. I understand that my identity will not be disclosed and that I may withdraw from the study without giving a reason at any time and this will not negatively affect me in any way.

Participant's name…………………………..

Participant's signature…………………………………….

Witness…………………………………….

Date………………………

Should you have any questions regarding this study or wish to report any problems you have experienced related to the study, please contact the study coordinator:

Study Coordinator's Name: Dr Neil Henderson

University of the Western Cape

Private Bag X17, Belville 7535

Telephone: (021)959-2843

Cell: 0725397433

Annexure C – Interview Schedule with probing questions

UNIVERSITY OF THE WESTERN CAPE

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"*Fathers experiences of single parenting*".

Time: _____

Date: _____

Place: _____

Interviewer: _____

Interviewee: _____

Questions:

1. What are the single fathers' experiences of solely rearing their child/ren?

2. What roles is the single father employing when fathering their child/ren.

3. How does a single father define being a father?

4. Do the single fathers feel that other people view them differently since they became single fathers, if so, How

5. Tell me more............

6. What do you mean...............?

Thank you very much for your time and effort and participation during in this interview. It is greatly appreciated.

Annexure D – Interview Guide

Interview Guide

Background information

1. Please state your age and race?
2. How many children do you have?
3. How old are your children?
4. How long have your children been residing with you?
5. How did it happen that you ended up having the children?
6. Who made the decision for the children to reside with you?
7. How do you feel about the decision now?
8. How often do your children have contact with their mother?
9. Since you became a single father do you have any help with caring for your children?
10. Prior to the separation and obtaining custody of the children, who mainly looked after the children?

Aim 1 – Explore and describe your definition of being a father.

11. Explain your understanding of a good father?
12. How do you feel about being a father?
13. What qualities should a good father have?
14. Think about your relationship with your children, what contributes to being a 'good father'?
15. How does your role as a single father fit into your cultural expectation of being a man/father?

Aim 2 – Explore and describe your single fathers parenting experiences.

16. How do you experience single fatherhood?
17. Tell me about your relationship with your children?
18. When you became the main carer for your children, what changes did you make to your life?
19. Tell me about the day to day challenges you experience as a single father?
20. How you deal with these challenges?
21. How has single fatherhood impacted on your future relationships?
22. Have you ever felt that you needed practical help or advice on how to be a good single father?

23. What kind of support services do you think is available to you as a single father?

24. Do you feel that these services meet your needs? (optional)

Aim 3 – Explore and describe single fathers parenting roles.

Engagement

25. How often do you participate in activities with your children?

26. How often do you play with your child or interact with them?

27. Tell me about the activities you partake in with your children? What do you do with them?

Accessibility and availability

28. Do you experience any specific challenges with regards to caring for your children and your work life? Please explain how you accommodate the two?

29. How do you manage your time, e.g. work and taking your child to and from activities?

30. How available are you to your children? When they need your help with something?

Responsibility

31. Do you make alternative arrangements for care for your children when you are unable to do so? If yes, what do you do?

Communication

32. Tell me about your method of communication with your children?

33. Do you experience difficulty in communicating with them?

34. Has communication changed now that you are responsible for all aspects of raising them?

35. How often do you talk to children about things that happened during the day?

Teaching

36. Do you assist your children with their homework?

37. How often do you do this?

38. How do you experience this?

39. How often do you read to your children, tell me about this experience?

Errands

40. How often do you take children to and from activities, eg birthday parties, extra mural activities?

41. Tell me what this experience is like for you?

Maintenance

42. Do you have financial challenges now that you are a single father? If yes, can you talk about it?

43. Do you receive any financial assistance from the childrens mother?

44. Can you describe your experience of meeting your childrens basic needs? E.g. buying clothing, food and other basic necessities.

Protection

45. Can we talk about how you see yourself as a protector of your children? Has your level of awareness increased since they have been residing with you.

Discipline

46. Tell me about the ways or methods you use to discipline your children?

47. How effective do you feel are the methods that you use?

Providing affection and emotional support

48. Tell me about how you provide emotional support to children?

49. How do you tend to your child/children's emotional needs, for example if they are sad, or are crying or got hurt?

50. Tell me about how you show affection to your children? Do you think it is different compared when you were married/had a partner?

51. How do you express your feelings to your children eg if you worried about them, or concerned about their development?

52. *Caregiving*

53. How do you organise practical housework, eg cleaning, preparing meals?

54. How do you organise the practical side of caring for your children, eg routine, caring for your child when ill, buying clothing etc?

55. What roles that you would normally consider to be a mother's role do you find difficultly fulfilling?

Aim 4 – Personal perception of how single fathers are viewed.

56. What words do you think people use to describe single fathers?

57. What do you think your friends/family feel and say about you rearing your children?

58. What do you think you had to give up as a man since rearing your children?

59. How do you think your children feel about being reared solely by you?

60. You are aware of the norm that mothers are natural carers and nurturers, do you believe in that now that you have been 'taking on' that role?

61. How do you view motherhood since taking on the role of the mother?

62. Are you aware of your rights as a father? Can we talk about it?

63. The new Childrens Act has now given unmarried fathers equally rights to their children but does stipulate that fathers should acquire these rights. Since you are a single father soley caring for your children, how do you feel about this?

Would you like to add anything before we concluded the interview?

Annexure E – Example of transcript

Glenda: Freddy, name is Glenda and I am conducting research on behalf of the University of the Western Cape. My research is about single parent fathers and I am looking at the experiences single fathers go through while rearing their children. Can you please state your age and your race for me?

Freddy: I'm 41 years and I am a Khoisan.

Glenda: How many children do you have?

Freddy: I have two children.

Glenda: How old are you children?

Freddy: 17 years old and 20 years old.

Glenda: And how long have your children been residing with you?

Freddy: 13 years.

Glenda: How did it happen that you ended up having your children?

Freddy: I was retrenched and it affected me and my wife's relationship and there was no income and she cannot live the life style she lived before and just pack up and move to her family.

Glenda: and she left her children behind?

Freddy: Yes

Glenda: Who made the decision that the children stay with you?

Freddy: There was not a decision, we did first argue a lot, so the children go to her on weekends, so then I was at home every day and afterwards she just leaves them because she is working also, and during her working time she left the children at her families place.

Glenda: So you said the children are staying with you for fourteen years, how do you feel about that decision now, taking on the responsibility of your children?

Freddy: I don't feel. I think it's a good thing for me to know all the time where my children are, what is my children doing, where they are, to look after them. In the beginning it was a burden but not anymore for me. I feel positive for the decision that I have made to step down or step up for my kids.

Glenda: How often do they have contact with their mother?

Freddy: Not a lot, just say three four times a month.

Glenda: Is that how much contact they have with their mother as well?

Freddy: No sometime she picks them up then she leave and drops them again. They spend a lot of time with them, especially on weekends because she is not working on weekends.

Glenda: And during the week?

Freddy: No them they are my responsibility; she is never coming there during the week.

Glenda: Ok, so it is only weekends when she has contact with them. So since you became a single father, did you have any help caring for your children?

Freddy: Yes I did get help, help care in 2014 August, last year somebody help me with it.

Glenda: With what?

Freddy: To get help care, like a grant for my kids, because I never got a grant because I was under the impression that I would not qualify for it. I was ashamed to do it, you know, and I didn't want my kids to know about it. So my family was helping me out most of the times, I could depend on my brother, he was helping me financially.

Glenda: Ok, so prior to separation and you deciding to look after your children, when you were still married to your wife, who mainly looked after the children?

Freddy : My sister looked after them because my wife was working.

Glenda: So your sister cared mostly for them. So even while you were married.

Freddy: Yes they stayed by my sister until 8 o clock at night.

Glenda: When your wife came home from work.

Freddy: Yes.

Glenda: Ok Charles, what I am going to do now is talk to you abit about what is your definition about being a father. So if you think of a good father, how would you describe a good father?

Freddy: I would describe a good father must listen to their children, they must be part activities, especially in their education, must have patience with them. A good father must learn their children all the things that they can. That he can do for them, that they need can take note of. A Good father must learn his children of the environment around them, to be alert, and don't talk to strangers. And a good father need to provide for his kids. A good father needs to be stress free, a good father needs to have finance.

Glenda: So how do you feel about being a father?

Freddy: Because I am alone with my kids, sometimes I feel is it a curse that did come over me, because I cannot move on with my life, I cannot, like really its like I am in a cage most of the time. Really I feel hurt man.

Glenda: You feel hurt?

Freddy: Yes man, I am going alone through these things. There was times when I wanted to give up on life, but I was thinking of my kids, really. I didn't have the pleasure of other people. I cannot say, I am going to stand up and go there, you know it is a 24 hour thing. For them, when I see them, I forget about everything that is around me, I appreciate them a lot, I think without them, I don't know where I stand in this world. I don't think there is a place for me.

Glenda: Ok, I am going to speak abit about that in a little while, about you being restricted and all those things. I just want to get your understanding of what is a good father, you explained to be that it is someone that the finances, and all those other things. But what qualities do you think a good father should have.

Freddy: I didn't think about that, really. I don't know if I am a good father. Maybe I imagine I am.

Glenda: Ok, not you, think about it in general.

Freddy: If I can give my kids everything I think I will be a good father.

Glenda: So do you think a good father should be an understanding father, should he be a caring father, what kind of qualities do you think he should have.

Freddy: He should be caring, understanding, listening to his kids, not to be like they fathers were with them, too strict, you need to give your children also space. That's a good father and if the child needs something for school, you must not put that burden on the child, you cannot say you don't have, you must make a way for the child. A good father is someone that the child feels there is nothing that can keep the child back, you don't put responsibility, the child must feel responsibility for him.

Glenda: So earlier on you mentioned to me, that you are part of the Khoisan?

Freddy: Yes

Glenda: So if you think of the role of a man in that culture, the Khoisan culture, how does being a single father, rearing your children, fit into that.

Freddy: Khoisan men are really free men, they don't have a lot in common with the household things, I wanted to change that. That side of me. Because my father, he is like a

Xhosa and a Khoisan, he is from Uppington, he was not involed in the family, and I did promise myself that if I have a family one day, I wont be like that.

Glenda: So are you saying that the Khoisan men, they are not really involved in household chores, looking after children. The more female side of things.

Freddy: Yes

Glenda: So now that you have to do that, how do you feel about that? Is it difficult for you to do. Is it easy for you to make the change?

Freddy: It was not easy, it was hard for me to make that change, so I educate myself, I couldn't cook or do anything in the house. So what I have done, I did go on courses, baking courses and cooking courses. And afterwards I start developing and enjoying it. So I stand in the house, make the food for them. I did look at things that I can satisfy my children, the needs of my children that are important. So I did go in baking courses, and so on. It is hard; today it's still hard, It is a little hard. Sometimes I didn't get the relax them I soma ask them to stay quiet. Go into your rooms, take books and just leave me for a while so I can adjust. I never get rest actually, I am always busy busy busy, its always. Because I don't want my children also to work so hard in the house, light things like skottels goedjies opwas, as dit baie skottelgoed, sale k maar laat hulle werk nee. As dit n beitjie, dan doen ek dit. Die oudste dogter is regte n help vir my. And I learn a lot of things from her. Sy weet hoe om huis dinge te doen en so aan. Sy maak nee kos, ek maak die kos want ek is n beitjie bang sy brand of so aan. Kitchen rules and so on.

Glenda: So we are going to move on to the next set of questions where you are going to talk to me about your parenting experiences and how you are coping with being a single father. So earlier you mentioned to me that it is a difficult task for you, but I want us to speak abit about that, how you experience being a single father, or lets look at first the difficult task.

Freddy: Ok the difficult task as a single father is to bring things over to my eldest daughter. she don't talk a lot or respond on what I ask about certain things in her life. It is very difficult sometimes for me understand them because they are girls. I go to the library and read some books actually to respond to them when they don't respond to me.

Glenda: So is it communicating with your teenage daughter that you find difficult?

Freddy: Yes

Glenda: About what kind of things?

Freddy: I always ask her does she have a boyfriend and then she will say no, like it offends her when I bring it up. Almost like don't I trust her, like parties. For me its not difficult but Im still worried when they go out to parties, like class parties. It is difficult for me to let her go to that parties.

Glenda: Are you concerned about her safety?

Freddy: Yes I am concerned about her safety and about the youngsters, their behaviour, how they are today. I see things happening in my community and it make me very afraid to make my daughter be part of that activities where class mates go out and that.

Glenda: Ok we are going to talk about that in a little while, that's is also part of the questions I am going to ask you. In general you said, that you have some difficult task of being a single father, what are the easy for you to do. What do you find that doesn't take much effort?

Freddy: Actually to make activities, to go out with them, to me it's not a problem to go out with them and so on. And to put them to bed at night it's also easy for me. And washing, it's a bietjie heavy for me at times.

Glenda: What washing? The Clothes

Freddy: Yes the clothes, I need to do the clothes.

Glenda: Ok, we going to speak about your day to day chores, and you can tell me what you do in the house. Tell me about your relationship with your children, how would you describe that?

Freddy: I think we have a good relationship, because my daughters, if anything is not good at school for them and they have a problem, they will always come to me, and speak with me, we have an open relationship, always and they call me sometimes mom in the house, and we just laugh about it. And the youngest daughter, sometimes the relationship is, sometimes I look at her and then she lies about things that I ask her and she will just answer the thing without thinking. She covers up for kids at school, she is afraid I will go see the school over that thing or I will go face that people or I will go to their houses and correct the thing immediately and tell them what their children is doing. So she keeps sometimes back and then I need to ask questions and then she will come out. To say the kids is nasty with her or the kids give her somethings, because I learn her a lot not to take stuff from people.

Glenda: ok, since you became the main carer of your children, or rather, you and you wife decided that the children should stay with you, what changes did you make in your life?

Freddy: Big changes, I made a lot of changes. First actually was the rules, what time the children need to go sleep. The second change was me working in the kitchen and to do the washing, or doing the bathing of the youngest. Make changes there, and then my daughter need to do that and she need to talk, when my daughter become a teenager, she is actually always comforting her in a way, but also changes that I was not interested in women anymore.

Glenda: So on a personal level the change that you made in your life, was for to put your relationships on hold.

Freddy: I change to spend more time with my daughters, I change, I think my behaviour did also change towards my kids, I am better off now than when I was before. I was a little very strict with them, my wife was still in the house. Because I did always think she cover up for them. But I did learn afterwards she did love them, she was just protecting them

Glenda: Did you realise that because you found yourself in that position?

Freddy: Yes

Glenda: That you were taking on the role of the mother, is that why you realised that? Ok you said you were the strict one and she was the one that would cover up for them, so after the divorce and the children because your responsibility, you understood more what she was doing?

Freddy: Yes

Glenda: So was your understanding clearer because, you are in that position?

Freddy: Yes now I understand that she did really love her children.

Glenda: So you said you stopped entering into relationships, are there any other changes you on a personal level that you did.

Freddy: I stopped going out with friends, I even stopped my friends coming to my house. I saw danger when my friends coming to my house, so I stopped it. Took myself away form them, so I don't have a lot of friends anymore. The community I sometimes I keep my children inside. But they are actually outdoor children. I took them say once a month, I took them for a drive, take them to the zoo, we go places.

Glenda: Charles can you tell me about the day to day challenges you have, things that you find on a day to day basis that you find difficult doing, for example, getting up in the morning, preparing the children for school, normal challenges that you experience?

Freddy: Challenges that I get is if I need to go do something, or I need to, I want to educate myself further, become more educated it's a challenge for me because of my children, there is no one to look after them and I still don't trust to leave them for a whole day alone even if I have a teenager today. You know its for me a challenge for me o leave them alone.

Glenda: Ok, so if you think of day to day challenges. For example, getting up in the morning, preparing them for school, going off to work, coming home from work, preparing supper. You said earlier on you also struggle with doing the washing?

Freddy: Yes its only the washing is mostly that I struggle with. Because you know, getting up in the mornings, I don't have a problem, because we sleep early. My eldest daughter, she has the alarm, she always wakes us up in morning. She set the alarm. I was thinking a few days back, Yor do we live on an alarm system.

Glenda: Ok so you say you do not experience any day to day challenges.

Freddy: Another thing is shopping

Glenda: Shopping aswell as washing.

Freddy: The reason for the shopping is actually, I afraid to take my youngest daughter with because she wants everything in the shop.

Glenda: Do you know what things to go and buy at the shops.

Freddy: Yes I know how to do shopping for the house.

Glenda: What are you struggling with, with regards to the washing.

Freddy: Is actually the lines there, they always full.

Glenda: So it's not actually the task of doing the washing.

Freddy: No the lines are always full. So I always wash then I go out and I see the lines is always full, then the washing just stands there for the whole day, then I just get frustrated.

Glenda: So you don't have a difficulty in doing the washing. It is not that you do not know how to it.

Freddy: I do know how to do it, I think my time is out when I have to go hang it up, because when I was a youngster, my mom learned me to do all those things. I was my mothers baby.

Glenda: Do you think that being a single father now has impacted on your future relationships, has it stopped you from entering future relationships. I know you said you made a change that you were not going to get involved with women but do you think that it has affected any possibility of you veer entering into a relationship.

Freddy: Yes, definitely.

Glenda: Can you tell me why?

Freddy: I am afraid for relationships, because I am afraid how they will treat my children and so because it is still only, and I think to myself what will my children say about, but I try to keep that away from them but for me maybe, I feel maybe my wife will come back to me because she never told me why she left, she never tell me. I just makde my own assumptions, it's the family involved, her sisters and so on. And you know I am not a guy that will go and fight over things you know. I can go around with nothing also.

Glenda: Ok, so Charles, have you ever felt that you needed practical help from someone, that you could not cope?

Freddy: Yes

Glenda: So what did you do in that instance?

Freddy: I always believe in my youngest daughter, if I feel for help, I leave her at home, not to stay out of school but like weekends then a go to friend of my he always help me out with a loan, he never complain when I can pay him back. When I get a chance, I pay him back, but he is a good a very good friend of mine.

Glenda: I am talking about practical help, such as keeping the house clean, doing the washing, cleaning the dishes, I know you said your daughter helps but at any other point, when you felt I just need someone else to help me.

Freddy: Yes

Glenda: So what did you do, did you get someone to help you?

Freddy: No, I just go through that phase and deal with it the way I need to deal with it.

Glenda: Did you ever seek advice from someone or go to an institution to assist with this task of being a single father?

Freddy: It's just that I start talking with someone about it and this person actually showed me a way to SASSA.

Glenda: So SASSA was the only place that you approached for assistance, financial assistance?

Freddy: Yes, and my brother but SASSA was the only institution.

Glenda: And do you feel that the services that you received from SASSA meet your needs?

Freddy: Yes, it's a help for me when it comes to the school fees and books and so on.

Glenda: Ok, I am going to move on to the next set of questions, which is going to focus on your parenting role, we are going to cover a few things, I am going to look at how you

engage your child, whether you are available to your children, communication with your children, doing some errands. You mentioned earlier that you children are big, one is 12 and

Freddy: 17

Glenda: 17, but you are actively involved in their lives, you do take them out?

Freddy: Always

Glenda: Can you describe how often you participate in activities with your children. How often do you do things with your children?

Freddy: Ok, I, lately I don't do a lot of things with them, but I was always in their school activities, sports.

Glenda: So is there a reason why lately you haven't been involved?

Freddy: Because I was trying to make time for myself, I need to educate myself and make ways to get a job. Because I did see, my brother is not going to help me for always. I find that out.

Glenda: How often do you play with your children?

Freddy: A lot,

Glenda: A lot?

Freddy: Yes

Glenda: What type of things do you play with them?

Freddy: We go parks, we play games the house, we play chess, monopoly, I made a room were we have our entertainment, so we have every Saturday afternoon and Sunday afternoon we relax with a game of chess after lunch then by 4 o clock, we stand up and them we just start cleaning the house, kitchen and so on.

Glenda: So you are working at the moment?

Freddy: No I am not working

Glenda: You not working yet, you studying, you attending this course?

Freddy: Yes

Glenda: You mentioned earlier on, being on this course, the difficulty you experience was that you didn't have anybody to look after your children, was that the only challenge you are experiencing?

Freddy: And in the mornings now, to leave them to go to school, that was also a challenge for me. Because I did take them every morning to school, I walk with them to school. For me it was a challenge to leave them, the eldest one is there, she leaves more early them the

youngest one because she is going further, so it's a challenge with the youngest one. I don't want to leave her to go to school early in the morning, because there is a main road.

Glenda: So how did you accommodate this, how did you work around this, you had to be at the course and your children had to be at the school, who took over the role of you walking them to school?

Freddy: my eldest daughter she saved some time and go later to school. We struggling now with this because its very hard for me to do somethings and havbe that role in the morning to fulfil because sacrifice, she stays after class to make up for the first period as she come late and so on. She stay after classes.

Glenda: so when you done with this course, will you go an work?

Freddy: yes I will go work, I need to go work.

Glenda: So do you feel that you are available to your children. Can you children come to you when they need help with something?

Freddy: Always.

Glenda: Do you often make alternative arrangements to care for your children? For someone else to care for them when you are unable to do so?

Freddy: Yes, I made arrangements. The youngest one is coming out of school then she goes to a crèche and stays there by the crèche.

Glenda: Now that you are on this course?

Freddy: Yes that lady did say that if she wants to stay further she can stay.

Glenda: so when you were not on the curse, you were at home and would go fetch them.

Charles: yes, always

Glenda: So that is what you use to do. Were there any other times that you needed to make alternative arrangements, like when you needed to go to a friend or go out with someone?

Freddy: No

Glenda: Do you ask someone else to care for them.

Freddy: No

Glenda: What would you do?

Freddy: This is the truth that I tell you, I have two keys and I lock the front down and leave the big one with the key in house. I have my keys and they have a key. I am also afraid of what is going on around in the community.

Glenda: So are you saying that you would rather leave them alone at home, you don't find alternative care, is that what you are saying. You don't get someone else to come and look after them and babysit them.

Freddy: Yes

Glenda: Earlier on you said you find it a bit difficult to speak to your teenage daughter, but then you also said speaking to your younger daughter you have good open communication with them?

Freddy: Yes there are times when they don't share when it comes to their friends, where there friends sit, they don't want me to go a lot in there because I am always learning them to be aware of there friends also and because they had on a class party and I rejected my daughter to go the class party. And then the following week, that was last year, and then in this year, a boy did go on with her because she did go on with her because she did go to this party in matric and she couldn't go to the party at Pollsmoor She couldn't attend and I explained her why. So they were busy with something, not him alone. It was a planned thing.

Glenda: So when you explained to your daughter why, why kind of topic did you cover?

Freddy: I covered the topic of what youngsters do today; their own mind-set and they do wrong things.

Glenda: And what was the experience like speaking to her about those kind of things?

Freddy: I was a little bit nervous but I needed to face it because she did come to me about the boy that was angry about, and I explain her that it's a whole year gone and we did forget about it and you didn't go everyone was there and his like his angry with you. This year, his not in your class, and you go to a party this year. So she bring it to me and I got an understanding that the time you were angry with me, this is what I needed to bring over but I didn't know how to bring it over.

Glenda: So it general, do you find it difficult to communicate with your children.

Freddy: Not anymore, after I was here now, there is a lot of difference that I learned.

Glenda: So is there any topic that you feel uncomfortable discussing with your children?

Freddy: The topic that I really feel uncomfortable about is speaking about their mother because I am afraid they will blame me.

Glenda: You were separated 14 yrs ago, your oldest child is?

Freddy: 17 yrs old in Decemeber

Glenda: 17, were things different with your oldest child, your relationship with your oldest child.

Freddy: Before?

Glenda: Yes, Before you separate?

Freddy: Yes she was very irritated with me, her mommy

Glenda: No, not with you, were you a different father then, then how you are now?

Freddy: I didn't see them a lot; I was working day and night shifts so I didn't come home. So I see them very very scarce, that I see them. They did ask me once did I live by the work. Because that was the need of my wife, to fulfil her fantasy world.

Glenda: How often do you talk to your children about their day at school or things that happened during the day?

Freddy: I talk to them every day about what is going on in their life and what did happen in school, and I'm always interested, everyday did you do your homework, do you have some homework, if they say they don't have then I say then find something in your school books, try to figure things out.

Glenda: So do you assist them with the homework.

Freddy: Only the youngest

Glenda: The younger one, and how often do you do this?

Freddy: that's everyday

Glenda: what is it a difficult task or easy task

Freddy: Easy, I enjoy it

Glenda: so you enjoy spending that time

Freddy: My eldest daughter she also get the time to study in that moment, really study.
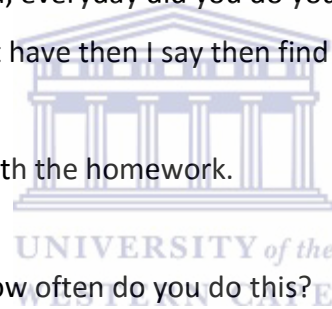
Glenda: Do you often read to your children.

Freddy: I do not read a lot with them. They read stories for me, they love reading library books.

Glenda: If your child needs to be at a party or your child's needs to attend extra mural activities at school. Do you take them?

Freddy: Yes

Glenda: Is it a difficult thing for you to get around or is it easy for you.

Freddy: Easy.

Glenda: and taking you child to parties, if your child gets invited to a party do you normally take the child yourself.

Freddy: No

Glenda: Who would take the child?

Freddy The young one don't go to parties, it's the eldest one. Her friends come over and they will go together.

Glenda: Ok so earlier you should you were struggling financially; you said that you were receiving assistance from your brother and your friend. Let's talk abit about the finances with being a single father. What challenges are you having?

Freddy: the challenges are my rates and tax that I need to pay.

Glenda: Rates and tax?

Freddy: My rates is a big challenge, water is a challenge, electricity is a big challenge

Glenda: So those are the basic household things, let's look at the cost of rearing your two girls. Are you meeting those costs?

Freddy: Yes, like clothes, they need to wait for clothing, sometimes they get angry at me, and then they say they don't have jeans. They have to look after their clothing because this is for a whole year if I buy. I shop in the winter for summer clothing and then in the summer I'm shopping for winter clothing.

Glenda: So when going to the shops, Ok before we get to that point, Tell me do you receive any financial assistance from the mother?

Freddy: No, I'm busy with that.

Glenda: Does she support her children?

Freddy: Yes she just buy them on her own, when she comes she spoils them.

Glenda: With clothing?

Freddy: With everything they want she gives them.

Glenda: Can you tell about how you meet your children's basic needs, like for example, buying clothes, food and other basic necessities, like toiletries and those kind of things? How do you do that? Do you go yourself to the shops to buy it?

Freddy: Yes, everything they need, even when they tell me its their month time, she writes them down, they tell me what things she needs, what pads she needs.

Glenda: So if you are unemployed, how are you meeting these needs?

Freddy: my family assist me

Glenda: Your family is assisting you. So was it difficult for you to go to the shop and go an purchase products for your daughters, like toiletries.

Freddy: For me, it's the price that is heavy.

Glenda: But besides the price, the actual experience of buying those things?

Freddy: I never have a problem with it, it is for me a learning process, just like the role of a mother, I am still learning.

Glenda: I want us to talk abit about how you see yourself as a protector of your children. You mentioned to me that you worry a lot about them, that you scared for them, afraid of the things that are going on in your community, you afraid that it is going to happen to them. So do you feel that this has all changed since you have become a single father, since your children came to live with you?

Freddy: Change in which way?

Glenda: Like were you always this aware of it?

Freddy: Never like when I was married, I never actually aware. I didn't contribute a lot, I was just going to wrok and back, but since I became a single parent and I am at home I did learn a lot of things. And so I just try to protect my kids.

Glenda: sometimes is it a worrying task for you? Do you worry a lot about your children.

Freddy: I am alwys worried what will happen to them, what if asomeone is watching them and so on because the community is really unhealthy.

Glenda: Do you discipline your children?

Freddy: We talk a lot,

Glenda: Is that how you discipline them?

Freddy: We engage a lot in talks.

Glenda: Do you think it is an effective method? Does it work?

Freddy: There is sometimes ways that it doesn't work with the youngest one, because I was always thinking she is the same as the eldest one but there was a big difference until I look in it and I find out ok two types of people, you get a Cain and a Abel, you know. I always try to use like the bible with things to bring it over to them. If I maybe struggle then I show them that people did also struggle in that times but there was always light at the end of the tunnel. If there is something wrong them I coreectiofy it with them, even if my daugheters have a problem, maybe she is teasing the one and then I always go there for help.

Glenda: So do you physically discipline them?

Freddy: No

Glenda: Ok, tell me about how you provide emotional support to your children. So say for example your child is feeling sad, how do you address that?

Freddy: If I address it, I address it immediately because I see

Glenda: What would you do?

Freddy: I sit them down, I always let the eldest one sit with me then I speak with her and I tell her this is things that you will find out in this world. This is not rosy as in shows, you know.

Glenda: So say your child gets hurt and she falls on the floor, and she is crying, what do you do? Besides attending to the wound, emotionally what do you do? Do you hug her, do you pick her up, do you console her, do you comfort her or do you just say?

Freddy: We give hugs, we hg each other. If my youngest gets hurt, my eldest daughter always intervenes.

Glenda: And you?

Freddy: I will always intervene.

Glenda: What do you do, do you hug your children often?

Freddy: I will talk about the mistake that she made, I will always go back that I talk to them. Listen Dad say he cannot keep quiet if he see there is a glass and you going to tramp in it, now this thing did happen it is the same thing. She must be aware.

Glenda: Do you show your children affection?

Freddy: Affection or expression, I don't know what you mean?

Glenda: Affection like we spoke abit about hugging, and you said you do hug but do you give you give your children a kiss goodbye, do you tell them you love them.

Freddy: Yes we make just we laugh. I kiss them goodnight, and in the afternoons, when I leave them at the school gates, they kiss me I kiss them.

Glenda: So has this changed now, you said that you were not that actively involved when you were married. So did you kiss your children and hug them when you were married.

Freddy: No not as much as now.

Glenda: How do you express your feelings to your children? If you are worried about them or you are concerned about something.

Freddy: If I am worried, I go to the toilet and I cry there first. But I do not cry in front of them.

Glenda: So you don't express your feelings in front of them. What would you say; do they see you as an emotional person?

Freddy: They know I cry when I go to the bathroom, they always try to pamper me especially my eldest.

Glenda: So are you crying because are just too much for?

Freddy: No I am not crying because it is too much for me. I am always crying because for all this 23 years that my parents is away, I did always struggle they never believed in what I can do when I have a family and I always wish they can see or my family members can see through my eyes what I am doing and so on. I don't take my children to my family members because my family members are busy with a big wrong things. I feel that they did hate me for that because they will always say you like a mom with your kids, and you make a god of your kids and so on. But it's not that, because I know if I took my children they will be exposed to a lot of things and I believe that my sisters children, really my kids will do wrong things. Because most of the youngsters have children.

Glenda: So you are trying to keep them on the right path and instil certain values in them?

Freddy: Yes.

Glenda: Do you prepare meals in the evening when you come home?

Freddy: Yes

Glenda: Supper and cleaning the house you said you share that task with your eldest daughter.

Freddy: Yes.

Glenda: So what roles do you think you would normally consider the mothers role, do you find the most difficult to fulfil?

Freddy: That love that she has for that kids, I realise now.

Glenda: The love that your children's mother have for them?

Freddy: Yes, I need to play that role, and I try to understand it. And I miss that because , I think that touch, that softness. When they come from her they just happy, they just happy. During the week they become quiet again, here Wednesday, say Tuesday and Wednesday they quiet, two days then they kick in again.

Glenda: So Charles, tell me what do you thiubk they are getting foerm their mother that you are not givig them?

Freddy: I think everything, the thing is money, she spoils them, she gives them a lot. She really gives them a lot. And I don't know if they enjoy it to be like that or if they know they going to get something. They also know I cannot not provide and they don't ask me a lot of things, like buy me this cell phones and that, she is providing that, and I don't like she must buy them over because I cannot provide. But for me it is a help, so the eldest one ask me her mom going to buy for her a tablet and so on, because I was university the 18th and she told me she going to speak to her mom so I said ok, you can speak to the mom. And then I thought is it necessary but then I thought as I listened there, my child need that equipment, it is really important.

Glenda: So how do you feel as a man, normally men are the providers, the supporters, they are the ones that finanace the family, now that you find yourself in this position, how do you feel? How do you feel?

Freddy: Bad man, really bad. I try to. I do not feel happy that I cannot do that.

Glenda: At the beginning of the interview you said that you gave your wife the lifestyle that she wanted; that you would constantly provide for her, now that you find yourself in this situation how is it affecting you?

Charles: I feel that I should have put money away and all that things.

Glenda: Do you have a lot of regrets?

Freddy: Yes a lot of regrets, a lot of regrets. I didn't see that money was just wasted, I didn't plan for the future. And I was under the impression that she is doing all that because I was just giving. She have the cards and I was just working. The things that I need I just go to her and she just give me the money and I will go buy me whatever I want or need. I didn't see what was coming in and going out.

Glenda: Ok so we are coming to the end of the interview now, the last part of the interview, I just want to speak to you about how you view yourself as single father. What words would you use to describe single fathers, not yourself but other men out there that look after their children. What words would you use to describe them?

Freddy: Brilliant man. To do this, it cost work. People wont know what single fathers go through, they wont know truly. It feels like women are really different from men, and I think they deserve a hand clap if they stay with their kids and sacrifice so a lot.

Glenda: What do you think you frineds and family say about your looking afteryour children?

Freddy: My family is not so a lot in contact with me, but my brother support me a lot, its like he becomes my bank man. Because he is busy with big wrong things but my family.

Glenda: So what do you think your brothers say about you looking your children, does he see it as a good thing, does he see it as a bad thing.

Freddy: I think he just has sympathy for me, because he knew what I want for my kids. Like I really put in and I really want to be different from my friends, you know. Because we did spoke once about it and he always laugh, and say, we did always think you were going to become a merchant or something, but it's not in your blood to do that.

Glenda: What do you think you had to give up as a man? As you see yourself, as a man the things you use to do, what do you think that you needed to give up since you started looking after your children.

Freddy: I think I had to give up that stubbornness that I had, and that strong hold and that nobody tells me what to do. It did change that, it is gone.

Glenda: Are you no longer that person?

Freddy: No.

Glenda: How do you think your children feel about them being solely reared by you or reared by you?

Freddy: I don't know, I really don't know, do you mean?

Glenda: That they living with you and not there mother.

Freddy: well we have fun you know, because always when they come back they always complain about the rudeness of other kids and they cannot believe that children of that age can behave like that and talking back and be disrespectful. Its like they can see the value of people, I learned them how to have respect. They always complain when they come back about the nepwes and nieces

Glenda: Charles you are aware of the that the is the norm that mothers are the naturally carers, they are the ones that nurture they are the ones that look after their children. So its very seldom that, as I told you in the beginning that it is not a very common thing where you find fathers looking after their children but it does happen. So do you believe know that sinvce you taking on the role of single parent that you are now the mother and the father in the household. Do you think you have become that nurturer?

Freddy: Yes, I feel I am the mother, it is worth it man and I did learn what women go through. As a man I didn't know what women go through.

Glenda: So what are the new things you learnt?

Freddy: To see your children growing up in the brains. You know there are thinsg that YOR, and you can see the brightness of your children, there future. What they came become.

Glenda: So you saying you saying you become more emotional?

Freddy: Yes, as I say I cry and stuff and I was not like that before.

Glenda: so you know nurture your children and care for them 24/7. You have taking on the role as the mother, they are now your responsibility. How do you see the role of a mother since you have been doing all of this?

Freddy: All I can say is sometimes, when I am in the kitchen busy making food, then I laugh to myself n=beacsue I think did I become a women, you feel like that.

Glenda: And how does that make you feel?

Freddy: I don't know what people think of me but I think this people must think, yor

Glenda: so what do you thnk your friends are thinking?

Freddy: that I am a women man, because I don't have a lot of friends but I believe they know in the community they know my life nad my children. For me myself I also feel I am not a man anymore because I cannot explain it to anyone.

Glenda: Why do you feel that you are not a man anynmore?

Freddy: because I am doing all the things a women do. Its like you become a women

Glenda: I understand that..

Freddy: I cannot fight and skel anymore, you feel that.

Glenda: So what do you feel? You saying like a women, what like women?

Freddy: its like a…..

Glenda: do you feel that you no linger have all thise qualities of a man?

Freddy: It almost feel like that you know, I wont argue anymore with another man, I will just sit and listen and in my head I will think, you stupid.

Glenda: But you wont express it

Freddy: Yes, but I can not

Glenda: But do you think you expressing yourself because you confidence is gone. Do you not feel confident about being a man?

Freddy: I wont say that but its just like a feminine side that comes, I never knew what wa that, it was always just a word for me

Glenda: But now you undetsrand it?

Freddy: Yes, I cvan feel it now. Sometimes I think en te dink ek was nee bang vir die ouens wat hier staan. So now I believe that if I go out and a man smacks me in my face I will give him the other cheek. It's something that grows in you. That's why I don't like speaking in the beginning when I am in a group of women.

Glenda: So has this that you are becoming a women, has this been like this since your children are with you?

Freddy: No it came, I always watch also but I think, three years back I did start noticing this change. I mean it take a long time, if I sit today, it was worth it for me also to learn these things. I wish I could speak to my wife about it but she will say I am a moffie. Really it is a gentle thing.

Glenda: A gentle thing?

Freddy: Yes a gentle thing, to care. Most of the time I am also thinking what if a man should fall pregnant, How would it have been done, we would have to learn a lot of things, we will feel that pain. Like now lately, says 2 years back, I wanted to figure out how it feels for women to be pregnant and conceive a baby. Do you see how far it did move? I was never interested in this and I asked myself why you think this nonsense because a man cannot fall pregnant. Just to feel how it feels and what they go through for that 9 months. I think single fathers they don't say but they really change into something they don't want to be.

Glenda: Do you think it is a good change?

Freddy: As I see the world now, I don't think its bad

Glenda: Can you repeat that?

Freddy: As I see the how it is now, how the developing, I don't think its bad thing, it's a good thing if man can have that always and is born with that, character to do the task of a women it would be great thing. Children would have been more advance.

Glenda: Thank you very much Charles for sharing that with me. We have come to the end of the interview; do you have anything that you would like to add?

Freddy: I think it's the first time that I could speak my heart out to feel a little empty. It's a good thing to speak. I hope this. I think I feel happy now.

Glenda: So thank you very much for participating in the interview.