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The subjective experiences of divorced men in the South African context

Meirim, Hugo Miguel Neves

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

This research aimed to explore the social and psychological impact subjectively reported by men, resulting from divorce in the South African context. Thus the research had as its primary aim the investigation of how divorce affects the well-being of men. Formal academic literature and research addressing the social and psychological impact of divorce as experienced by men is somewhat limited, particularly in the South African context. What is well established is that divorce and separation are ever-growing social phenomena (StatsSa, 2002).

With the phenomenon of divorce comes a number of different misconceptions regarding what is experienced by both men and women following divorce. These range from stereotypes of promiscuity following divorce, to social and emotional impacts of divorce. With reference to promiscuity, men are generally believed to involve themselves with more sexual partners and find it easier to engage in new sexual encounters as compared to women (Wade & DeLemater, 2002). Men are also believed to suffer less social and emotional loss than women. However, according to Kalmijn (2005), the socio-economic as well as psychological consequences for men are less well known when compared to the consequences experienced by women. The costs for men are generally believed to be more social and economic than psychological in nature, although this has not been fully explored (Kalmijn, 2005). Furthermore, mental health professionals appear to relegate those issues related specifically to the institution of marriage to sociologists, lawyers, anthropologists and historians; often ignoring the psychological component associated with divorce (Karasu, 2007).

The psychological impact of divorce on men does therefore need to be explored to a greater degree. Although much research has been done in terms of the responses of women, the research involving men is less thorough (Myers, 1989; Kalmijn, 2005). What is known is that both men and women find the process traumatic and feelings of shame,

depression and failure are common (Myers, 1989). Contrary to what happens to women, men however often do not have a place to go to seek emotional assistance, as the extent to which they are affected has not been fully recognised, often even by themselves (Baum, 2004). Instead, the majority of the assistance they receive is psycho-educational and directed towards helping them fulfil their non-custodial parental roles (Baum, 2004). These, as well as other factors generally experienced more specifically by men, necessitate a study that seeks to uncover all of the specific factors that impact on the well-being of men following on from divorce.

The present study was qualitative in nature and it hoped to capture and convey the subjective experiences of men. This assisted in providing information that was not statistical in nature, as has been the case with the majority of other studies conducted in this field of research. Kalmijn and Poortman (2006) provide evidence that the bulk of research carried out in this field is of a quantitative nature, and consequently it is difficult to understand a subjective experience of the emotional reactions following divorce. Thus, a qualitative study utilising focus groups, was considered a powerful way of generating information regarding this poorly researched area (Millward, 2006).

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

The following literature will address a number of different aspects of the divorce process. Topics that will be discussed include definitions of marriage and divorce, an elaboration of some of the consequences of divorce, some of the differences between men and women experiencing divorce, the problems specifically experienced by men, and finally, Bronfenbrenner's ecological theory of development as a means of categorising the heterogeneous impact that divorce has on the adult man's development, on the varying levels of Bronfenbrenner's model.

Marriage

Although this study focuses on the consequences of divorce, it is important to first define that which precedes a divorce, namely a marriage. According to Bell (1997), a marriage is defined as a union between a man and a woman that takes place within an institution and is recognised by that institution. Marriage defines for both men and women a place within a social structure; it implies that they are members of some group or groups from which they may gain access to certain resources and to which they may bear socially recognised responsibilities (Bell, 1997). This definition does not take into account some of the changes in constitution that allow for the union of two men or two women. From an institutional perspective, marriage is seen as being embedded in the culture and intertwines both public and private lives. It is defined as a unique, legally binding contract between two people but it is also a pact with the community (Karasu, 2007). It is important to keep in mind that these definitions would constitute a civil marriage. This has implications in the South African context as South Africa is such a diverse country and other types of marriages exist. These would include traditional marriages, whereby a man would "pay" for his wife, and common law marriages whereby following a set time of cohabiting, the couple is deemed to be married (Bell, 1997). These two alternate definitions are not yet officially recognised by the judicial system.

It is also important to make the distinction between monogamous and polygamous marriages. Monogamy refers to only having one partner, whereas polygamy refers to having two or more partners (Bell, 1997). This distinction is important as the type of marriage ultimately affects the divorced man differently.

Marriage is seen as having many practical implications, including psychological and physical benefits for both men and women and is still in many ways considered the gold standard of relationships. Karasu (2007) stresses that marriage is often less about the present and more about a developed shared past and an imagined future. It is also argued that good marriages seem to be protective physically, financially and psychologically and that the longer one remains married the more these benefits accrue (Karasu, 2007).

Statistics on marriage and divorce

During the year 2001, South Africa recorded 134581 marriages that were legally registered (StatsSa, 2002). During the same year, a total of 34045 divorces were also recorded (StatsSa, 2002). This number of divorces is consistently on the increase. An increase of 1% in the number of divorces registered was recorded over the period from 2001 and 2002 (StatsSa, 2002). This reflects a phenomenon that is affecting not only South Africa, but is globally evident as well (StatsSa, 2002). Within the South African context, the majority of recorded divorces between 1997 and 2006 have taken place in the white population, although this is slowly beginning to change with African and mixed groups showing slight increases (StatsSa, 2007). One of the possible reasons given is that divorce data is based on divorces from civil marriages and does not take into account other types of marriages (StatsSa, 2007). Thus the figures for divorce as it affects African and mixed groups may be understated.

The median age at which men get divorced is forty three years while for women this is at age forty. Statistics show that for white males the age at which they divorce rises after 25-29 years and peaks between 35-39 years (StatsSa, 2007). For African males, there is a rise between 25-29 years and a peak at 40-44 years. Regarding Indian and Asian males

there is a rise from 25-29 years and a peak between 30-34 years. Coloured males do not demonstrate as sharp rises and declines although there appears to be a peak between 35-39 years (StatsSa, 2007). Across all population groups the highest number of divorces appear to occur for those individuals married between five and nine years, with 27,3% of divorces occurring within this timeframe. The number of divorces seems to decrease as the length of time married increases. Furthermore, 60,6% of divorces involved couples with children younger than eighteen years of age (StatsSa, 2007).

Defining divorce

Psychological studies have defined divorce as a stressful life event and have shown that a divorce increases feelings of depression, anxiety and tension (Kalmijn, 2005). This is true for both men and women. Williams and Dunne-Bryant (2006) state that marital dissolution has negative consequences for adult well-being and that divorced individuals are more depressed, less happy and at a greater risk of health problems and psychiatric illnesses. They indicate that there is a general agreement that the decline in well-being associated with divorce, reflects both the loss of resources provided by marriage, such as economic benefits, emotional support and health regulation, and the stressors induced by the transition itself (Williams & Dunne-Bryant, 2006).

It is important to identify some of the factors that may lead a couple to getting divorced as this may have an impact on how the divorce is perceived. Some of these factors include relational issues, behavioural problems, violence within the relationship, and infidelity or lack of trust. Depending on the reason for the divorce, the impact will be felt as more or less traumatic and will affect the way in which the divorce is dealt with (Kalmijn & Poortman, 2006). This study begins by examining some of the particular characteristics that the stressor of divorce commonly tends to have.

Characteristics of the impact of divorce

According to Wade and DeLemater (2002), the end of a relationship is a process, as opposed to an event, characterised by continuous and intermittent stressors. The immediate crisis of this separation is followed by a period of acute adjustment that is

ultimately resolved and dealt with. It is defined as a possible life stage transition that is temporary, which can hold both negative as well as positive consequences for the two parties involved (Wade & DeLemater, 2002). There are however two models available for focussing on the impact divorce has on the individual. The crisis model assumes that individuals will eventually recover from the acute stress of marital dissolution (Williams & Dunne-Bryant, 2006). The chronic strain model suggests the loss of resources and the introduction of more enduring chronic strains creates long-lasting negative consequences for the individual's well-being (Williams & Dunne-Bryant, 2006).

Although divorce may sometimes be considered easier for the initiator to deal with, it has long been recognised as traumatic regardless of who leaves whom (Bogolub, 1991). Even if the marriage has been openly unhappy, the persistence of long-standing attachment and the subsequent breakdown of this can require intensive grief work. Depression, loneliness and a decline in the standard of living are common features following a divorce (Bogolub, 1991). Myers (1989) shows that on the Social Readjustment Rating Scale, marital separation earns sixty-five points and divorce seventy-three points, surpassed only by the death of a spouse at one hundred points. Thus one can conclude that divorce impacts greatly on the lives of both parties involved.

Consequences of divorce as experienced by both men and women

Divorce and separation are traumatic experiences for both parties involved, and men and women often experience common stressors, which elicit common responses to those. The process is often accompanied by certain stigmas, and misconceptions in the form of stereotypes often provide a distorted perception of what divorced people experience. For example, newly single men and women are often imagined to be wildly sexual, seeking multiple partners out of a sense of freedom or out of desperation for validation of themselves as still being attractive (Wade & DeLemater, 2002). Many individuals claim that divorced men find it easier to build a social network following the breakdown of their marriage and subsequently find it easier to engage in sexual activity. Research has shown however that this is not the case and that men generally suffer from social disintegration following a divorce (Kposowa, 2000). It is also argued that women are

generally more ambivalent towards sexual activity following a divorce and thus find it easier to engage new sexual partners. What this means is that sexual intercourse is not viewed as something as sacred as it was before (Wade & DeLemater, 2002). Thus statistics for engaging in new sexual relationships following divorce and separation may be more similar for both men and women than previously thought (Wade & DeLemater, 2002). It is important to note however than men usually engage in multiple brief partnerships whereas women will usually find one stable partner much more quickly than men (Wade & DeLemater, 2002).

Regarding socio-economic costs incurred, more research has been done into the impact on women. Studies have shown that divorce is often initiated by the women even though it has more negative economic consequences for women than for men (Andreß & Bröckel, 2006). Women lose between 30-40% of their income in the first few years after a divorce as their partner's income has gone and alimony only covers costs partially (Kalmijn, 2005). The fact that more women are now employed may however modify this statistic. Costs for men are generally seen to be more social and psychological than economic, although this may not be the case. Divorce has been shown to have a negative impact on career trajectory and it has been argued that married men have more financial security and faster wage increases (Kalmijn, 2005; Andreß & Bröckel, 2007). These effects are also not short-term but rather become long-term in nature. After divorce, men are more likely to experience a period of unemployment and sickness or disability. Many men will often change to a new job with a lower occupational status to the one they held prior to the divorce (Kalmijn, 2005). Men are also often made to bear the costs of finding a new residence, and setting up a new household, whereas women will more often continue to reside in the family home (Bollinter & Palkovitz, 2003). Results obtained from a study done by Andreß and Bröckel (2006) indicated that while women are less satisfied with their post-separation income than men, they have more general life satisfaction and in many ways feel they cope better emotionally than men.

One thing that is common to both men and women and has already been mentioned briefly is the fact that divorce and separation is a traumatic process. Some of the effects

experienced by both parties include feelings of failure and varying amounts of self-blame (Myers, 1989). There is often also a feeling of pining for the spouse due to the sense of bonding and attachment that occurred in the marriage. Studies have shown that divorce and separation correlate with a 30% increased risk of stress-related acute and chronic illnesses, as well as more visits to the doctor than married adults (Myers, 1989). What is interesting to note is that more divorced women reportedly suffer from depression than men, and that these women are more likely to seek psychotherapy as compared to their male counterparts. In conjunction with this, more women are likely to attempt suicide although the numbers of deaths related to suicide are greater in men (Myers, 1989). It is also reported that the most commonly studied mental health outcome of divorce is depression, but there is growing evidence indicating that men are more likely to exhibit externalising behavioural expressions of distress, such as alcohol abuse and violence. Women however are reportedly more likely to exhibit internalising or emotional reactions to stress, such as depression (Williams & Dunne-Bryant, 2006). Thus the conclusion that women suffer more emotionally than men may in fact be a misperception.

Research conducted exploring the responses of women

A fair amount of research into the psychological, social and emotional impact of divorce has been conducted with a focus on women, especially utilising female subjects (Kalmijn, 2005). Whereas initially, the workplace was predominantly male dominated, more and more women are working. A study conducted by Grover (1999) stated that over 60% of women are now employed, as compared to less than 44% in the late 1960's. This increase in employment means that women now have less of a financial risk when considering leaving a marriage or relationship (Kalmijn & Poortman, 2006). Further economic studies have found that the number of hours worked by women who went on to divorce rose steadily compared with other women who remained in a relationship (Hale, 2007). By the year of their divorce, the women worked an average of 1425 hours a year as compared to the 1221 hours worked by those in happy marriages. This increase in hours continued even after divorce. The same study showed that men worked only slightly more and often even cut down slightly on their workload, although this effect was not long-term and returned to normal by the second year following the divorce (Hale, 2007).

Research conducted by Bogolub (1991) revealed that middle-aged divorced women frequently resent their more financially secure ex-husbands, that they lack male companionship, and that they fear the departure of their remaining children from the home. There is often a high level of emotional reliance on the children, which is often due to the fact that many children tend to feel angry towards their fathers for the divorce, while feeling more protective towards their mother. This frequently leads to the mother experiencing feelings of guilt for making her child's transition to independence more difficult for him or her (Bogolub, 1991).

Feelings of depression, loneliness and a decline in one's standard of living are higher in women who divorce in middle-age than in those who divorce in their younger years (Bogolub, 1991). However, it has been reported that some middle-aged women do find divorce to be a psychological relief and a potentially exciting vocational challenge. It has also been reported that while some women who divorce are not interested in pursuing new sexual relationships, many actually express a strong interest in forming new long-lasting sexual relationships with men (Bogolub, 1991). This presents problems however, as depending on the length of time married, many women experience difficulties as the dating norms change and they thus feel unsure about themselves and what is expected.

Divorce-related problems more specific to men

Following on from the section detailing the responses experienced by women, one can now look at some of the research more specific to men. According to Grover (1999), men in the workplace are expected to work hard while at the same time spend enough time with their families and children. Men who do not make the time for their families are seen to be neglecting them. Women however are often allowed a greater degree of flexibility and those that do spend more time at work are often seen as being driven and goal-directed (Grover, 1999). Thus with the employment rate of women now having increased, they have less of a financial concern in leaving their spouses, which has contributed to a growing worry for men. These men often feel emasculated in their

marriages as it goes against perceived gender roles (Kalmijn & Poortman, 2006). This may leave some divorced men with a confused sense of identity.

A possible result of this identity confusion and feelings of emasculation may be evident in newspaper headlines and stories that make the news. Many newspaper headlines report all too frequently of separated husbands who murder their wives, their children, themselves and occasionally even the wives' new lovers (Myers, 1989). Although these men represent only a small segment of newly separated and divorced men, they exemplify the most extreme form of responses to the psychological trauma associated with the stress of a divorce. It is possible that these men commit these violent acts out of the feelings of shame and failure that often accompany a divorce (Myers, 1989). Or it may be due to the fact that these men often experience adjustment problems, as they are forced to take on roles they previously were not expected to. In this regard women often reportedly adjust better (Myers, 1989). Anger is another possibility, as it has been shown to be a common feature of divorce for both men and women. Yet it is more socially acceptable for men to display this anger, and it often serves as a defence against the emotions of grief and sorrow (Baum, 2004). However, there is not enough literature to make sense of the particular stressors experienced by such men, in comparison to others whose responses are less catastrophic.

Exploring the consequences of divorce and separation for men

Divorce and separation have a number of consequences for men and these are often different to those experienced by women. Take for example a father's level of involvement with their children. Research has shown that a father's level of involvement is not as high as a mother's especially when it comes to care-giving activities (Bollinter & Palkovitz, 2003). Fathers generally spend more time 'playing' with their children than mothers do, with statistics showing that 40% of a father's time with their children is devoted to play as compared to only 25% for women (Bollinter & Palkovitz, 2003). This is due to men's longer working hours and the social expectation of women to be the primary caregiver. Once a man gets divorced or separates from his partner, this level of involvement decreases even more. The children may find it more difficult to relate to

their fathers. Research has shown that this is due to sometimes large geographical distances between fathers and their children, difficult relationships between their biological parents, or to a lack of commitment from the father (Bollinter & Palkovitz, 2003). Furthermore, once a man is divorced or separated, he often leaves or is asked to leave the family home. This is so that his partner does not suffer the psychological burden and the economic stress of having to find a new place for herself and the children (Myers, 1989). As a result of this, men are often bitter and resentful, contributing even more to the breakdown of their relationships with their children.

Additional research has shown that the above mentioned points may often be out of the father's control. A stereotype exists which claims that divorced men are disinterested in their children and are not distressed after their divorce (Myers, 1996). This may however not be the case. Many fathers thought of themselves as emotionally attached to their children and stated that often they did not see the divorce coming as it was wife-initiated (Myers, 1996). They thus found themselves being forcibly separated from their children. Custody and child-access then become highly charged areas for these men, as they often want more access to their children. The fact that they are not being allowed sufficient access to their children can produce a process similar to bereavement, where the father feels as if he has lost his child (Myers, 1996). Since fathers rarely get custody and do not see their children as much following a divorce or separation, the losses suffered by men with children are sometimes greater than those suffered by men who have no children (Kalmijn & Poortman, 2006). As a result of this, chronic grief becomes a major characteristic of divorced men, due to loss of the closeness of the relationship with children. Research done by Williams and Dunne-Bryant (2006) indicates that having children and getting divorced increases the difficulties faced by both parents. The custodial parent is placed under strain as they are now expected to provide day-to-day care without the prior support they once had. The non-custodial parent experiences strain in maintaining contact with the children, as well as in the forced contact he or she must have with their ex-partner (Williams & Dunne-Bryant, 2006). Thus one can see how having children and getting divorced increases the strain placed on the parent.

The fact that divorce precipitates a loss of social integration can also lead to a clinically significant level of depression. This depression can be a prelude to suicide in many cases (Kposowa, 2000). Research has demonstrated that women may cope better with divorce than men, due to the greater supportive networks in their lives. Andreß and Bröckel (2007) report that women cope better emotionally following a divorce, as men are more likely to experience distress and self-pity, and are also more likely to continue pining for their former spouse. Men reportedly also struggle more with finding ways to cope with their pain. Men also often find themselves becoming isolated from the networks they were originally a part of. As a result of this, divorced and separated men are twice as likely to commit suicide than single or married men (Kposowa, 2000). Furthermore, they are four times as likely to commit suicide, and succeed, as compared with divorced and separated women.

What makes the mentioned literature disconcerting is the fact that even though men face the many problems listed above, they rarely seek psychological help. This may be due to the stereotype that men must be strong, thus the showing of emotion represents weakness and vulnerability (Baum, 2004). It may however be due to the fact that little, if any, emotional help is available for divorced or divorcing men. The help that is available is directed towards divorced fathers with a focus to helping them and encouraging them to fulfil their post-divorce role as non-custodial parents (Baum, 2004). This is an approach that is normally psycho-educational in nature.

While the psycho-educational approach has its merits, it does not deal with the major emotional consequences of divorce. It does not deal with the dissolution of the marriage and the many losses that the dissolution entails (Baum, 2004). Three views have been provided as a possible explanation to why men do not receive the emotional help they need. Firstly, many clinicians perceive that men do not benefit as much as women from emotional intervention (Baum, 2004). Secondly, many counsellors are unable to look beyond the rage that divorced men often present with and the behavioural manifestations of this rage, potentially responding judgementally or defensively. Lastly, there is often a failure on the part of the clinician to recognise the full extent of men’s losses in

divorce (Baum, 2004). These views are based on the premise that men are less emotionally invested in their marriages and subsequently do not experience as great a loss as women. This is incorrect as research has shown that men are more likely to have their strongest emotional attachment to their spouse, whereas women find it easier to make emotional connections to their spouse as well as their children, close friends and others (Baum, 2004). Secondly, the premise that men are generally the secondary caregivers and as a result suffer less when their children are removed from them may be inaccurate. Research has shown that non-custodial fathers display tremendous feelings of loss and exhibit a large amount of mental anguish (Baum, 2004).

Although Baum (2004) highlights some of the problems facing men that are going through or have been through divorce, many gaps still exist. Most of the research conducted looks at the effects divorce has on non-custodial fathers as well as some of the social implications. Not much literature addresses the emotional impact it has on men (Baum, 2004). Even less literature exists that focuses on the specific problems facing South African men, with the researchers having discovered very little in terms of local research on this topic. This research on men in a South African context thus attempted to present a starting point. As it was an exploratory study, it had the intention of generating data that can eventually lead to the identification of more specific psychological aspects of the divorce process.

Bronfenbrenner's ecological theory of development

As there is a lack of literature surrounding this research area of divorce in men, this study is aiming to gather a large body of data exhibiting a wide variety of stressors and experiences related to divorce, and thus the methodology needs to cast as wide a 'net' as possible, to gather as much information of different kinds as possible. This will then hopefully allow future research studies to be conducted that may explore the links between these influences and how they impact on the male individual.

It is assumed that there will be a wide variety of findings of the influence on behaviour of divorced men. These influences are likely to be qualitatively different, both in nature and

in how they impact on the divorced man. For example, it is anticipated that stressors impacting on the well-being of divorced men may range from subjectively intense emotional experiences of anguish, to social factors such as divided friendship groups, to economic strain or practical factors like separating bank accounts. Unless a way of categorising or organising this data is found, the findings are likely to be a long list of unorganised influences on the divorced men, with little way of understanding them or seeing emerging patterns. Bronfenbrenner's theory of influences on development provides a way of beginning to understand these influences.

Bronfenbrenner defines development as the person's evolving conception of the ecological environment, their relation to it, as well as their growing capacity to discover, sustain or alter its properties (Hook, 2002). The theory focuses on what is perceived, desired, feared, thought about, or acquired as knowledge and accords relatively equal value to both the environment of development and the developing person (Hook, 2002). For Bronfenbrenner there are no questions of psychology that are not also questions of context.

The theory claims systemic forms of influence, whereby an impact on one system will have a ripple effect on other systems. In building on this notion, Bronfenbrenner referred to a dyad, whereby an individual never exists in social isolation but will always be viewed as part of an interaction (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Hook, 2002). It was due to this rationale that Bronfenbrenner developed his notion of five separate systems within the ecological environment. The microsystem is the immediate situation that directly affects the individual and includes roles and settings (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). Emotional, social and biological systems of the individual would fall within this microsystem (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). The mesosystem is a system of microsystems, which is formed whenever the individual moves into a new setting. The exosystem refers to the social settings and organisations beyond the individual's immediate experience that nevertheless affect him or her (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). The macrosystem refers to the overarching institutional patterns of the culture or sub-culture – such as the economic, social, educational, legal and political systems – in which the individual finds him or

herself. The chronosystem refers to the dimension of time, which has a fundamental influence on the direction of psychosocial development (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). It is argued that if change is to occur, it is better if it happens at the level of the macrosystem as this will impact on all the lower levels of development (Hook, 2002).

Thus it can be argued that going through a divorce may impact on the individual at all of these different levels. For example, at the level of the microsystem the individual may experience intense emotions, as well as the loss of close personal relationships. At the level of the mesosystem, the individual may be forced to build new relationships or may be forced into seeking new employment. With regards to the exosystem, they may be aware of external services or social institutions but they may feel unable to access these. Impact at the level of the macrosystem may involve the loss of custody of children and the subsequent battle with the legal system, or it may involve the economic expectations regarding maintenance payments. Lastly, at the level of the chronosystem the individual may experience effects after a period of time that were previously hidden, or they may discover that time has an influence on how these various stressors impact upon their experiences, which are more prominent at particular junctures, and so forth.

The final important aspect of the theory to be addressed is what Bronfenbrenner termed ecological transitions. These ecological transitions are shifts in role, setting or both, which occur throughout the life span of an individual (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). This is important as the changing of roles alters how a person is treated, how they begin to act, and ultimately how they think and feel. The individual can then choose whether to adapt to the ecological transition and develop, or to battle against it and remain where they were before (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). Divorce clearly represents just such an ecological transition for the individual, impacting (at all levels of the model) on the further development of the adult male divorcee.

Thus Bronfenbrenner's theory became important to this study, as it offered a way of organising the data into an ordered, systematic form. It allowed information to be gathered and organised according to the systems that have been explained, providing an

organized ‘map’ of all of the various, subjectively reported influences on the well-being of men following on from the ecological transition of divorce. Its strength in this regard was also that it offered a hierarchical order of influences since it is developmental in nature; and finally, it allows one to begin to understand divorce as a chronologically-based incident in a man’s life, and how this could affect the divorced man’s further development.

CHAPTER 3

METHOD

Research Design

As the study was explorative and geared towards gathering descriptive information, a qualitative research design was utilised. The study made use of non-probability purposive sampling.

Research Questions

While this study was exploratory in nature and thus aimed to collect as wide a variety of data as possible, it was still guided by an overarching research question. This question was posed to highlight some of the areas of difficulty that men experienced as a result of their divorce. The question thus reads as follows “What are the experiences subjectively reported as consequences of divorce by men in the South African context?”

Sampling

The sample group for this study comprised seven divorced men. These men were divided into two separate focus groups comprising two men each, as well as three individual interviews. The participants were fully legally divorced men so as to avoid the researcher becoming involved in legal matters and getting subpoenaed.

As mentioned earlier, non-probability purposive sampling was used and thus the participants were obtained through a number of different sources. The sources included men known to the researcher as acquaintances, as well as men that these participants knew, a so-called ‘snowball’ sample.

Methods Procedures

Acquaintances of the researcher were contacted to determine if they knew of any men that would fit the criteria needed for the study. The contact numbers of these men was then given to the researcher who then contacted and explained to them the aim of the

study. Further participants were acquired through those who had already expressed interest in taking part and who knew of other men that would be interested. The latter were then contacted and the aim of the study was explained to them. A focus group interview was then organised with the participants. Those who wished to take part but who could not make any of the times suggested for the focus group were offered the opportunity of taking part in an individual interview. A subject information sheet was given to all the participants detailing the purpose and aim of the study and they were asked to sign consent forms regarding their participation and consent to have the interview recorded. These forms can be seen in Appendix B, Appendix C and Appendix D.

The two focus groups took place at the residence of the researcher, which was convenient for the participants to attend. The individual interviews were conducted at a venue convenient to those participants. The focus groups lasted between one and one and a half hours, in agreement with the requirements that had been conveyed to the participants beforehand. The individual interviews lasted between thirty and forty five minutes, also as previously conveyed to the participants. Once the focus groups and individual interviews had taken place and the data had been collected, the data was then analysed.

The participants were provided with contact details of the researcher should they have required feedback. All effort was made to provide the participants with this feedback swiftly and the participants were encouraged to contact the researcher should they have felt the need for additional support following the study. The researcher arranged contact details for psychologists or counsellors who charge either minimal rates or who offer their services free of charge.

Data gathering

As the research question is aimed at addressing men's perceptions and subjective experiences of separation and divorce, a qualitative research design allowed the researcher to gather rich descriptive data. Furthermore, since the research is exploratory

in nature, the qualitative subjective data gathered allowed the researcher to generate a broader picture of the well-being of men that dealt with the experience of divorce.

For this reason it was felt that focus groups were the best instrument for data collection. A focus group is a discussion-based interview that produces a particular type of qualitative data, and is generated via group interaction (Millward, 2006). The function of the focus group is to capture understandings, perspectives, stories and discourses. Thus a focus group helps in creating a collaborative reality, gleaned from the input of all the participants (Millward, 2006). Although it is acknowledged that with focus groups, individuals may withhold certain information due to either the diversity of the group or their anxiety in a group situation, this risk is accepted in return for the possibly rich amount of data and the potentially empowering nature of group discussion on this issue. However, as all interested participants were not able to attend the focus groups for reasons previously mentioned, individual interviews were also conducted.

The focus groups and individual interviews were run with the help of a semi-structured interview schedule. This interview schedule can be viewed by referring to Appendix A. A semi-structured interview schedule was used as it provided the participants with an opportunity to express opinions to similar questions across groups, while at the same time allowing the researcher some control over probing information further, as well as an opportunity to gather required relevant information. Semi-structured interviews provide the researcher with a rich store of descriptive and anecdotal information, which allows the researcher to notice a variety of emerging patterns (Jacobsen & Landau, 2003).

Method of Analysis

The analysis of this data was done using thematic content analysis, whereby the participant's responses were transcribed and common themes addressed in the content of their responses. Thematic content analysis concerns itself with how the social world is interpreted, experienced, understood or produced (Banister, Burman, Parker, Taylor & Tindal, 2003). The initial system of classification may be derived from the research

question and the topic guide used by the researcher during the process of facilitation (Millward, 2006). Additional themes then arose from a closer examination of the data.

According to Potter and Wetherell's (1987) method of analysis, one needs to initially begin searching for patterns in the data, as well as paying attention to the functions of the patterns. A complicated framework for making sense of the functions of the patterns is also discussed by Potter and Wetherell (1987), including such things as their purpose and consequence, their ideological function, and their action orientation. Potter and Wetherell's method of analysis is therefore used as a means of sorting and ordering the contents of the body of data. This becomes necessary when the contents are constructed both extensively and repetitively. Thus content is grouped together with other content of a similar nature, so that it can be grouped together into just a few categories or themes (Potter and Wetherell, 1987).

As a final step, these themes were organised into Bronfenbrenner's systems of influence on the individual. This provided a framework within which influences on divorced men's well-being might be organized into meaningful categories. This in turn guided the researcher in establishing common themes or patterns in order to begin to construct a view of the adjustment required by the divorce situation, which may be believed to be the experiences of many men, while of course not being empirically generalizable.

Ethical Considerations

Due to the sensitive nature of divorce and separation, a great amount of precaution was exercised when interviewing the participants. Since the participants agreed to be a part of the study on a voluntary basis, it was hoped that they were comfortable in talking about this sensitive material. However, it was communicated to them that should they at any stage feel they need to withdraw; they could do so with no negative consequence for themselves. A debriefing session was also organised by the researcher for those participants who felt they needed to speak further, and this allowed the participants to discuss any difficulties they encountered during the study.

Consent forms were given to the participants for them to complete. The forms explained in writing what the study entailed, how the results would be utilised and what was expected from the participants. Consent was also obtained regarding the use of a tape recorder during the session, and it was explained to the participants that this practice was simply to ensure the accuracy and exactness of the participant's responses. The sample group was informed that with regards to the researcher, their confidentiality would be maintained and that any results obtained were solely for the purpose of this study. Other than the researcher, the only other person that viewed the raw data was the researcher's supervisor, and this fact was duly communicated to the participants. However, as a focus group was being used, it was not possible to assure their confidentiality completely, due to the fact that the researcher had no control over whom the men decide to speak to following the study.

Following the analysis stage, all the recorded tapes, as well as the transcripts were retained in a safe place to further ensure confidentiality as far as is possible while using focus group methodology. These were kept in a locked cupboard in the supervisor's office. Upon final completion of the study, the tapes and transcripts were then destroyed.

As previously mentioned in this work, the researcher's contact details were provided to the participants in case they required feedback. This would be made available electronically in the form of a summary of the research report, emphasizing findings and recommendations. Participants were provided with relevant contact details and were informed of some of the available resources such as the Emthonjeni Centre, FAMSA, Men as Partners, and Professional Men's Forum, in the event that they required additional support.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

RESULTS

A number of themes have been identified from the responses obtained during the process of data collection. These have been listed below. In order to categorise the many findings that emerged, Bronfenbrenner's ecological theory of development helped to provide a framework within which to better understand the findings. The theory claims systemic forms of influence, whereby an impact on one system will have a ripple effect on other systems. In building on this notion, Bronfenbrenner referred to a dyad, whereby an individual never exists in social isolation but will always be viewed as part of an interaction (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Hook, 2002). It was due to this rationale that Bronfenbrenner developed his notion of five separate systems within the ecological environment. The findings of the study are presented as falling within these five systems that include: the microsystem, the mesosystem, the exosystem, the macrosystem and the chronosystem. Although these systems provide a means of beginning to categorise the findings, it is important to note that many of the findings impact on more than one system and thus at times appear to create overlap. The various participants are designated in the text as P1 – P7 to respect confidentiality.

The Microsystem

The microsystem refers to the immediate situation that directly affects the individual and includes roles and settings. The emotional, social and biological systems of the individual would fall within this microsystem.

Loneliness and isolation

This theme refers to all those feelings associated with loneliness and isolation experienced by the participants and the impact these feelings have had on the particular

individual. This category is further broken down into sub-themes of individual loneliness and of isolation from relationships.

In the following instances, loneliness was described as something 'individual'

P3 stated "*the problem was coping with the fact that I was now on my own*", as well as "*And it, but it, it has a far greater effect on me than what I think I know. That, that, it comes back to that being alone and loneliness*".

P1 reported that "*Um, the other things like um, like the financial for example, it's true but you know in terms of the magnitude. I think the being alone is probably the biggest thing, especially if it continues*", as well as "*So, its been hard I mean, you come home there's nobody at home. Wake up there's no one*".

P2 stated "*The initial loneliness. For sure. That very first night that you are by yourself…you might as well have died*".

Here, loneliness was something defined in terms of exclusion from particular relationships

P1 reported "*No amount of partying can uh, or other casual relationships. I mean you still alone*".

P3 stated "*your friends were all married people with kids, because that's what you did. Then all of a sudden, that part of it disappears because she was the one with the kids*", as well as "*I would have chosen the family life. And uh, you know, have the grandkids and walk away merrily into the sunset. That was my ideal*".

P1 said "*I think death would be the worst, it would be the only other thing that could be worse....Although sometimes people say, people say, I spoke to my mother. She said to me that sometimes the death of the wife or the husband is better than a divorce.*"

P2 added "*It's the death of your relationship and you mourn*".

<u>Denial</u>

This theme refers to the feelings of denial reported by some of the participants and of how difficult it was for them to accept their divorce. The quotes below illustrate some of the difficulties these participants faced.

P3 stated that he felt "*you still need to live your life as though you are married... [I]decided to run my life as though nothing had happened*".
P6 explained how he felt by saying "*You angry with the world for, because this is not supposed to happen to me. This happens to the oke, other guys, this isn't happening to me*".
P1 stated "*The raw um, problems and emotions that came up during or, during that period, all you know, I put them in a box*".

Self-blame

Many of the participants reported feeling that they were entirely to blame for the breakdown of their marriage, even though through the interview it became clear that this was not necessarily the case. This theme has been broken down into sub-themes of blaming oneself after the divorce, and of blaming oneself for the state of the marriage.

Here, participants blamed themselves for the divorce

P7 stated "*…I think it was, pointing to myself, looking at myself as, the guilty party....What have I done wrong for this to happen?*"
P1 said that "*If there's anger its probably more, I I'm, why did I, it was something in me and I recognise and respect of it. And uh, there's a little bit of bitterness towards myself. How could I allow, things to have gotten to this point?*" as well as "*I think it was a case of, I didn't do enough from my side*".

Here the participants blamed themselves for the failings of the marriage itself

P6 stated "*I mean why did I get involved with her from the beginning. Could I not see it?*"
P7 felt that he potentially might have had a predisposition to having a failed marriage and stated "*So, I don't know whether it's my natural attraction to people like that, which are in a way rejected by other people. Or, it just is my luck. I don't know*".

She got more

This theme refers to the feelings experienced by the participants that their ex-wife in some ways ended up benefiting more from the divorce than they did. It refers to the way they feel they have been disadvantaged as a result of the divorce.

P6 reported "*But I had to pay her off....All the assets everything. No, I gave her everything. Its supposed to half half, but I said no I don't want anything, so she took quite gladly*", and he also stated "*She wanted more money, so I gave her everything, but it doesn't stop. They want more, they want more. So I gave into everything, I gave her everything. Its been five years now and she still gives me shit*".
P3 stated "*I mean she got the kids and I got the dogs*", and he also said "*She was the one with the kids and she was the one with all the, the friends with uh kids, and I was here on my own*".

Resentment and disbelief

This theme refers to the way in which the participants felt that they had no say in their divorce and how in many instances the divorce was initiated by the woman. The quotes below detail the responses of the participants with regards to the feelings that accompanied this fact.

P3 felt that his divorce should not have happened and stated "*when I had my divorce, and then, it wasn't because I wanted it, it was because the ex-wife wanted it....for me it wasn't, it wasn't, it shouldn't have happened. It wasn't normal*".
P6 stated "*So…that was and I, you bitter hey. Because this is not my doing. This is not, like I wasn't the one that messed this relationship up*".
P1 felt that he could have sought help for his marriage but that when his ex-wife initiated the divorce his feelings changed. He reported "*Um, but once she took that step, to move out and do the divorce. For me that was it, there was no going back. Um, too much had happened*".

Employment and finances

This theme articulates some of the financial implications divorce has had on the participants and aims to demonstrate the difficulties faced as a result of the divorce. It is broken down into two sub-themes, one being the impact divorce had on their employment capacity and the other being the impact divorce had on their financial situation.

Employment

P3 felt that his work suffered as a result of his divorce and he stated "*your mind isn't totally on your work, your mind is on woe is me*".

P7 articulated a similar experience "*They spoke to me and I said yes I'm not, in condition to, to assume the full responsibility of my position. Even if I wanted to, because anything that I see, anything that I experience can spark a whole collection of, of things that happened in my life or with which I am, or I reasoned about. And I lose my, my grip on things so*".

Financial difficulties

P4 stated that he felt financially burdened following the divorce and he explained this by saying "*it set me back financially. Because we used to do everything together*".

P6 stated when referring to his finances that "*I went rock bottom*".

Divorce and the children

This theme refers to all the feelings experienced by the participants after the divorce with regard to their children. It includes things such as the difficulty in losing the children, the financial expectations for and from the children and the impact on future upbringing of the children. These will all be presented as separate sub-themes below.

Feeling like you've lost the children

P3 stated "*You know, it, it was seeing how they got involved with everything and here I was, even though I was doing all this work. I was still on the outside, I was the outsider. I think…because you not living with the kids*".

P6 indicated his most difficult aspect regarding the divorce as being "*Agh, losing the kids. Although um, I still get to see them on weekends. You don't see them, like everyday. I suppose that was the worst. The assets were nothing. The kids were the worst*".

The children as a financial strain following divorce

P3 describes his experience of having his children stay with his ex-wife and having to contribute to maintenance and costs as "*I mean they've been a financial burden*".
P6 stated "*Now the kids are costing me a lot of money. So, and I, I know for a fact and every parent knows that kids don't cost the amount of money that I provide for them*".
P6 also describes his experience with having to pay costs as "*Even now, the kids are still used as pawns for money....So its easier to just pay the money and give them what they want and then she leaves me alone*".

Seeking affection

P6 indicated how he feels his parenting style has changed by saying "*But here it's more lenient because the time is so short. So you don't want to be like a, a bad guy. Then they don't want to come here*".
P6 also felt that in many ways he's had to "buy" his children's time and he stated "*I've got to accommodate them and make them want to spend time with me and looking forward to come with me because they've got all this*".

<u>Post-divorce feelings towards the self</u>

This theme elicits the experiences felt by the participants in as far as they feel about themselves following the divorce. It is extremely difficult to identify one particular feeling and as a result a number of sub-themes become apparent. Some of these sub-themes relate to the positive feelings felt by the participants, whereas other sub-themes relate more to their negative emotions.

Positive feelings towards the self

P4 stated "*I'm back to the positive person I was. Um…I can still laugh at myself whereas at one stage I couldn't laugh at myself....I was closed for a while. And I've opened up*

again. I mean I'm even open to criticism now, whereas during that time I'd probably bite your head off".

P1 stated "*I feel better about myself, uh in terms of some of the changes I've made. Um, talking about things with people*".

P6 reported "*Now I'm confident, now I'm good hey. But in, in the beginning you lose confidence completely*".

Negative feelings towards the self

P4 reported "*I thought well, if she doesn't love me no one else will*".

P3 stated "*She wanted the divorce, if I was the, the best thing since sliced bread I'm sure she wouldn't have wanted the divorce*".

P6 stated "*I'm very like reserved and more…like how can I say uh, not confident enough to, because you, I won't allow myself to get hurt again, like that. Ever!*"

P7 summarises in many ways what the other participants expressed by saying "*Those problems I felt, I felt very bad. And I felt very, very low self-esteem....I felt very insecure. I felt very insecure, that's mainly the thing*".

Negative feelings towards the self and their impact on relationships

P1 reported in terms of his relationship with his children that "*You, you, if there's any guilt that I have, its, its that guilt. The guilt that I didn't offer my children um, the perfect, the family where they had a mother and a father together and they grew up*".

P6 stated with regards to his approach with others that "*I, like you bitter now. You angry with the world....Until today I still don't trust anybody. And that's all her doing*".

P5 stated "*Um, uncertainty is a problem....Well where to from now type of thing, you know*".

<u>Post-divorce feelings towards the ex-wife</u>

A varied number of results emerged from the responses of the participants and as such a number of sub-themes become apparent. These include positive and negative feelings towards the ex-wife, feelings towards the ex-wife as a result of her status as a mother, as well as ambivalent feelings.

Positive feelings towards the ex-wife

P4 stated "*Um, I still love her. Obviously not that deep love that I had but I still love her....I don't wish her bad I actually wish her very well*".

P5 indicated "*No we have a good relationship. Um, we can communicate well. We communicate better now than we did when we were married*".

P6 stated "*I would say that I would be lying if I said I didn't have feelings for the woman, even after, you know what I'm saying*".

P1 stated "*I still think the world of her. Just because we no longer married doesn't mean I think she's a, bad individual*".

Negative feelings towards the ex-wife

P4 stated "*Obviously in the beginning I felt the pain, and I was upset. And I blamed her*".

P3 indicated "*if it wasn't for the kids if I'd never seen her again it would've been Ok*".

P3 also stated "*All the memories. And the fact that it would have been lovely to have gone on in life....And yeah, from that aspect I think um, I'm quite resentful for her not allowing that to happen*".

P2 stated "*Its also I think, another thing to, to come to terms with is, getting over the potential anger…at your ex-wife. Because you, I mean any divorce, no matter how amicable or not. You going to have some resentment towards that person*".

Feelings towards the ex-wife as a result of her status as a mother

P1 stated "*We have kids together, we can't be…enemies*".

P1 also stated "*Um, I still feel I want her to be happy because, if she's not happy and, and life's bad for her, it affects my kids*".

P2 stated "*Like if it wasn't for, for my daughter, I don't think I'd ever speak to my ex-wife. Ever!*"

Ambivalent feelings towards the ex-wife

P3 indicated "*I don't know how I feel about her to be honest....Um but yeah. So I think um, my feeling for her is that she's the mother of my children*".

P2 stated "*I think mine's, we not friends but we um…civil*".

The positive impact of divorce

This theme refers to all the responses of the participants whereby they have felt that there has been a positive outcome as a result of their divorce. It has been sub-divided into smaller sub-themes to reflect the different impacts it has had on the participants.

Self-reflection and its impact on the individual

P7 stated "*But, at the time it also enabled me to, to look into myself and, and to see what are the , according my own judgement, what are the things that I did wrong, what are the things that I did right. How could I have done differently. And, yeah it was a time of, of terrible in-fight but at the same time it was a time of, of peacemaking with myself*".

P6 stated "*Because she thought I was gonna, roll down and frikken fade away and it didn't happen. So in that way I'm thankful for that because its made me a stronger person, in a big way*".

P1 stated "*Lessons have been learnt. There are some lessons that I'm still going to learn. But um I feel, I feel a better person*".

Making new connections

P2 stated "*Um, and in retro, in retrospect I think it was a good thing. Because I met somebody else and I'm happy than I ever was*".

P3 stated "*I would not have met a lot of the new people that I've met*".

P4 when explaining how he had drawn from it a positive experience stated "*The negative thing was losing those old friends, and I, I've met new people*".

The negative impact of divorce

This theme refers to some of the responses whereby participants have felt that there has been a negative impact on their lives, as a result of the divorce. It has been broken into smaller sub-themes to reflect the different impact it had had on the participants.

Potentially destructive coping skills

P6 stated "*You start drinking, you start acting like a real idiot. And uh, I bought the car, I got it on the Thursday, on the Friday night I got so drunk, I crashed the thing*".

P7 stated "*I could've started drinking but I never liked alcohol so*".

Avoiding feelings of emptiness

P1 stated "*To try and fill the void. You know the quietness....I try and go out every, every Friday night, every Saturday night, I have to be out. I just can't stay, being at home*".

P1 added "*No amount of partying can uh, or other casual relationships. I mean you still alone*".

Sacrifices made during the marriage that have an impact after divorce

P1 stated "*There's one negative for me. Um, I'm forty two now, and ordinarily a forty two year old should be able to have children. Um, I had a vasectomy, um during the marriage. After the second was born. And um I figured you know its, its easier for me to have a vasectomy, than for her to have all the, all the contraception's, its damaging in the long-term for a woman. So I had a vasectomy. And now, there's a part of me that wants to be a dad again. And um, now I've had a vasectomy*".

Future challenges

This theme encapsulates the experiences the participants have encountered in moving on from their divorce and the challenges they feel they may still encounter. This has been broken down into sub-themes, addressing some of the emotional and the more "practical" challenges.

Struggling for independence

P4 stated "*My only challenge is to look after me now....I've got to now look after myself mentally, physically. Body, mind and spirit*".

P3 stated "*my challenge is again I think its also, probably a little bit selfish....But I have to think about self now*".

Seeking recognition from your children

P6 stated "*But as a challenge is, as a father figure I won't be recognised, to them they'll still pull for the mother. And that's, I accept that but, with time I hopefully they'll like acknowledge me and say you know what, dad thanks for everything, but I don't see that happening so*".

P1 stated "*So I think, what's important for me, its in that process, not moving to far away from the kids. And the relationship. Because you could end up with someone, that you happy with, and you grow further and further apart from where you were, apart from your kids. And um, I think that's something uh, that the challenge is*".

Finding personal happiness

P2 stated "*Because the most important thing really I think uh, in this road is probably um, finding happiness in yourself first*".

P1 expressed "*For me the challenge is around finding happiness*".

Difficulties with my job

P7 stated "*Most of them had to do with my work. I lost the grip into my work and people knew that. My superiors knew that I was very vulnerable. I was weak at the time where I needed to be strong*".

P3 stated "*I think in terms of my, work-wise, I mean that's becoming a bit of a challenge. To make sure that I make ends meet*".

The Mesosystem

The mesosystem is a system of microsystems, which is formed whenever the individual moves into a new setting. This would imply that all the systems that have affected the individual previously (on the level of the microsystem), now interact with each other to impact on the individual in a new setting. It is the creation of a new set of impacts on the individual, as a direct result of the person moving from their prior setting into a new one.

Changing friendships

This theme highlights the difficulties participants found in being isolated from their previous social setting and some of the emotions they experienced as a result of this. Sub-themes emerge that illustrate how participants felt like they lost connections, as well as how they felt wary around others they previously depended on. The quotes below demonstrate how many of the participants felt forced into a situation they weren't comfortable with and the difficulties they thus faced.

Losing old connections

P3 indicated "*you don't tend to hang around with, with group people, with married people, with families....When you, when you divorced it becomes different and that negative*".

P4 stated "*we used to play tenpin together. I stopped playing so that we wouldn't…be with the same friends....I've got new acquaintances, I don't call them friends…no there's no friends*".

P5 reported "*we'd been married for, for a number of years so we had mutual friends…And some of the friends chose to go one way, some the other way, very few chose to remain friends with both of us....And um, I couldn't understand why all the friends couldn't remain friends with both of us. But they tended uh, they seemed to take sides*".

Feeling like you can't always rely on your friends

P2 stated "*Um, but there was a lot to, to other friends, people think ugh shut up now. So I think you've got to be quite selective as to who you unload on". P2 also added "Its like if they ask then talk, if they don't ask then also well I don't volunteer too much*".

New friendships

This theme identifies both some of the difficulties of moving into a new social setting as well as some of the benefits of finding a new social setting. The following quotes illustrate this.

The positives of finding new friends

P4 stated "*It was hard in the beginning but now I enjoy the, the new, the new people that I meet*".

P1 stated "*Um and, and you spend more time with the people that are important....But you know, with that you start taking more of an interest in other people*".

The isolation that accompanies trying to meet people

P1 felt that it had been difficult to connect with new people and stated "*just going to a place and, and now you go for a beer and sometimes you go alone and have a beer*".

The difficulty in finding new friends

P2 stated "*Yeah, I mean, you don't have a whole set of just your friends. And its quite difficult to just get out there and make new friends*".

P5 stated "*So you know, the challenges were also to, move into a new circle of friends or find new friends or whatever*".

<u>New intimate relationships</u>

This theme refers to the difficulties and joys experienced of connecting intimately with a new partner. It is divided into a number of sub-themes including the difficulty of finding a new partner, bringing past experience into a new relationship, and the impact of children on new relationships.

Not being emotionally available to new relationships

P3 stated "*Be nice to find somebody and get married again but its uh, just I've never felt that right emotion, with any of the girls I've taken home*".

P3 also stated "*I've just never been able to commit myself to anybody and that's a negative for me*".

P7 reported "*And, there were many opportunities you know, girls that knew you and were after you and I was not available to anything*".

Not believing you will meet anybody new

P1 stated "*Uh and, and at times there's anxiety about you know I do want to find someone again that, I'm still romantic about you know, like, like my soul mate is out there and....And at times the anxiety does come in terms of, you know, will I meet her, will I find her*".

P4 stated "*I thought well, if she doesn't love me no one else will*".

The influence of past experience on a new relationship

P6 felt that his previous relationship had impacted on his feelings towards new relationships and stated "*agh you lose trust because uh you, you don't trust anybody because the person you loved and trusted the most has let you down....I don't believe I will get ever, over that so*".

P6 also expressed that his past experience now resulted in him behaving in a particular way in his new relationship and he stated "*And like with C I'm hard now. I force her to work. I force her to provide as well. And to, earn her own way…And its not fair on her, because she doesn't really need to work. I mean I can provide. But because of what the ex has done, I make sure that she knows, that its tough out there*".

Giving up a part of oneself because of past experience

P7 stated "*and when I married again seven years later I, I promised myself that I would never allow a situation where my children would be deprived of both parents, no matter what it took from me. And, yeah it was very hard, that decision and the life that I had with the second wife was also not easy....I gave up many things about me, in order to preserve um, the relationship. For the sake of the children. Even if it meant me having a…subdued, role, in the process*".

The impact of children on a new relationship

P6 stated "*Um, she'll never be their mother and that gets thrown in her face. Shit like that. Its from the ex and from the kids you know. You not my mom, shit like that*".

P2 reported "*If you happy your kids will be happy with your new partner. But I think the more difficult thing is making sure your new partner is happy with your kids. Or not happy, I mean there's always going to be friction and its going to happen. Guaranteed*".

Losing family

This theme refers to the sense of loss participants felt, regarding close family connections, following their divorce. It illustrates their experience with the difficulty in maintaining previous family circles (as well as connections with the ex-wife's family) and the feelings of loss and uncertainty that accompany this.

Feeling like you don't belong

P4 stated "*The hardest thing I think was…geez…I mean…I know, I know I can still visit her family. They won't chase me out. I just feel like right now its just not, I think I'd be intruding....Because now I would feel like I don't belong anymore*".

P1 indicated "*Where you used to go see, as family together um, suddenly that's no longer there. Everything's sort of splintered*".

Uncertainty of the relationship with my child

P5 stated "*And uh, um sort of the uncertainty of what kind of a relationship I would have with my son*".

P6 stated in terms of not being sure what the future holds with regards to his children that "*if she should move to another relationship maybe the kids will say wait a minute, I want to go live with dad. So. And if they don't well. So. I'll just wait it out, wait it out*".

Employment opportunities

This theme refers to the impact divorce has had on the employment opportunities of the divorced man. It refers to the positive effect they have felt it has had, as they have moved into a new setting and have consequently been happier because of it.

P4 stated "*The negative thing was I was in a job, the new thing is I'm in a new challenge. Which I'm enjoying more*".

P3 stated "*That's how I came into doing what I'm doing now, totally different to what I was trained for. And yes it became that negative brought on this positive. I would never be in my, financial or position now, if I'd stayed in my…never*".

The challenge of starting over

This theme relates to finding oneself suddenly have to start over in life and finding that many challenges accompany this. As illustrated by the following quotes the theme speaks of the difficulties faced in learning to be independent of a relationship again.

P5 stated " *Well the challenges were, were basically to um, set myself up....In accommodation and…um, find a new home and furnish it*".
P5 also added "*Um…adjusting to uh, um to living single again*".
P3 stated "*things she did you now have to do*".
P4 stated that his difficulty in starting over was "*to rearrange all my accounts back into my name only....because we shared everything. Literally.*".

The Exosystem

The exosystem refers to the social settings and organisations beyond the individual's immediate experience that nevertheless affect him. These would include things such as welfare systems, health systems and transport systems, to name but a few examples.

Seeking help

This theme refers to the way in which some of the participants chose to seek professional help, or attempted to seek professional help and the difficulties that they faced. It allows one to see what the impact of existing mental health services is on divorced men and what problems they encountered in accessing these services. The quotes below illustrate the experiences of the participants in attempting to first process their difficulties alone and then eventually trying to turn to external help in order to better understand what has happened.

Seeking psychological help feels beneficial

P2 stated "*And, I think it's a question of you work through it yourself. Personally I went to go see a shrink, which I found just helped....But I strongly recommend it to anybody that I know, or if I know of somebody getting divorced, I would actually recommend that after you know, give yourself six months. You going to go through all that crap yourself, then go and actually see someone. Even if its just for two or three sessions because it really, really just helps put things into perspective*".

P4 stated "*fortunately I also saw a psychologist....I saw her for three occasions*".

Feeling impeded when trying to seek help

P7 however found that his experience was slightly different and he explained that "*And I asked, when the children were bigger, I asked and I kept on asking, lets go to a psychologist. Lets talk about all the things and…and they always said to me, we not crazy, I'm not crazy, I don't want to go*".

<u>Reasons for divorcing</u>

Although the majority of participants provided different reasons for divorcing, most agreed that they often felt they had no control over what had happened. This theme aims to illustrate the experiences of these participants and provide some indication of their feelings during the divorce process.

P7 stated "*And when I got there she, told me the news. I mean she never told me anything before, even when I said to her that I was going with the children, she never said stop or anything. So I went and I confronted with reality. And a couple of months later the other reality that she was pregnant and the other guy was the father*".

P1 indicated "*I can see that, we just grew, we just spent less and less time together and we just grew further apart in terms of, things that we, we um, we were doing less things together*".

P5 stated "*Um look the divorce was um by mutual agreement. And um…um, I think it was the best for both parties*".

The Macrosystem

The macrosystem refers to the overarching institutional patterns of the culture or sub-culture in which the individual finds himself. Examples include the economic, social, educational, legal and political systems. The themes mentioned below involve some of these systems and the impact they have had on the individual.

Questioning beliefs

This theme refers to the intrinsic beliefs held by some of the participants about the institution of marriage and about the impact that religion had on their choice to initially get married.

Questioning one's religious beliefs

P3 stated "*things don't always work out, that, that you or even God intended*".
P4 found that he began questioning his beliefs in the church following the breakdown of his marriage and he stated "*when that came apart, that also fell apart*".

Questioning one's belief in marriage

P1 felt that his belief around marriage had been questioned, as well as how a marriage should proceed and he stated "*Yeah and you don't just say I do and, end of story*".
P7 articulated a similar experience and stated "*I never felt that I possess any person. That you are my property. The simple fact that we, got married its, its an agreement. And that agreement has got, besides a legal, uh a legal framework or legal basis that it has. It also has, a component which is individual....You committed to another person because you want to be committed to another person. Not because the paper says that you must be committed to that person*".
P3 stated "*I thought well that's for life.*"

Custody issues

This theme refers to the responses of those participants who have children and who have had to fight the legal system in order to get custody of their children. Some of the

responses are favourable in nature to the father, while the majority however are unfavourable.

Exorbitant costs of custody battles

P2, who's daughter was physically abused by his ex-wife's new partner describes his experience with the legal system as "*And then of course going through the whole legal system of being a, a single father trying to get custody of his little girl. Its like impossible. And it wasn't even contested....And it cost like a fortune....Now already, you've just gotten divorced…Yeah you know, so you've basically got bugger all to start with. And now all of a sudden you've got to find fifty grand in legal fees*".

Feeling let down by the legal system

P6 stated "*I wasn't worried about all the material stuff I just wanted the kids. And I couldn't get them....And the system said sorry, you can't stay with the kids. So, so I'm bitter because of the system just pulls more, for the mother....Which I think is wrong*". P3 explained his experience as "*there's this thing about every second weekend which I think is a whole lot of crap…to be honest*".

The Chronosystem

The chronosystem refers to the dimension of time, which has a fundamental influence on the direction of psychosocial development. It communicates the influence of time on an individual and also relates to the socio-historical context which one finds themselves within.

Historical impact on the individual's frame of mind

This theme refers to the impact of context on a participants experience and the subsequent difficulty that he faced.

P7 stated "*It was also a period of very, high political agitation in Mozambique. It was very hard for us to understand what was going on, I mean we could understand what was*

going on but to see the implications for the future, and for one's children and…it was a very complicated time".

The effect of time on feelings for the ex-wife

This theme relates to the way time has had an effect on the way the divorced man feels towards his ex-wife. It describes the manner in which time can affect his feelings.

P1 stated "*And uh, we were married for twenty years and its difficult to suddenly hate her*".
P7 stated "*Agh…up to about five years ago, I felt something for her. You cannot say its love, no its not love but I felt a lot of affection for her*".

The effect of time on feelings towards the self

This theme relates to the way time has had an effect on the way the divorced man feels towards himself. It reflects the way in which time can affect his feelings.

P4 stated "*That's how I was the first month. I was happy to be unhappy*", to which P3 responded "*with me it lasted eighteen months*".
P1 stated "*But eighteen months on you know um, I still feel um, I still feel the emptiness*".
P7 Stated "*So two years, two years and a bit that I was really really really, felt very lonely, very vulnerable and very, wanting to be on my own*".

DISCUSSION

This research study was aimed at gathering the subjective experiences of divorced men with regard to their perceptions of the divorce, and thus gather as wide a range of responses as possible. These responses were then analysed by using thematic content analysis and were subsequently categorised with the assistance of Bronfenbrenner's ecological theory of development. This was done in order to provide a framework from which to view the wide range of themes, as well as to illustrate the differing levels of impact on the divorcee's further development. If one refers to the above results, it is possible to see that a number of themes were found. These themes illustrated the vast number of experiences that divorced men go through.

It is evident when looking at the results that the majority of themes are located within the microsystem and the mesosystem of Bronfenbrenner's theory; the two systems that deal predominantly with the more personal, and socially intimate experiences of the individual. This then possibly highlights the major areas of impact for divorced men and provides a basis for further research to be conducted into this field.

Although this research did not take into account the woman's perspective on divorce and thus one cannot confirm whether some of the comparisons mentioned by the literature do indeed exist, it clearly allowed one to get a perspective of how men experience divorce. It also confirmed much of the previous literature that has been found on this topic. For example Wade and DeLemater (2002) defined divorce as a possible life stage transition that is temporary, which can hold both negative and positive consequences for the two parties involved. This in fact emerged from the responses offered by the participants, as the majority of them felt that while there had indeed been many negative aspects as a result of the divorce, there had also been a number of positive developments in their lives as a result of it. The negatives ranged from negative feelings towards the self, to the loss of relationships and friendships, to the negative impact on their ability to work. Some examples of these negatives include the response of P6 where he states "*agh you lose trust because uh you, you don't trust anybody because the person you loved and trusted*

the most has let you down....I don't believe I will get ever, over that so". The positives ranged from their ability to begin forming new relationships, to self-discovery, to positive employment changes. Some examples of this include P2 stating "*Um, and in retro, in retrospect I think it was a good thing. Because I met somebody else and I'm happy than I ever was*". And with regards to employment change P3 stating "*That's how I came into doing what I'm doing now, totally different to what I was trained for. And yes it became that negative brought on this positive. I would never be in my, financial or position now, if I'd stayed in my…never*".

According to Kposowa (2000), many individuals claim that divorced men find it easier to build a social network following the breakdown of their marriage and subsequently find it easier to engage in sexual activity. Research has shown however that this is not the case and that men generally suffer from social disintegration following a divorce. This was confirmed by the results obtained from the participants in this study as many of them reported feeling that they had lost contact with previous friends, had battled to make new friends, and generally had struggled to meet potential new partners. For example, P2 stated "*Yeah, I mean, you don't have a whole set of just your friends. And its quite difficult to just get out there and make new friends*". P7 reported "*And, there were many opportunities you know, girls that knew you and were after you and I was not available to anything*".

Other areas where this research study has conformed with some of the available past literature related to the financial and housing aspects of post-divorce. After divorce, men are more likely to experience a period of unemployment, sickness or disability. Many men will often change to a new job with a lower occupational status to the one they held prior to the divorce (Kalmijn, 2005). P7 stated with regards to his employment following the divorce that the challenges he faced "*Most of them had to do with my work. I lost the grip into my work and people knew that. My superiors knew that I was very vulnerable. I was weak at the time where I needed to be strong*". Men are also often made to bear the costs of finding a new residence, and setting up a new household, whereas women will more often continue to reside in the family home (Bollinter & Palkovitz, 2003). P5 stated

"*Well the challenges were, were basically to um, set myself up....In accommodation and…um, find a new home and furnish it*".

Some of the effects experienced by both parties include feelings of failure and varying amounts of self-blame (Myers, 1989). There is often also a feeling of pining for the spouse due to the sense of bonding and attachment that occurred in the marriage. Although this research study cannot assume, and it did not set out to consider, the feelings of the women involved in the divorce, it did however find that the majority of the men in this study concurred with prior literature relating to feelings of self-blame and of pining for their ex-partner. For example, P6 stated "*I would say that I would be lying if I said I didn't have feelings for the woman, even after, you know what I'm saying*". P7 stated with regards to self-blame "*The third one I think it was, pointing to myself, looking at myself as, the guilty party....What have I done wrong for this to happen?*"

One of the most important findings to come from this research study, and one which was in keeping with a great deal of the previous literature, related to the impact of children on the divorced parent. Previous research indicated that children play a great part in determining the impact of divorce on men. More so for those without custody. Take for example a father's level of involvement with their children. Research had shown that a father's level of involvement was not as high as a mother's especially when it came to care-giving activities (Bollinter & Palkovitz, 2003). This was due to men's longer working hours and the social expectation of women to be the primary caregiver. Once a man gets divorced or separates from his partner, this level of involvement decreases even more. The children also clearly find it more difficult to relate to their fathers after separation (Bollinter & Palkovitz, 2003). P6 indicated his most difficult aspect regarding the divorce as being "*Agh, losing the kids. Although um, I still get to see them on weekends. You don't see them, like everyday. I suppose that was the worst. The assets were nothing. The kids were the worst*".

A stereotype that exists, according to Myers (1996), claims that divorced men are disinterested in their children and are not distressed after their divorce. This did not

however seem to be the case. Many fathers thought of themselves as emotionally attached to their children and stated that often they did not see the divorce materialising as it was wife-initiated (Myers, 1996). They thus found themselves being forcibly separated from their children. P3 felt that his divorce should not have happened and stated "*when I had my divorce, and then, it wasn't because I wanted it, it was because the ex-wife wanted it....for me it wasn't. it wasn't, it shouldn't have happened. It wasn't normal*"

However, not all the results from the current research study are congruent with results indicated in previous literature. For example Myers (1989) stated that more divorced women reportedly suffered from depression than men, and that these women were more likely to seek psychotherapy as compared to their male counterparts. The current study however, found that just under half of its participants admitted to having sought psychotherapy and having felt that they had benefited from it. It is important to acknowledge that the sample is not completely representative of the larger male population and thus it may be that this is still not the norm. It is however an area for potential future research.

With regards to the area of mental health services, while it did appear as though some of the participants found accessing these services useful, one of the participants expressed difficulty in his attempt to engage with the service. This was as a result of the stigma and stereotypes attached to the use of mental health service. An example to illustrate this point is evident when P7 stated "*And I asked, when the children were bigger, I asked and I kept on asking, lets go to a psychologist. Lets talk about all the things and. And they always said to me, we not crazy, I'm not crazy, I don't want to go*". This highlights some of the preconceptions individual's have when it comes to the purpose of mental health services, as well as how these preconceptions can impede the accessing of these services. This leads one to consider that more research is required to establish if this phenomenon is widespread across the South African populations and it probably highlights the need for a better awareness of what mental health services offer. This could potentially be done through better marketing of mental health services or through improved education at

grass roots level as to what mental health services entail, and certainly through a more multidisciplinary approach to healthcare services.

This research study has also unearthed findings that have not appeared to be emphasised in previous studies. These findings relate to the experience of denial felt by the participants. It is possible that this denial was used as a defence mechanism and may not have been reported in previous studies as it may not have been a focus of their research. P3 stated that he felt "*you still need to live your life as though you are married....decided to run my life as though nothing had happened*". P6 explained how he felt by saying "*You angry with the world for, because this is not supposed to happen to me. This happens to the oke, other guys, this isn't happening to me*".

A further finding that may contribute to existing literature refers to the role of maintenance payments in the relationship of divorced parties after divorce. Although the area of divorced fathers and custody has been widely researched, it was not evident the extent to which maintenance payments are sometimes used to cover costs other than the child-related expenses. This study found that divorced men often felt that the children are used as bargaining tools and that their needs are sometimes used as ways of extracting more money from the father. P6 stated "*Now the kids are costing me a lot of money. So, and I, I know for a fact and every parent knows that kids don't cost the amount of money that I provide for them*". P6 also describes his experience with having to pay costs as "*Even now, the kids are still used as pawns for money....So its easier to just pay the money and give them what they want and then she leaves me alone*".

The facts found around maintenance issues do however correlate with existing literature that indicates how divorced men often feel hard done by the legal system, with regards to custody concerns. They often feel prejudiced against by the legal system regarding the amount of time they get to spend with their children, frequently only every second weekend, which results in many feelings of anger and disappointment. They also feel prejudiced against, regarding often exorbitant maintenance payments and the way this money is put to use. Lastly, it appears as though one of the greatest difficulties divorced

men consequently still face with regards to the present legal system has to do with how the law generally views the mother as being the best parent and primary care-giver, regardless of the evidence presented by the father. Thus it is evident that much more research needs to be done into this area with a view to establishing whether more parity between men and women can exist in this regard.

In summarising the results of this research study, it became evident that divorced men go through a wide range of experiences pertaining to their divorce. These range from emotional, social, financial, practical, to psychological experiences. All the participants described both positive and negative experiences as a result of their divorce and all were able to articulate some of their more obvious difficulties. It became clear upon analysis of their responses that the majority of participants identified the emotional and psychological aspects of their divorce as being more long lasting and more scarring than the financial or practical concerns they have faced. Examples of these long-lasting and often frequently high chronic levels of subjective emotional distress include P3 stating "*I don't know, I go through days where I'm, like what's the point of it* all". P6 also stated "*Until today I still don't trust anybody. And that's all her* doing". P3 also indicated "*it still hurts because it's still, you just wish that everything was normal, but things aren't* normal".

In conclusion, some of the emotional and long-lasting effects included the denial, guilt and self-blame around their divorce, as well as the negative self-thoughts that accompanied these emotions. They also included stressors relating to their intimate relationships and new friendships, with a sense of isolation and loneliness becoming extremely prevalent, as well as a sense of social disintegration. The impact of children and custody was a major stressor for the majority of the participants, with many feeling that they had in some ways lost their children and that their future role in the upbringing of their children was uncertain. Many of the participants also described not being able to move on completely with their lives, with the majority reporting still having feelings for their ex-wives and battling to commit entirely to a new relationship. Finally, the feeling of insecurity and low self-esteem also appeared to play a major role in the participant's

lives following the divorce, as well as the difficulty in coming to terms with their new post-divorce phase of life.

LIMITATIONS

A number of limitations became apparent when one looked at the way this study was conducted. One of the weaknesses of this study was potentially the small sample size, which limits one's ability to generalise any conclusions to all divorced men in the South African context. Although all the men in the sample came from similar socio-economic backgrounds, they came from different ethnic and cultural backgrounds. The sample would still have had to be larger to be more representative of the diverse South African population, and to provide a more rounded understanding of the experiences of divorced men from very different backgrounds. In this regard, the sample over-represented white middle-class South African men, partly because this was an easier sample for the researcher to access, given that this is his background, but also due to the 'snowball' method of sampling used by the study.

Secondly, with regards to the composition of the sample, it is possible that this study has obtained certain results based entirely on the type of participants. To clarify this point, all participants were volunteers who expressed an interest in taking part in the study and thus this already presupposes that these men were comfortable enough to discuss their experiences of divorce. Results obtained might have presented as slightly different had the sample group comprised of a different sample of individuals.

Thus this study is limited in terms of its ability to generalise its findings across all divorced male populations in a South African context. It is not representative of all ethnic groups, with the vast majority of the sample comprising white middle-class citizens, and it only takes into account the responses of individuals who are obviously comfortable enough with their divorce to be able to discuss it.

Furthermore, the use of individual interviews for those participants who wished to take part but could not make the times suggested for the focus groups, may have deprived this study of some of the dynamics that emerge as a result of group discussion. Thus it is possible that things were left unsaid by the individual participants, that may have

emerged as a result of being prompted or reminded of experiences by having other group members present.

Lastly, the use of Bronfenbrenner's ecological theory of development while providing a useful framework with which to begin categorising the themes that emerged, also presented a problem in that many of the themes did not clearly fit into only one category. The responses also seemed to centre around specific systems within Bronfenbrenner's theory and their impact on the individual, and this in part may have been due to the focus of this study and the subsequent make up of the questions asked.

RECOMMENDATIONS

As this study was predominantly explorative in nature, it provides an opportunity for a more in-depth investigation and analysis of certain themes in possible future studies. This study highlighted some of the areas that divorced men appear to struggle with but it was not an exhaustive study. Future research could thus be geared towards expanding and further probing these various areas, in the hope that a more comprehensive understanding of the experiences of divorced men is obtained.

Some of the questions that future research could potentially explore to a greater degree include the following:
What are the particular psychological vulnerabilities of men that result in such chronic psychological trauma and distress following divorce?
Why do most men report such intense feelings of distress for years and decades whereas their female counterparts generally appear to be coping better emotionally in a shorter time following the divorce?
Are there particular personality styles that increase the risk of feeling distress following a divorce?

It is also recommended that there be a greater awareness given to the role mental health services can play in helping divorced men to adjust and to cope with the difficulties of divorce. The participants that were able to access these services reported feeling that they were beneficial, yet it appears as if not enough attention is given to this. Accessing these services may result in decreased long-term effects, as well as a greater feeling of well-being, and thus the promotion of these services needs to be carried out to a greater extent. This would also then reduce some of the stigmas and stereotypes associated with the accessing of mental health services.

Lastly, it is recommended that future studies attempt to broaden the size and dynamics of the sample, thus creating more of a chance for the results to be generalised to all divorced South African men.

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APPENDIX A

Interview schedule

UNIVERSITY OF THE WITWATERSRAND, JOHANNESBURG

School of Human and Community Development
Private Bag 3, Wits 2050, Johannesburg, South Africa
Tel: (011) 717-4500 Fax: (011) 717-4559
Email: 018lucy@muse.wits.ac.za

Interview schedule

1) What are the problems, if any, that you have faced as a result of your divorce?
2) In what way has your divorce affected you negatively?
3) How do you feel about your ex-partner now?
4) How do you feel about yourself now?
5) What has been the most difficult thing for you regarding your divorce?
6) What do you think some of the challenges might be for you in the future?

APPENDIX B

Subject Information Sheet



School of Human and Community Development
Private Bag 3, Wits 2050, Johannesburg, South Africa
Tel: (011) 717-4500 Fax: (011) 717-4559
Email: 018lucy@muse.wits.ac.za

My name is Hugo Meirim, and I am conducting research for the purposes of obtaining a Masters degree in Clinical Psychology at the University of the Witwatersrand. My area of focus is that of the subjective experiences of divorced men. I would like to invite you to participate in this study.

Participation in this research will entail being part of a focus group discussion, where you will have a chance to express your opinions with others in a similar position to yourself. Please note that I wish you to speak as freely as possible about your experiences, as this will greatly benefit my understanding of what divorce is like for men. However, please note that if you reveal any serious plans to harm yourself or others, I am legally obligated to try intervene by reporting any intended illegal activities.

The focus group will last for approximately one and a half hours. With your permission this will be recorded in order to ensure accuracy. Participation is voluntary, and no person will be advantaged or disadvantaged in any way for choosing to participate or not participate in the study. All of your responses will be kept confidential, and no information that could identify you would be included in the research report. However, as the discussion is group based, I cannot ensure that fellow participants will not divulge any information to others. The interview material (tapes and transcripts) will not be seen or heard by any person in this organisation (other than my supervisor) at any time, and will only be processed by myself and my supervisor, a registered psychologist. You may refuse to answer any questions you would prefer not to, and you may choose to withdraw from the study at any point.

If you choose to participate in the study please fill in your details on the consent form below. Should you require any further information, please feel free to contact me telephonically at *0835011567 or (011)4767353* or via e-mail at *ameirim@mweb.co.za.* Also, should you wish feedback about my results; you may contact me for an electronic version of a summary of my results and recommendations. A debriefing session will also be run following the study, to allow you a chance to discuss any difficulties that may have arisen for you as a result of participating in the study. Further, should you wish to seek any professional support and assistance, please don't hesitate to contact me and I will make an appropriate referral.

Kind Regards

Hugo Meirim
(Masters in Clinical psychology student- University of the Witwatersrand)

APPENDIX C

Consent Form (Interview)



UNIVERSITY OF THE WITWATERSRAND, JOHANNESBURG

School of Human and Community Development
Private Bag 3, Wits 2050, Johannesburg, South Africa
Tel: (011) 717-4500 Fax: (011) 717-4559
Email: 018lucy@muse.wits.ac.za

I _____ consent to being interviewed by Hugo Meirim for his/her study on "*The subjective experiences of divorced men in the South African context*". I understand that:

- Participation in this interview is voluntary.
- That I may refuse to answer any questions I would prefer not to.
- I may withdraw from the study at any time.
- No information that may identify me will be included in the research report, and my responses will remain confidential.
- I allow the researcher to make use of direct quotes in the final research report, although these quotes will contain no identifying data.

Signed _____

APPENDIX D

Consent Form (Recording)



UNIVERSITY OF THE WITWATERSRAND, JOHANNESBURG

School of Human and Community Development
Private Bag 3, Wits 2050, Johannesburg, South Africa
Tel: (011) 717-4500 Fax: (011) 717-4559
Email: 018lucy@muse.wits.ac.za

I _____ consent to my interview with Hugo Meirim for his/her study on "*The subjective experiences of divorced men in the South African context*" being tape-recorded. I understand that:

- The tapes and transcripts will not be seen or heard by any person at any time (other than the researcher and the researcher's supervisor), and will only be processed by the researcher.
- All tape recordings will be kept in a securely locked cupboard in the supervisor's office for one year following the completion of the written report, so as to ensure that no corrections need to be made. The recordings will then be destroyed.
- No identifying information will be used in the transcripts or the research report.

Signed _____