

https://dspace.org/

# A narrative exploration of the experiences of urban Black South African fathers.

**Quinn, Theresa**

**2013-03-18**
http://hdl.handle.net/10539/12528

Downloaded from a DSpace repository. https://dspace.org/

# A NARRATIVE EXPLORATION OF THE EXPERIENCES OF URBAN BLACK SOUTH AFRICAN FATHERS

STUDENT: THERESA QUINN
STUDENT NUMBER: 0403330N
SUPERVISOR: DR KATHERINE BAIN

A RESEARCH REPORT SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF PSYCHOLOGY, UNIVERSITY OF THE WITWATERSRAND, IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTERS IN EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY

# Table of Contents

Table of Contents ..... ii
Declaration ..... iv
Acknowledgements ..... v
Abstract ..... vi
1 CHAPTER 1: Introduction ..... 1
1.1 Research Rationale ..... 2
1.2 Research Aims ..... 7
2 CHAPTER 2: Literature Review ..... 10
2.1 Fathering and Fatherhood ..... 10
2.2 Psychoanalytic Tradition ..... 12
2.3 Fathering within psychoanalysis ..... 13
2.4 Roles of the father in psychoanalytic theory ..... 14
2.5 The internalised father ..... 18
2.6 Identification with own father ..... 19
2.7 Attachment Theory ..... 21
2.8 Socio-cultural considerations ..... 22
3 CHAPTER 3: Methodology ..... 26
3.1 Research Paradigm ..... 26
3.2 Sample and Sampling Procedure ..... 27
3.3 Description of participants ..... 29
3.4 Procedure ..... 30
3.5 Data Collection ..... 31
3.6 Data Analysis ..... 31
3.7 Reflections of the analytic Process ..... 34
3.8 Ethical Considerations ..... 36
3.9 Research Questions ..... 37
4 CHAPTER 4: Results ..... 39
4.1 Introduction ..... 39
4.2 Prenatal Experience of Fathers ..... 39
*4.2.1 Waiting excitedly for our child to arrive: Feeling bonded in anticipation ..... 40*
*4.2.2 "What would we do? What must I do?": Uncertainty and ambivalence ..... 42*
*4.2.3 Prenatal aspirations ..... 44*
4.3 Identification ..... 46
*4.3.1 Post natal aspirations ..... 49*
4.4 Reparation ..... 54
4.5 Experience of Fatherhood ..... 62
4.6 Perceived Role of the Father ..... 68
*4.6.1 Protective role ..... 68*
*4.6.2 Broadening of masculinity ..... 70*
4.7 Transitioning into Fatherhood ..... 72
*4.7.1 Modelling on their own fathers ..... 73*
4.8 The Internal Father ..... 76
4.9 Conclusion ..... 77
5 CHAPTER 5: Discussion ..... 79
5.1 Introduction ..... 79
5.2 Experience of Being a Father ..... 81
*5.2.1 Prenatal Experiences ..... 81*
*5.2.2 Existing Outside of the Mother Infant-Dyad ..... 86*
*5.2.3 Interdependence/Oedipus Complex ..... 88*
5.3 Linking the Past to the Present ..... 93

*5.3.1 Identification* ..... *93*
*5.3.2 Reparation* ..... *96*
5.4 The Internal Father ..... 99
5.5 The Perceived Role of the Father ..... 102
*5.5.1 Protector/Provider* ..... *103*
*5.5.2 Nurturer/Attachment Figure* ..... *104*
*5.5.3 Role of Socialising* ..... *106*
*5.5.4 Masculinity and Fatherhood* ..... *106*
*5.5.5 Social and Historical Influence* ..... *110*
5.6 Conclusion ..... 112
6 CHAPTER 6: Conclusion ..... 113
6.1 Findings of the study ..... 113
6.2 Clinical Implications ..... 115
6.3 Limitations of the study ..... 117
6.4 Recommendations for further research ..... 119
7 Reference List ..... 120
Appendix A: Information Sheet ..... 128
Appendix B: Written Informed Consent ..... 130
Appendix C: Consent for Tape Recording ..... 131
Appendix D: Semi-structured Interview Schedule ..... 133
Appendix E: Information for Referral ..... 135
Appendix F: Ethics Clearance Certificate ..... 136

# Declaration

I, Theresa Quinn, know and accept that plagiarism (i.e., to use another's work and to pretend that it is one's own) is wrong. Consequently I declare that:

- The research report is my own work
- I have correctly acknowledged all direct quotations and paraphrased ideas/content. In addition I have provided a complete, alphabetized reference list, as required by the APA method of referencing.
- I have not allowed, and will not allow anyone to copy my work with the intention of passing it off as his/her own work.
- I understand that that University of the Witwatersrand may take disciplinary action against me if there is a belief that this is not my own unaided work, or that I failed to acknowledge the sources of the ideas or words in my writing.

**Signed:** _____

**Date:** _____

# Acknowledgements

First and foremost I offer my sincerest gratitude to my supervisor, Dr Katherine Bain who was abundantly helpful, gave so generously of her time and offered invaluable assistance, support and guidance and without whom this thesis would not have possible.

Deepest gratitude is also due to Ruby Patel for her help and assistance during the proposal writing of this thesis.

I owe my deepest gratitude to my boyfriend for his continuous support, understanding and love throughout this process.

I also wish to express my gratitude to my beloved family; for their understanding & endless love, through the duration of my studies.

# Abstract

This study aimed to explore the perceptions of the role of the father and the experiences of fatherhood among Black South African fathers residing in urban Johannesburg. It further investigated how the experience of being fathered influenced being a father. Qualitative methods were utilised in the form of a narrative analysis of semi structured interviews. The interviews and the analysis relied upon the guidelines of the psychoanalytic research interview (Cartwright, 2002) in providing a psychoanalytic lens through which to analyse the data. An in depth analysis of the interview data and process notes generated the following focal themes: pre-natal experiences, identification, reparation, the experience of being a father, the perceived role of the father, transitioning into fatherhood and the internal father. Becoming a father seemed to bring with it a host of different emotions and anxieties both within the prenatal and post natal stages. Becoming a father also seemed to cause the majority of the participants to reflect on their own childhoods and their experiences of being fathered. Fatherhood also seemed to provide the opportunity for some type of reparation with the participants own fathers through their new roles as fathers. Transitioning into fatherhood proved to be difficult for most of the participants and the loss of certain aspects of their lives such as their more carefree youth and less responsibility, was highlighted. Interesting to note is the point that although all the participants were Black males, little information regarding traditional beliefs around fathering emerged. This was thought to be due to the fact that all the participants resided in an urban area, thus the strong influence of western culture was apparent.

# 1 CHAPTER 1: Introduction

"In more ways than one the child is the father to the man" William Wordsworth

Several writers have recently called attention to the neglect of the father in research, the father has often been referred to as the forgotten parent (Lamb, 1997). Since then fatherhood has received increasing attention in the literature. Lamb (1975, 1997) has written for decades on fathering and many of his studies have considered father-infant attachment. Some of his results indicated that infants residing with the mother and father showed no preference for either parent in attachment behaviour. Lamb (1997), like other authors in this field of study, proposed that fathers' engagement is likely to exert a direct influence on the psychological development of their children. Furthermore, Terell (2005) reported that fathers are central in developing a sense of security and self esteem in their children. Importantly, Lamb (1997) also highlighted that men who had fathers who were poor role models or who spent little time with them growing up are thought to have more difficulty being actively involved in their own children's lives. He also mentioned that the family of origin and social conditions of childhood are important when predicting the father's relationship with his own children in the next generation. Cowan (1990) also noted that fathers' memories and experiences of their own childhoods affected their involvement with their children and the security of this father child relationship. Another study by Radin (1994) suggested that compensation motivation may also affect the paternal involvement with one's own child. This is linked to the concept of reparation, in redoing certain aspects of their own pasts. In this longitudinal study it was highlighted that men who wished that their own fathers had been closer and more involved in their lives, perceived themselves as being more actively involved with their children. These studies highlighted the fact that the father should no longer be perceived as the forgotten parent.

Despite the relevance of these studies there is still a lack of research when considering urban Black South African men.

The changing roles and practices of men as fathers has also been a growing subject of interest in literature in response to contemporary socio cultural change (Finn & Henwood, 2009). A change has been noted in the western world that men are becoming or at least striving to be more hands on and emotionally involved fathers. Finn and Henwood (2009) proposed that the main reasons for this change include: women's changing role in the labour force and the decline of traditional patriarchal and masculine authority. Importantly, however, this discourse of changing roles and practices within fatherhood is mainly associated with white middle class men. There has been little research conducted on men of colour, more specifically on Black South African men.

There is also evidence in the literature of inter-generationally located narratives (Finn & Henkwood, 2009), in that a strong link is often found between how men today view fatherhood and their experience with their own fathers. The central aim of this research was to explore the perceived roles and experiences of fatherhood of a select group of urban Black South African fathers. Furthermore it aimed to explore the relationship with the participants' own fathers and the possible influences of these on the participants' current father child relationships.

## 1.1 Research Rationale

Traditionally in psychological literature there has been a strong focus on motherhood and the mother's imperative role in the development of the child (Freeman, 2008). In the past much attention has been given to the mother-child bond while the paternal relationship has remained relatively hidden. Freeman

(2008) argued that this discrepancy reflects the fact that child care has been viewed as essentially and exclusively a female activity. This attention on the maternal relationship has been encouraged by many facets of the psychoanalytic movement and has become one of the principle foci of psychoanalysis (Diamond, 1995).

Furthermore, there is a lack of refined research applicable to the role of fathers (Phares, Fields, Kamboukos & Lopez, 2005). For example, Phares (1992) found that
of 577 studies dealing with parenting , these being drawn from international studies, only 8 (or 1.4%) involved fathers and more recently a similar analysis was conducted and it was found that of 540 studies on parents only 2.1 % involved fathers (Phares et al., 2005).

However, this visible pull towards the maternal has gradually shifted and the psychological community has come to recognise the vast impact of paternal involvement in child care (Freeman, 2008). Parke (2004) also illustrated that in the past, fathers have largely been forgotten in terms of their contribution to child development; however, in the 21st century they have now been more substantially recognised as central contributors to children's psychological, social, emotional and cognitive development. There has been an increased interest in fatherhood in recent years and literature in this area has expanded immensely in the past two decades (Miller & Maiter, 2008). Yet several issues remain undeveloped on this research front, hence, it was the goal of this study to explore some of these topics that are fertile for more exploratory and theoretical work. These include the experiences of Black African fathers, the impact of fathering on men themselves and the need for intergenerational examination of fathering.

Williams (2007) highlighted that that there has been increased involvement of the father and a transformation of the role of fatherhood in childcare in the UK and other western countries in the past decade and also an increase in the contribution that fathers are making regarding child development within families. Although there have been numerous studies conducted in Western countries there remains a paucity of literature available pertaining to the South African context, thus making South African fathers an underrepresented population. This study aimed to look at urban Black South African fathers who comprise a noteworthy percentage of the South African population.

Studies that engage in exploring issues pertaining to underrepresented populations are of vital importance in furthering our understanding as a whole. At present the majority of developmental and intervention psychological data available on attachment and parenting practices are situated within a Western framework (Westby & Erikson, 1992), as past studies have been conducted mainly within white populations with children and parents from middle class, two parent families. This data is then often taken and applied to a number of local contexts and universalist assumptions underlie much of the theorising in social sciences (Parke, 2004). This approach may be seen as problematic within the multicultural environment of South Africa as many cultural, social and economic factors may determine different ways of thinking and existing in the world (Brown, Rogers & Kapadia, 2008). Therefore it is proposed that experiences of fatherhood could be influenced by variation in culturally diverse populations. This should be thought about especially in relation to urban Black South African fathers and other similar population groups, in that they have more than one cultural influence which may affect their understandings and ways of being in the world.

Although a substantial amount of research has been recently conducted, there still remains limited information available on the role of fatherhood in diverse social, racial, cultural and ethnic groups (Miller & Maiter, 2008), and there is also an evident paucity of information available within the South African context on how the role of fatherhood is perceived and experienced by urban Black South African fathers themselves.

This study aimed to explore fatherhood within this under investigated context. Some important studies have been conducted on fatherhood in South Africa such as 'Ubaba: Men and fatherhood in South Africa' written by Linda Richter and Robert Morell in 2006, which focused predominantly on traditional African beliefs on fatherhood and fathering. This current study hoped to fill more of this gap around fathering in South Africa by focusing on the experiences of fatherhood of the fathers themselves. Although literature highlights that looking back to one's own childhood and how one's father is perceived to have engaged or disengaged as a father is an inevitable reference point, this factor is heavily mediated by other factors such as socio economic status, class and current familial relations (Finn & Henkwood, 2009). The population that was investigated in the current study consisted of urban Black South African males, most of whom had grown up in more rural environments and had moved to urban Johannesburg later in their life. This study aimed to tap into the population of these men, who seem to straddle African and western belief systems. Although some authors have viewed fatherhood through the lens of culture there is an omission of the understanding and the diverse contexts of the lives of these fathers (Miller & Maiter, 2008). Urban men in South Africa would perhaps highlight the fluid and contextual aspects of both culture and fatherhood. Furthermore, some consideration of immigration, urbanisation and globalization, which are likely to have affected these men, would increase the depth and breadth of the knowledge around the different factors influencing

fathers. Traditional beliefs may be diluted and diversified as these men may not be in contact with more traditional practices and would constantly be influenced by the more Western community in which they live.

Research within this area is important as it may serve to inform conceptual foundations as well as addressing clinical implications of the many Black urban South Africans' understandings of the father's role and their experiences in parenting. A father's relationship with his child has been of great interest to psychologists who are involved in this area of study and who work with children and families. This area is also of particular interest to the school of psychoanalysis as it places much importance on early relationships, attachment and object relations of the child (Diamond, 1995). Hence, this research explores the role of fatherhood and the experiences of urban Black South African fathers and considers these views within a psychoanalytic framework.

It is imperative that psychologists working within the South African context gain a deeper understanding of this large segment of the South African population, in order to provide culturally sensitive services when working with children and families of diverse cultural backgrounds. A large proportion of South African fathers today have experienced a similar history, being brought up as children in more rural areas and then moving to the cities as they get older (Ritcher & Morell, 2006). Unfortunately little research has been documented on Black urban South African fathers and their perceived roles of fatherhood. Research should devote time and resources to understand how the influences of different social and contextual contexts may influence the behaviour and roles of fathers and the perceptions of fatherhood within diverse cultures. This would contribute toward a better understanding of difference and increased awareness and could therefore improve clinicians' abilities to include fathers from a wide range of cultural backgrounds in appropriate family and child interventions.

Psychologists in South Africa will engage increasingly with socio-economically and culturally diverse families and individuals, thus the need for contextual consideration is evident. It is hoped that this exploration will add to a body of knowledge that will allow therapists to provide services beyond the stereotypical and over generalised notions of fatherhood from more researched populations.

## 1.2 Research Aims

The primary aim of this research was to explore the experiences of Black South African fathers. In particular this study set out to explore:

- The participants' views on the role of Black South African fathers, specifically within the family, in relation to his children.
- The fathers' experiences of fatherhood.
- The fathers' experiences of their own fathers and their experiences of being fathered.
- The participants' experiences and perceptions with regard to the influence of their own relationships with their fathers on their fathering.

For the purposes of this study 'Black' is a term used to denote a particular population of people with African ancestry. Although the term Black is sometimes used to refer to all people of colour, within this study it refers specifically to those from ethnic groups speaking Bantu languages.

This research paper explores the perceptions of the role of the father and the experiences of fatherhood among Black South African fathers residing in urban Johannesburg. It further investigates how the experience of being fathered influenced being a father.

# 2 CHAPTER 2: Literature Review

## 2.1 Fathering and Fatherhood

Parenthood may well be the most difficult, challenging and gratifying undertaking that life offers (Cath, Gurwitt & Ross, 1989) and an appreciation of the nature of fatherhood as an important aspect of male lifespan development is essential. Lamb (2000) highlighted that investigating the role of the father involves complex conceptual difficulties such as considering the biological, economic, social and psychological forms of fatherhood. This study also highlighted that fathers' involvement in children's lives varies in diverse ways across cultures. Ritcher and Morell (2006) highlighted a similar difficulty to that of Lamb (2000) in suggesting that within the role of the father there still exists some confusion as to how fatherhood is defined. Ritcher and Morell (2006) differentiated between the two in explaining that a father is the person responsible for the biological contribution for the formation of the child whereas fatherhood refers to the social role of the father in the child's life, within the family and within the broader community. This definition emphasised the influence that the personal as well as the broader social, cultural and historical context may have on the perceptions and experience of fatherhood. Thus when considering the role of the father in this study, the term will be inclusive of social, cultural and political determinants.

Interestingly Diamond (1998) highlighted that fathers are always psychically present even in fatherless children, indicating the importance of the paternal figure within a child's life. It is widely reported that fathers fulfil multiple and complex roles in the lives of their children and the role of the father has recognised the need for fathers to serve as containers, protectors, facilitators, models, challengers, initiators and mentors throughout the life cycle (Diamond, 1998). Many developmental theorists have also stated how it is important to consider how adult development interacts and

mutually influences the development of parental capacity and fatherhood (Miller & Maiter, 2008).

Combs-Arme and Renkert (2009) highlighted the fact that the father-infant relationship may provide different experiences to that of the mother-infant relationship and so result in different influences on personality development into adult life. Fathers engage in varying levels of involvement with their children and literature proposes that there are varied types of fatherhood relationships (Combs-Arme and Renkert, 2009). These can be broadly divided into two categories, namely primary and non-primary care-giving fathers. These are differentiated according to the amount of time a father spends with his child. This would obviously incorporate the idea of physical proximity between the father and the child in terms of geographical proximity and living conditions. It would also include for fathers who do live with their children, the father's emotional availability to the child and the father's care taking role within the family. This more involved and nurturing father role has been described by Finn and Henkwood (2009) as 'new fatherhood'. More positive outcomes have been observed with children receiving this active care giving from paternal figures. A study by Rohner and Veneziano (2001) demonstrates the strong positive effects that fatherly affection had on children's psychological well being and emotional development throughout the child's life.

Many studies have been undertaken looking at the detriments of growing up without a father. The effects of father absence have been known to have negative impacts on cognitive, moral and social development as well as peer relationships, self esteem and self concepts (Jones, 2008). Some of these highlighted effects have proved to be more detrimental, and the absent father has been more seriously related to drug and alcohol abuse, teenage pregnancy as well as delinquency (Jones, 2008).

Becoming a father entails significant life changes for the man himself (Goodman, 2004) and the demands are experienced as challenging at this stage of critical development in the individual's life. Studies have highlighted that a vast majority of new fathers express the intentions of being emotionally involved and emotionally connected to their infant (Goodman, 2004), whether this then is undertaken is another question in itself. Another common desire that was expressed by fathers in a study by Anderson (1996) highlighted that a majority of fathers expressed the will to parent differently from their own fathers when they perceived them as being distant or disengaged from their families. Involvement in childcare is important to the development of fathering itself and this involvement in caring for children has also been known to facilitate men's personal development (Lamb, 1987). However there exist few models, little support and many obstacles involved in fatherhood as the paternal role often lacks clear cultural rules and role models and men are often left to negotiate their own roles in fatherhood (Marsiglio, 2008).

## 2.2 Psychoanalytic Tradition

The theoretical orientation of this paper relies heavily on psychoanalytic thoughts around the role of the father and more specifically concentrates on Freud's (1927) early notions of the role of the father. It also utilises the theory of the parent infant relationship with reference to Winnicott (1960) and utilises attachment theory in considering the role of the father. Another imperative aspect that this study considers, in conjunction with psychoanalytic theory, is fathers' experiences with their own fathers and how this may have affected their own present experience of fatherhood. Although psychoanalytic tradition formed the platform for this study, socio cultural considerations were taken into account, as this study is also concerned with the ways in which men as fathers emerge from interpenetrating socio historical frameworks, cultural expectations and personal histories that involve relational and intergenerational tensions and connections.

## 2.3 Fathering within psychoanalysis

Within the study of psychoanalysis and fatherhood, early ideas revolved around the role of the father in the Freud's Pre-oedipal and Oedipal phases (Jones, 2005). This conceptualisation portrayed the father as authoritative and castrating figure adhering to idea of the patriarchal father (Freeman, 2008). Essential to this school of thought was the emphasis for male children on identifications with the same sex parent in facilitating healthy gender identity. Through the development of object relation theories new ideas about the father began to emerge. Klein in contrast to Freud proposed that that the oedipal situation occurred much earlier in infant development, thus suggesting the importance of the father earlier in the infants development. She also proposed that the father offered another or outsider to the mother-infant dyad, thus the father being necessary for the facilitation of the development of a reflective thinking space for the infant. Although viewing the mother as the primary object, and the father as the secondary object, these theories began to highlight the role of the father in that the father was too seen as occupying an essential role in the child's internal and external world (Jones, 2005).

Yet, although the importance of a paternal figure is recognised is these early writings there has still been a lack of emphasis and research on paternal contributions in this imperative role. Theorists in general continue to suggest that "there is no comprehensive and cohesive body of theory about fatherhood in the psychoanalytic literature" (Etchegoyen, 2001, p 33). This study aimed to look at urban South African fathers and explore their internal and external experiences as fathers.

As previously mentioned traditional psychoanalytic literature describes the father as occupying a critical role in child development (Jones, 2008; Freeman, 2008). Great

emphasis is placed on the process of becoming a father to the individual and the psychodynamics of fatherhood especially between impregnation, birth and early development in the child's life (Freeman, 2008). The father during this time is said to be concerned with: expectations for the child's growth and development, the environment in which the child is developing, the preoccupation of the mother with the child, the arousal of his own nurturing attitudes and the impact of his memories concerning the relationship with his own father (Diamond, 1986). As development of the child proceeds the father is thought to provide the internal experience to the child involving reality, non mother space, separation, identification and socialisation (Jones, 2005).

The father's authority as well as his connection to the mother enable the child to regulate conflicts and make sure these are safely negotiated, once these have been negotiated then only can identification occur (Seligman, 1982). The paternal role and paternal experiences are complex and continue to develop throughout the lifespan. The paternal figure is thought to be crucial in the facilitation of cognitive development, superego formation and for sons, gender identity (Jones, 2005). A father has also been essential in reinforcing a sense of mastery and industry later in his child's life. The father has a tremendous opportunity to positively impact their children's growth and development. Importantly, psychoanalytic theory has also consistently portrayed the father as a figure of great importance in the acquisition of masculinity for boys (Jones, 2005).

## 2.4 Roles of the father in psychoanalytic theory

As previously mentioned, psychoanalytic ideas about the father's role in child development have their origins in the early writings of Sigmund Freud (Jones, 2005). The characterisation of the paternal role is encapsulated in Freud's foundational

concept of the Oedipus complex in its contribution to individual identity of the child. Freud considered the father as playing an imperative role in the pre-oedipal and oedipal stages of development (Freud, 1927). Freud suggests that the formation of a loving attachment to the father was critical for healthy development and successful resolution of the Oedipal stage. In this view it also suggests that the father plays a number of diverse roles such as the protector, nurturer and idealised figure (Freud, 1927). Yet this theory also acknowledges the child's confrontation with paternal authority and emphasises the father's role as an authoritative and somewhat distant figure, this role is seen as essential in order to guide the child through this stage, to aid in separation from the mother and to facilitate internal ego development (Freeman, 2008). Thus the father is seen as central to this imperative developmental stage.

Klein denotes the role of the father as being separate and outside the mother-infant dyad and creating a type of triangulation or triadic function, and this emphasis is not focused as much on the oedipal struggle but rather on the anxiety provoking triadic relating and its relevance for the promotion of healthy development of a reflective thinking space and the maturation of the infant's psyche (Stern ,1994). Here the father would be serving the role of facilitating healthy separation between the infant and the mother. Seligman (1982) highlights the importance of the father supporting the child in the process of separation from the mother. This then is said to promote differentiation and integration of the infantile ego.

Winnicott's model of early development has generally been centred on the role of the mother, on maternal preoccupation and the good enough mother within the context of the mother child relationship (Jones, 2005). However Winnicott (1964) does demonstrate that the paternal function is also related to the fact that the father serves as a link to the world outside the mother-infant dyad, he also proposes that the father is generally the person who enables the crucial maternal preoccupation to

take place in that the father supports this mother-child dyad in dealing responsibly with the environment created for the mother in creating this link to the outside world. The role of the father is to provide and foster a nurturing holding environment for the mother-child dyad in order for this relationship to develop optimally (Winnicott, 1960). Thus what Winnicott describes as the facilitating environment includes the paternal functions needed to support the mother- infant dyad. Winnicott explains that the father has a significant role in providing this holding for the new mother. Terell (2005) highlights that Winnicott is one of the earliest theorists to look beyond the mother to the father's role when discussing the healthy, emotional development for children.

Thus it can be said that in creating this safe, holding environment for the child, the father enables the successful role of the mother in the attachment process in providing the financial, physical, emotional and psychological support that the mother requires within her environment. Winnicott (1960) suggests that mothers who have supportive relationships and people in their lives who care for them are better enabled to provide a secure environment for their child and thus develop a better attachment relationship. Therefore the environment in terms of the support system that is in place for the mother and the family may positively or negatively affect the relationship between mother and child and thus impact on the child's overall development. Winnicott explains that this supportive function falls primarily on the father.

Winnicott (1960) proposes that the infant and the maternal care together form a unit and that the child cannot exist without the mother in the early stages of infancy. As mentioned above, the infant gradually develops and becomes free of the mother's ego support and achieves mental detachment from the mother and differentiation into a separate personal self (Winnicott, 1960). Taking this concept slightly further, it is described as separation-individuation (Mahler, Pine & Bergman, 1975). This

imperative function of the father that is acknowledged in literature is that of aiding separation so as to inhibit the child from being permanently merged with their mother. This process of separation is described by Margaret Mahler, who focused on observing young children and how they progress through the phases of separation-individuation. She explained that the father plays an essential role during this phase (Mahler et al., 1975).

Mahler et al., (1975) suggests that the father becomes aligned with reality, this includes the formation of a paternally based representation which functions to help the child test his emerging sense of self as being separate from the mother. Mahler, et al. (1975) also proposed that the internal presence of the father facilitates the child in developing a sense of otherness and individuality, which then guards against fears of engulfment. Mahler evidently envisioned the father as occupying a unique position to aid the child in the move toward greater psychological separateness and the formation of an individualised sense of self.

Albein (1975) also recognises that it is a widely accepted role of the father is that of the facilitator of this separation-individuation in the child. Jones (2005) highlights this in explaining that during this process the father represents a stable external reality, and is seen as an attachment figure who has the unique role in both activating and supporting the child in the separation individuation phase. The child's sense of self is said to occur only when it is experienced outside the dyadic relationship of the mother (Albein, 1975). The father is said to aid this process through his object relational position as well as through his special style of play with the child (Albein, 1975).

The role of the father discussed thus far has been one of the protector of the mother-infant dyad as well as that of facilitating; oedipal resolution and individuation-separation. The father's involvement or protective watchfulness is said to emerge during the mother's pregnancy and in the early stages of his infant's life (Diamond,

1995). Included in this representation of the father that is explained by Diamond, the role would include watchfulness, holding, containing, defending and providing for the child. Diamond (1995) highlights that in order for the father to fulfil the function of paternal protective watchfulness, the father should have the capacity for self sacrifice, reflexivity, generosity and servitude.

Diamond (1995) explains that individuals have a fundamental desire to be watched over, protected and provided for from birth and throughout development into adulthood. He also proposes that a father who is able to provide the holding environment for the mother and the baby will also be a father who is able to protect and encourage his young child's healthy development later in the child's life.

## 2.5 The internalised father

Another aspect of fatherhood that this paper considers is that of fathers' experiences with their own fathers and how this influences their experiences as fathers to their own children. The internalised father is explained by Diamond (1995) as an internalised image carried with an individual in the unconscious mind, which is an imaginary representation of significant caregivers such at the mother or in this case the father. This internalised father is integral to a sense of self and is experienced as both separate and concrete. In a paper by Guzzo and College (2003) it is highlighted that fatherhood is highly determinant on fathers' experiences with their own fathers growing up and how these experiences were internalised as a representation in their minds. It is suggested that men's own fathers play an important role in men's formation of their father identity and it is imperative to understand the motivational bases of paternal involvement that are rooted in childhood (Townsend, 2002). It is suggested that when men grow up with their biological father present in their childhood development that they will have a primary model of paternal behaviour. For others who have not had the opportunity

of growing up with their father or who may have experienced their fathers as a negative role model may be negatively affected in their own experience of fatherhood (Guzzo & College, 2003). Therefore this would be an important area of consideration within this study.

When considering the influence of the fathers own father the notion of the internalised father should be mentioned, Diamond, (1998) highlighted that an internalised father or father representation has shown to develop in children who have had minimal or even no contact with their father. Thus this internalised father should be kept in mind when reflecting on the links between being fathered and fathering.

## 2.6 Identification with own father

Historically many South African fathers and the role that they were afforded would have been significantly affected by the particular history of South Africa when they were growing up. Men of colour were forced to live in distant locations and were often separated geographically from their family and children due to forced migrant labour during these Apartheid years (Ritcher & Morrell, 2006). This may be seen as important in this study as psychoanalysis emphasises an individual's childhood relationship experiences and the importance of these in adult development (Freeman, 2008). It also illustrates that the importance of a man's relationship to the care taking qualities of his own father cannot be underestimated.

> Fatherhood may evoke a paternal love on a man's part which resonates with a productive identification with his own father, who now replaces his mother as the nurturing and creative figure to whom he can liken himself. Thus an assumption of the father's role in reproduction and in relation to caretaking

> helps an adult man come to terms with his repressed maternal desires (Ross, 1982, p.11).

Literature highlights that fatherhood may also be a time that creates challenges and turmoil in that it may open injuries and conflicts from the father's own childhood. It also explains that fatherhood can be restorative in that fathers are now able to reconnect with their own fathers and work through unresolved issues (Diamond, 1998). Through the resolution and reparation that is offered by becoming a father, an important area to consider is that of identification.

Identification is a prevalent process that occurs in parenthood and it is based on an initial emotional tie with the object. Freud treats identification as a process - the sequential interplay of forces internal and external which impel the child to take on the characteristics of the parent (Freud, 1923). The process of identification is represented explicitly as a mechanism for resolution of the Oedipus complex, the child begins with preliminary identification with both parents but, in the case of the boy, the identification develops into a sexual object cathexis towards the mother, followed by the realization that the father is obstructing this, the wish to replace the father and an ambivalent identification. The identification with the loved versus hated object are inextricably fused (Bronfenbrenner, 1960). Identification serves to recapture a lost love and loving object and to defend against paternal threat or aggression that is experienced as threatening. Identification endeavours to mould a person's own ego after the fashion of one that has been internalised as a model, in the case of being a father, the young boy would mould his ego to that of his internalised father. In becoming a father oneself this identification would become more powerful as the father now identifies with this paternal role in his own father.

Mowrer (1950) distinguishes two mechanisms for identification, these being: developmental and defensive, the first powered by biologically driven drives and the

second by socially inflicted discomforts. The first involves defense against an aggressor by emulating his characteristics, the second a response to an absent or depriving loved person by seeking to replace him in one's own behaviour. Identification also links with the successful resolution of the oedipal situation when the boy identifies with his father and in turn wishes to become like his father, post-oedipal wishes to become a father enable the boy to achieve his goal of competition with his father-he can become a father. Benedek (1970) describes that the man who does father a child then becomes a link in the chain of generations between fathers and their children. In relation to this Diamond (1994) suggests that while all men seem to struggle with succeeding their fathers, some men are particularly more fearful and thus inhibit or prevent their own fatherhood in order to prevent exposure to their own repressed aggression towards their fathers. Bronfenbrenner (1960) thought this to be the positive identity of the whole man, in internalising nurturing qualities as a male child and then being able to express these through fatherhood. This paper explores how the participants' view of their own father has influenced their perceptions of fatherhood.

## 2.7 Attachment Theory

Another way of conceptualizing the role of the father would be through attachment theory. Attachment theory has also been mainly associated with the mother-infant attachment bond (Schore & Schore, 2008). Literature however highlights that paternal and maternal functions may be modified and adjusted according to the needs of the child, the individual family and that the attachment figure may in fact be the mother or the father (Jones, 2008).

Attachment can be defined as the bonding process between infant and primary caregiver that satisfies the innate need of the infant for physical contact, closeness and safety (Bowlby, 1969). Bowlby held that the human species is equipped with a number of innate behavioural systems that contribute to the survival of the individual

and ultimately to the survival of the species (Ainsworth, Blehar, Waters & Wall, 1978). It is proposed that when these needs are fulfilled, by the attachment figure caring consistently for the child, an enduring bond is created which provides the infant with a sense of safety and security within this relationship and within the broader environment (Brown et al, 2008). This security then enables the infant to explore his/her world and to feel confident in doing so.

As previously mentioned, attachment theory has also considered the role of the father as a possible attachment figure for the young child. Lamb (1997) highlights that when a father takes an active nurturing role in caretaking the infant also becomes attached to the father in the earliest stages of infancy. "Paternal warmth, nurturance and closeness are associated with positive child outcomes whether the parent involved is the mother or the father" (Lamb, 1997, p.13). It was mentioned by Diamond (1995) that the mother plays an important role in facilitating the quality of attachment between the father and the child. Thus, if the mother and father have a close nurturing relationship and seem to be bonded over the child, the mother will facilitate a healthy attachment between the father and child.

Thus, it is evident that the role of the father in Western psychological theory is thought to be essential. This paternal attachment is thought to facilitate the child in developing a sense of an internal other in relation to the actual or fantasized paternal figure (Jones, 2005), and this internalised sense of a father is considered vital for the development of morality, independence and mastery. This study explores paternal attachment with regards to experiences of fatherhood in South African fathers through this theoretical framework.

## 2.8 Socio-cultural considerations

Interestingly, and related to socio cultural considerations, is the fact that there is evidence to support that the characteristics of fathering differ more from different societies and cultural groups than do the characteristics of mothering (Diamond, 1994). This is one of many imperative considerations to think about when taking into account fatherhood and experiences of being a father in the South African context.

Psychoanalytic formulations regarding the role of the father and parental roles in general were developed in a time where the role of the mother and the father were more traditional in nature and where the two parent nuclear family was more of the norm (Jones, 2008). Maternal and paternal roles have also been highly influenced by the socio historical environment of the time (Mikelson, 2008). It is important to consider the sociological and historical determinants of fatherhood within a country especially one with an intricate and complex past such as South Africa. The importance of examining fatherhood within a broader systemic and ecological context would thus be imperative in a country such as South Africa.

Over the past few decades the structure of the family has become somewhat different. The father has long been represented as the patriarch of the family in South African society (Ritcher & Morrell, 2006). However in recent times with changes in the socio-cultural environment in general and within South Africa in particular the perceptions of the role of the father have been subject to change. Amato (1994) proposes that two major social changes in many parts of the developing world have caused attention to be placed on the role of the father and fatherhood in different societies. These facts being; that more women are entering the formal labour force and the existing decline in the traditional nuclear family increasing the amount of children in single parent families. Amato (1994) explains that the division of labour within the family has changed with fathers taking a more active role in providing child care. In single parent families and where traditional

roles are challenged by the presence of extended live-in family caregivers the social interaction is little understood with limited research history.

These representations of the father would come into question when considering some contemporary shifts that have occurred, and should be considered practically, for example, if the mother contributed more financially in the household or the child did not live with the father under his direct protective gaze. The father may also in some instances take on the role of the main caregiver and nurturer.

In a study by Cowan & Cowan (1990) which was a cross cultural study looking at the role of the father in different cultures it was found that the main role of the father was conceptualised as the impregnator, the provider and the protector within the family. This view was perpetuated across a vast majority of cultures.

Although African culture is not by any means a homogenous one, Ritcher and Morrell (2006) propose that there are however, sufficient commonalities that enable us to draw a collective picture of what fatherhood means within this broad value system over a given time. In the text 'Ubaba: Men and Fatherhood in South Africa' (Ritcher & Morrell, 2006), a chapter devoted to the topic of fatherhood from an African cultural perspective provides an overview of the role of the father in African culture. It highlights that patriarchy was a large part of the broader cultural system, where values were embedded in this patriarchal system. It explains that men possessed authority, but that they also had obligations in conjunction with this powerful position and the system imposed duties on these men for the benefit of their children. This patriarchy today is explained as problematic in that a new patriarchy has emerged but it is one without obligations or reciprocity, in that it gives men power but imposes few duties. This discussed 'new patriarchy' would affect the perception of the role of the father encountering fatherhood today.

It is therefore obvious that attention and consideration of the social construction of fatherhood in society are imperative and that the role that the environment would play an important role in determining perceptions towards fatherhood. Literature highlights this fact, stating that cultural and social factors have been known to play an imperative function in the perceptions of the role of fatherhood (Parke, 2004). In spite of this recognition, relatively little is known about the different aspects of fatherhood within different cultures. Parke (2004) suggests that one of the reasons for this, as in many other areas of research, is that the majority of research is conducted within Western cultures and in this case with white middle class samples of fathers and the findings are then generalised to a variety of different cultures. It is essential that psychologists begin to establish a much needed data base of these diverse socio cultural beliefs and practices as lack of information regarding issues surrounding different cultural issues such as fatherhood, may serve as a barrier in adequate service provision to much of the South African population.

This study provides a view of the role of fatherhood from within a psychoanalytic conceptual framework while simultaneously taking into account the varied and complex functions attributed to the father as a result of historical and cultural backgrounds, encompassing different traditions and beliefs regarding the role of fatherhood. In other words it considers the socio-historical and political influences and considers how these have affected the inner intra-psychic development of experiences of fatherhood from the fathers themselves.

# 3 CHAPTER 3: Methodology

## 3.1 Research Paradigm

This study utilized a qualitative descriptive research design; this approach was utilized as it is considered more holistic in nature and aims to elicit participants' accounts of meaning, experience and perceptions (Burck, 2005), which suited the aims of this exploratory study on black South African father's experiences of fathering. This paradigm was beneficial in the description and exploration of the phenomenon being examined in this study. This study aimed to understand the participants' worlds and to describe these worlds according to narrative accounts, in particular, focusing on the participants' experiences and perceptions of fatherhood. Qualitative research design also allows for questioning to be more open ended and less directive in nature (Collins, 2000), which was beneficial in this particular study as it enabled the researcher to gain a deeper insight into the phenomenon being investigated. The researcher also utilised a psychoanalytic lens in order to explore and gain an understanding of intrapsychic processes and unconscious meaning from the interview processes and the interview material.

As qualitative methods were utilised and the research instrument consisted of open ended questions, it is important to note that although this type of research design allows for individual interpretation and the ability to discover diversity among individuals, but that it does not allow the researcher to generalise results (Larkin, Watts & Clifton, 2006). This type of qualitative research is designed to gather more detailed information from a more restricted sample (Schiavetti & Metz, 2002), as was the case in this study. Qualitative research also provides the ability to conduct an in depth investigation and a more detailed description of the data being explored (Larkin et al., 2006).

## 3.2 Sample and Sampling Procedure

Due to the nature of this study, non probability purposive sampling was utilized, as the researcher had identified particular criteria for participants that would be necessary to be included in the sample. Purposive sampling is employed when the availability and willingness of participants is an important factor to consider (Crossley, 2007). This method was therefore used in order to gain access to these particular participants. Although this method of sampling presents the possibility of bias in terms of participants' chances of being included in the study, this study strived to obtain information from South African fathers that did not depend on variables but rather on individualistic personal experiences, and it was therefore felt that the sampling method would not bias the results. Instead, the sampling method is taken into account during the interpretation of results. It has been noted by Parke (2004) that fathers may be more difficult to recruit than mothers and access to particular cultural groups can also prove troublesome. This identified challenge was overcome by employing snowball sampling. This sampling method entailed identifying an individual who fitted the selection criteria for the particular study and then inviting them to participate in the study, this individual was then asked to identify other possible participants who also fitted the specified criteria.

This form of sampling enabled the researcher to gain access to a specific population of people and also to consider the social structure of the participants and the relations among these individuals (Burck, 2005). Snowball sampling can result in a homogenous sample of participants as the original participant provides the link to the other participants, however, in this study this did not become a problem and the sample ended up being more diverse than expected, as the researcher approached a few different participants individually and thus they were not all connected as had originally been planned.

The researcher approached fathers from a number of places; a residential block of flats, a restaurant, as well as non academic staff at the University of the Witwatersrand. It was thought that non-academic staff should be utilised as they may provide a more accurate account of the general population of South African fathers. Some of the potential participants approached were able to identify other possible participants. This was done in that the original participant approached provided a telephone number of another and then this person was invited to partake in the study and a meeting was set up for the interview.

The participants residing in the residential block of flats were interviewed in the care taker's office with his permission. The participants from the restaurant were interviewed in the manager's office and the Wits staff were interviewed in the researcher's office at the Emthonjeni Centre. All the venues described offered a private and safe space in which the interviews could be adequately conducted.

**Inclusion criteria for this particular study included:**

- Urban, Black, South African, biological fathers, with a child younger than twelve years.

These inclusion criteria served to restrict the sample to urban Black South African fathers as it was felt that this population have been unrepresented in literature and that it is essential to create a knowledge base of the perceptions and experiences of this prevalent group in South African society. The reason for the criteria of the age limit for their children was that prenatal and early experiences of fatherhood were important areas of investigation and the researcher wanted to make sure these experiences were not too far in the participants' remembered pasts. The decision to interview biological fathers was made as it was felt that fathers of step or adopted children may have slightly different experiences, which would broaden the scope of the study too much.

## 3.3 Description of participants

It should be noted that the participants described below were given pseudonyms in order to ensure confidentiality.

- Jacob is 37 years old and works at a bank. He has 2 children, a boy and a girl aged 9 and 7. He is married and lives with his family. He grew up in Johannesburg and his extended family live close to him.
- Simpho is 27 years old and currently works as a security guard. He has one child, a girl aged 5 years. Simpho is originally from KwaZulu Natal. He is no longer dating the mother of his child and has a new girlfriend. His child lives with his mother in Natal.
- Henry is 25 years old, currently working as a waiter. He has one child, a boy who is 4 years old. Henry is originally from the Eastern Cape. He is still dating the mother of his child but does not live with her. His son lives with the paternal grandmother in Johannesburg and Henry gets to visit him on weekends. He would very much like to get married to his girlfriend but currently states that he is not in the financial position to support a family.
- Philip is 33 years old and is also currently working as a waiter while he is trying to finish his matric. He has one child, a son who is 6 years old. Philip is married and has been for 4 years. He lives in Johannesburg with his wife and child. He is originally from the Transkei where the rest of his family still live.
- Manny is 32 years old and works as a manager. He has two children, two girls, 6 and 3 years old. He is married and has been for 6 years, however he reported that his marriage is taking strain and that he was not sure if it would last much longer. He is originally from a small village in the Transkei. His father was actively involved in the apartheid struggle and he attended boarding school.

- Neo is 30 years old and is working in his own business. He has one child, a baby boy of 6 months old. He is married and living with his family. He is originally from the Eastern Cape.

## 3.4 Procedure

An individual who was identified as a possible participant (A Black South African father) was approached in person or telephonically through snowball sampling as the researcher was given contact details. The individual was then invited to participate in the study. The study included six participants in order to gain in depth information about their personal experiences of fatherhood.

The participants, as previously mentioned, were approached at a residential block of flats in Northern Johannesburg, at the University of the Witwatersrand and at a restaurant. These were all places where the participants' lived or worked, and a place to conduct interviews was established and set up prior to conducting the interviews. These spaces were comfortable, quiet and confidential areas in which to conduct the interviews.

The participants were informed of what the study would entail both formally (information sheet) and informally before they were invited to participate.

## 3.5 Data Collection

The researcher utilised a self developed, semi-structured interview schedule. This interview schedule included open ended questions. The open ended questions allowed for individual interpretation of a more wide-ranging query as they are generally designed to discover diversity among individuals (Larkin, Watts & Clifton, 2006). Interviews were seen as a more appropriate form of data collection in this situation as they allowed the researcher to gather more detailed information from a more restricted sample (Schiavetti & Metz, 2002), as was the case in this study. This form of enquiry also encouraged self exploration and viewed the participants as active agents in shaping the interview, as they were seen as the experiential experts who should be allowed maximum opportunity to tell their story (Crossley, 2007). The questions that were asked in the semi-structured interviews were decided upon in consultation with the researcher's supervisor and were based on the research aims and questions. The questions broadly covered the following areas:

- General experience of being a father
- Perceptions of the role of the father in their child's development
- Traditional views of fatherhood
- Relationship with the mother of the child
- The relationship with the participant's own father and childhood experiences.

## 3.6 Data Analysis

The data was transcribed by the researcher in order for her to familiarise herself with the data and start the preliminary process of data analysis. A narrative analysis was conducted in this study as the topic was related to the exploration of an aspect of the self and of identity (Crossley, 2007), specifically in terms of the role of the father and how this role was embedded in the individual's personal story and social background. Narrative analysis acknowledges that language, i.e. the stories we tell

about our life, shapes our embodied experience of that life and holds that the world is 'fundamentally narratival' (Fay, 1996, p 194). In this understanding, embodied experience necessarily shapes the stories we tell as much as the stories we tell shape our experience. The analysis also concentrated on the way in which the fathers told their stories, the important elements that related to their personal experiences and what these meant to them. Attention was also paid to non-verbal communication, gestures and body language as all these elements made up the individuals deeper stories. Emotional responses and avoidance of certain aspects were also noted. These important elements were recorded in the process notes that were taken at the end of each interview.

As previously mentioned, this form of analysis relied heavily upon the researchers' capacity for reflexivity which is the point of connection between the individual and the social realm (Crossley, 2007). A deep understanding was sought in terms of a meaning centred approach through exploring the unconscious. Psychoanalysis is specifically utilised for exploring unconscious processes. Cartwright (2002) proposed that there is a need for the expansion of psychoanalytic research outside of the clinical setting and therefore there is also a need for a method of enquiry into such unconscious processes. It was thus highlighted that a psychoanalytic research interview would enable the researcher to focus on specific needs of the psychoanalytic enquiry as a type of methodology for exploring intrapsychic processes and unconscious meaning associated with behaviours, psychological processes and life situations (Cartwright, 2002).

This study aimed to gain such psychoanalytic insight into the experiences of fatherhood and therefore, in conjunction with the narrative analysis steps outlined above, this study utilised aspects of the psychoanalytic research interview and analysis. Cartwright (2002) states that three essential steps need to be included in the analysis and interpretation of a psychoanalytic research interview, these are:

1. Careful attention to feeling states and corresponding thoughts and perceptions. This took place before, during and after the interview. It was important for the researcher to be aware of motivations and perceptions related to the research topic as well as to give attention to transference-countertransference interactions during the interview process, as emotional impressions are important for contextualizing the meaning of the text.
2. The search for core narratives. This involved searching for the story lines within the interviews; it is proposed that the interview text should be engaged with in its entirety. This was done in contextualizing the meaning of the interview through constant comparison of parts of the narrative with other general themes.
3. The search for identifications and object relations. This step was considered important as it aided in the understanding of core narratives which serve as internal representations of the individual's world. This included gaining a meaning of how the participant constructed himself in his narrative in relation to objects.

This form of investigation was utilised in order to provide a methodology for a more systematic and purposeful analysis of psychodynamic concepts and processes across the small sample group (Cartwright, 2002). Cartwright (2002) also explains that in order to engage in a psychoanalytic interview the researcher is required to pay close attention to feeling states that occur within him/herself within the interview process. The researcher engaged with reflective process by keeping a journal in which reflections on each interview were written in the form of process notes. It was also kept in mind that the researcher was engaging with participants of a different race and gender and these facts were also kept in mind during the interview process. The researcher also utilized supervision in order to reflect on the interview processes and in order to discuss possible bias or preconceived ideas she may have held

about herself or the fathers who were interviewed that may influence the analysis of the data.

In addition to the narrative analysis, themes were also generated from the interviews in order to present the results and the discussion in a more meaningful way. This study thus utilised the six phases proposed by Braun & Clarke (2007) in order to derive themes from the data. These stages included: familiarising oneself with the data, generating initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes and producing these themes within the report. The following themes were identified:

- Prenatal experience of fathers
- Identification
- Reparation
- Experience of fatherhood
- Perceived role of the father
- Transitioning into fatherhood and,
- The internal father

## 3.7 Reflections of the analytic Process

As the narrative analysis included the interpretation of individual stories and relied heavily on the ability to understand and appreciate the personal and cultural meanings conveyed through these personal narratives, a reflective and introspective stance in the researcher throughout the data collection and analysis was recommended. It was also recommended that the researcher document the interview process and each individual encounter with participants (Crossley, 2007). This was done in the form of process notes which were recorded after each interview in order to capture some of the transference/countertransference that was observed and experienced within the interview processes. This was helpful in the analysis of the interview data as it provided extra information in providing a deeper understanding

of the participants and some of the underlying unconscious processes that seemed to be present. The information from this reflective process was incorporated when analysing the data. The importance of reflexivity cannot be underestimated in qualitative research (Cartwright, 2002). He also explains that in order to engage in a psychoanalytic interview the researcher is required to pay close attention to feeling states that occur within him/herself within the interview process, this is imperative as the researcher before entering the research process inevitably comes with some preconceptions regarding the topic of fatherhood as well as preconceived expectations regarding the participants and their thoughts on fatherhood. As the analysis instrument was largely contained within the interview itself, in part being the researcher's ability to recognise feeling states and remain perceptive to and aware of transference-countertransference occurrences.

The following reflections of the researcher's experience of the data collection and analysis will be written in the first-person: In conducting this study I was made aware of the usefulness of the reflective process, as only in thinking through the notes made during the interviews, was I able to recognise the important processes that had occurred in the interviews. It was through this process that I was able to recognise some of the unconscious processes that were occurring both in myself and the participants. At first I found it difficult to relate to some of the participants as most of my experience within research and counselling thus far has been with women and relating to men of a different race and culture was challenging. However, I found that through the process of conducting the interviews I became more open and comfortable in engaging with the participants and thus I was better able to reflect and track the narratives of the participants. At times during and after the interviews I found myself reflecting on my own experience with my father and my parents and relating some of these experiences to my own life. I had to be aware of this and through further reflection it became clear which counter transference feelings that were present were mine, and which were feelings evoked through the participants'

transference processes. I realised that I did come into the interview process with some preconceived ideas and these had to be constantly negotiated in order to accurately reflect the participants' feelings and experiences. Some of these preconceived ideas included the fact that I thought that most of the participants would be more uninvolved fathers and that they may have not been able to demonstrate deep understanding and reflexivity within the interview. I was pleasantly surprised to find that this was not the case, and that certain of the fathers were highly thoughtful and reflective. Upon reflection, I realised that my preconceived ideas had to do with a number of factors, including the fact that in my counselling experiences, fathers have most often been absent.

## 3.8 Ethical Considerations

Ethical clearance was sought from the University of the Witwatersrand Human research ethics committee before the study was carried out, and an ethical clearance certificate was be obtained prior to data collection (Protocol number: MED/11/005IH) Participants were invited to take part in the study, and they were then informed of the exact nature of the study in the information sheet provided (Appendix A). Participants were also informed that participation was entirely voluntary and that they may withdraw from the study at any time without any negative consequences. Participants were also informed that there were no benefits or risks associated with participating in the study.

If a participant decided to take part in the study they were required to sign the consent form (Appendix B) demonstrating that they had understood what was involved in the study, they were also required to sign a consent form for tape recording (Appendix C) thus giving permission for the interviews to be recorded. Any enquiries that the prospective participants had regarding the research were directly addressed by the researcher.

Confidentiality was communicated to participants prior to the commencement, it was also conveyed to the participants that the only person that would have access to the tape recordings would be the researcher and the research supervisor. It was communicated that the tape recordings would be kept in a locked cupboard for two years if a publication were to occur or for six years if no publication were to arise, after this time the raw data would be destroyed. The data that was transcribed was not linked to the participants as participants were given pseudonyms, thus anonymity was ensured in the written report. Direct quotes were used in the research report, however these were anonymous and pseudonyms were used to protect the identities of the participants.

It was acknowledged that the participants might possibly experience overwhelming or distressing feelings in answering some of the personal questions or in relaying their narratives as fathers and of their past childhood experiences with their own fathers. The researcher as a practicing clinician was aware of this and practiced sensitivity and containment within the interview setting, this seemed to be needed in many of the interviews. It was also communicated to the participants that they may contact a place of formal counselling such as the Emthonjeni Centre or Family Life Centre if they felt they would like to discuss any concerns they had with a mental health professional. The Emthonjeni Centre, in particular, offers a free counselling service. The contact details of these facilities were made available to all of the participants and were given out with the information sheets at the end of the interview. It was noted that two of the participants experienced some emotional distress in the interview and the researcher verbally highlighted that there were places available to discuss these or any other issues further if they so wished.

## 3.9 Research Questions

What are the experiences of Black South African fathers?

- What are the participants' views on the role Black South African fathers?
- What are the participant's experiences of being a father?
- What are the participant's experiences of their own fathers and their experiences of being fathered?
- How do the participants' experience the influence of their own relationships with their fathers on their fathering?

# 4 CHAPTER 4: Results

## 4.1 Introduction

This chapter explores the perceived roles and the experiences of fathers, or as many writers reflect, 'the forgotten parent'. It will explore the participants' experiences of being fathers as well those of being fathered. This analysis focused on the narratives that emerged from the participants. The central aim of this interview process was to understand and interpret what was being said by the fathers utilising a meaning centred approach. The addition of a psychoanalytic lens through which to view the data aimed to explore and gain understanding of intrapsychic processes and unconscious meanings. An in depth analysis of the interview data and process notes generated the following focal themes:

- Pre-natal experiences,
- Identification,
- Reparation,
- The experience of being a father,
- The perceived role of the father
- Transitioning into fatherhood and ,
- The internal father.

Although all six of the participants gave an account of their experiences related to most of these areas, those who provided more in-depth and pertinent information relating to each section were discussed in more detail within that section due to length restraints of the paper.

## 4.2 Prenatal Experience of Fathers

For most men becoming a father starts long before the baby is born. The prenatal stage is said to be the first in the developmental process in becoming a parent. The prenatal stage seemed to trigger a plethora of emotions within most of the

participants. A sense of excitement, reflection, anticipation as well as marked anxiety and emotional distress were reflected in some of the participants' narratives.

### 4.2.1 Waiting excitedly for our child to arrive: Feeling bonded in anticipation

During this time two of the participants recalled being close to the mother of their child and waiting together, bonded, for the arrival of their infant. Jacob, when asked about his wife's pregnancy responded:

> *I must say you know you know when I found out my wife was expecting um you know I was there right from the beginning, and excited with her. I would always talk and sing to the baby. You know I'd tell the baby to you know…to stop kicking or not to be so hard on mommy today. And you see I remember the baby will actually react to that and respond positively to that talking, so even in the beginning I was waiting with my wife for our child. Yeah and sometimes you know I would say kick for mommy and daddy and as silly as it sounds but we did"*

It seemed important for Jacob to be engaged with his child from the very start and later in the interview it became apparent that he very much wanted to do the right thing as a dad. His comments reflected a strong sense of needing to be a "good enough father", and it was became obvious through the interview process that he had read many books on parenting and the voices of these as to 'how to be a good parent' came through strongly in his narrative. This may have been because he was feeling anxious about the expected arrival and sought outside guidance, however, it could also be due to the fact that later in the interview he revealed that he was not close to his own father and had the need to do a better job with his child. Philip responded in a similar fashion describing the excitement he felt and how his child would be a gift from God. Philip stated:

*When I found out I was excited, more than excited, as I said it is a great gift to get a baby, it is something that is very, very interesting it really is, because there are lots of people out there that want to have a child but they can't. So if you have a baby it is very, very interesting. Somethingnice. Just a gift from God for the two people that love each other" I wanted so much for this baby you know, I kept thinking how he will be, all the good things even a friend one day.*

Philip also described his fantasies for his child's future and how he and this unborn child would even be friends one day. His narrative indicated that he felt a strong bond towards his unborn child. Although Philip told of his excitement and although he didn't consciously acknowledge it, it was apparent that he was also overwhelmed and anxious. He used the word 'interesting' a great deal, describing both his child and this process as interesting and this word seemed to capture a sense of uncertainty and intellectual distancing that was expressed in his tone of speech as well. His account of this time also captured that he expected a lot from himself in that his child was a "gift from God" and he had to fulfil his own expectations of being a dad.

Of note was that Philip spoke about a male child, "I kept thinking how **he** will be", without consciously acknowledging that he was doing this. Later he told of how he didn't know what the sex of child was, but was hoping for a boy. This gender preference theme will be discussed in more detail later in this chapter as it seemed to be a prevalent theme in the narratives of many of the participants.

Jacob and Philip felt bonded to their unborn children in the anticipation that came with this prenatal stage, in waiting for the baby. It seemed as if Philip and Jacob were extremely in-tune fathers as will be highlighted in later post natal accounts of their fatherhood experience. Jacob and Philip also seemed to be aware of their

feelings and fantasies pertaining to the pregnancy and the unborn child, as well as more cognisant of their own feelings around the impending the arrival of their child. These two participants also seemed to be more emotionally involved with their children in later development.

This prenatal phase is often viewed as an expanding mutual intimacy, with partners sharing in this phase. The above two participants both mentioned the mother of their child as being central to this exciting time. Jacob stated: "A gift for the two people that love each other" and Philip said: "I was waiting with my wife for our child". The other participants did not demonstrate any feelings of excitement during this prenatal stage but rather tended towards those of anxiety.

### 4.2.2 "What would we do? What must I do?": Uncertainty and ambivalence

Expectant fatherhood brings with it the unfolding reality of the child and all that is brought with it. Ambivalence and anxiety were major themes within the men's responses to this prenatal period. Simpho offered his feelings regarding becoming a father:

> *Yes it was a bit scary, with this child you had to look after, so small and you have to be right as parents.. You were not just looking after yourself. And now my girlfriend was going to be the mother of my child, we didn't even have enough time for each other, and now this new one, she wanted to be a mother I was more scared than her.*

Simpho seemed to compare his internal feelings and anxieties to those of his girlfriend and he reported that she was not as scared as him about having a child. He also reflected the burden of responsibility he now felt in caring for another person: "You are not just looking after yourself now". He was aware of the increasing responsibilities facing him. He seemed also to be bringing up fears regarding how the past was and how this will fit into his future: "We didn't even

have time enough for each other", and he did not seem comfortable with this fantasised world. He may have been experiencing an intensification of dependency needs, in pre-empting the arrival of another person. His use of the word scary reflected a fear of the unknown in that he couldn't be sure of what changes to expect with the arrival of the baby. This quote also reflects the idea that the arrival of the baby would change the relationship between him and his girlfriend and implied a fantasy about "the mother of my child", which perhaps reflected his fantasy of how the relationship with the mother of his child would be and how this real relationship seemed different to his fantasy.

This may also be linked to the fact that Simpho and his girlfriend had not planned this baby and that he seemed to feel a lack of control in the situation, which also seemed to heighten his anxiety and fear of the unknown and the unplanned.

Henry also demonstrated an unsure and apprehensive account of his feelings during the time of pregnancy. He brought up the fact that he was not married and a defensive pattern was noted in his interview that seemed to have emerged around his attempt to cope with the sense of loss and change in relation to his wife. His sense that he felt he should be married seemed to be indicative that he felt he needed a more stable environment into which to bring his child. Perhaps he was aware that the relationship between he and his girlfriend would change. He seemed to try and convince the researcher that he was okay with this relationship change, yet the underlying feeling seemed to be that of fear. Being married may have offered some type of safety during this time of uncertainty.

> *Well yes, we were not married and I knew that this would be a different time for us, I was thinking so many things. What would we do? What must I do? I was thinking that my life was really going to have to change, it was happy and sad, more happy (laughs) but still the things that you couldn't do again,*

*but it would be fine you know, with my wife. You have to be okay to look after this other person Eish!!*

Similar anxieties were seen in the other participants accounts of this prenatal time. These being: anticipation of increased responsibility, the fear of change in the relationship between themselves and the expectant mother and mainly a fear of the unknown that the child would bring.

### 4.2.3Prenatal aspirations

Upon exploring prenatal aspirations with the participants, a strong theme of gender preference emerged, where almost all of the participants expressed their wish to have a son. Even in this early stage it seemed as if some of the fathers were hoping that their child would embody some of their unfulfilled dreams. Henry spoke of his wishes for his child:

*Before my baby was born I was wishing for a boy, and before he was born I named him Christiano when he was still in the womb (laughing) Ja, I told myself that I wanted him to be a player because I wanted to be a player and he could play like Christiano Ronaldo, even my girlfriend the mother she wanted a boy, because when you are in love and your girlfriend or boyfriend says that I want this or I want this then they also want that for you, and it was important for me so she wanted to make me happy also. So also she wanted a boy.*

Henry reported his desire to have a boy and explained that he had named his 'son' before he was born, he had chosen the name of a soccer player, as Henry wanted to be a soccer player when he was younger. Later in his narrative account Henry explained how he always wanted to be a soccer player but that his father had made him focus solely on his studies. Henry now demonstrated a wish for his son to

possibly fulfil these unrecognised dreams that he had had for himself. Henry did have a boy and now as a dad takes him to every soccer match that he can. These aspirations were present before his child was born and as Henry spoke about these childhood dreams he became passionate and emotional, he constantly swayed back and forth between his own missed opportunities and those that his son would now have. He had a strong need to make these (his experienced missed opportunities) a reality for his child. Henry as well as Manny (below) expressed that this desire to have a male child was carried too by the mother of the unborn child. The need in the father seemed to be so strong that these were projected into the mother and she herself may have introjected these and thus also wanted a son to fulfil these strong desires in the father.

Manny explored the feelings that he had during this time:

> *Um honestly I.. I didn't know what I wanted to have, I think a boy, my wife wanted a boy and you know that is whole lot of pressure, she must, because I'm the only boy. So she felt this pressure you know to have a boy. Um so yeah so I mean I thought yeah it would be nice to have a boy I mean there so many girls in my family. But I didn't still have a preference something to the extent that the name we chose was neutral. And it's a name I will tell you now. I met my wife in the university and ah so we got married 3 years ago but it's a name we came up with 10 years ago. Yeah.*

Manny was the only boy in his family and he spoke of his wife feeling pressure because of this to also have a boy. He also expressed that himself and his wife had chosen the name for their child ten years previously when they were in university and had now had the chance to use this name for their child. Manny had had the idea of having children for some time yet the reality of this seemed to be more trying than his previous fantasies. Manny reported later that having children has put his relationship with his wife under strain and that he was not sure that his marriage

would survive. This will be explored later in this chapter. Some of the other participants only seemed to explore their aspirations once their child was born and not during this prenatal stage. It seemed as if these desires and wishes for their children only became of importance once the child was more of a reality.

## 4.3 Identification

"Fatherhood may evoke a paternal love on a man's part which resonates with a productive identification with his own father as well as his own childhood" (Ross, p. 11). Simpho explained that the situation he had found himself in was like that of his father and his parents, as now he is living away from his child and his girlfriend as was the case when he was a child living away from his father:

> *Well I was living with my mom when I was a child and he (His father) was living with his other wife, I don't know but it is the same what happened to me now being separated from the mother, I think it must have influenced me to be like this, you know when you see your own parents you don't know it but later sometimes you can live the same. I never thought that that would happen, but it just didn't work with us also like my mother and father. I don't really know her (his daughter) so well because I don't stay with her.*

Simpho seemed to display feelings of regret in living the same way that his parents did, of not feeling good enough, of not being a 'good enough' father. He was perhaps identifying with his own father whom he felt wasn't good enough and wasn't there enough when he was younger. Simpho went on and explained that he felt as if he should have a wife, and even suggested to the researcher that he was most probably answering 'wrong' and that other participants with a wife would be better able to engage in this discussion of fatherhood. As he spoke, his narrative was difficult to follow and at times incoherent with many gaps, as if he had so many

gaps in his story with his father and now in his relationship with his own child: "I don't really know her so well because I don't stay with her".

Towards the end of the interview Simpho started talking about what he wanted for his future, as if he was still the child and he needed guidance and advice. He spoke of how he hadn't got the opportunity to study and this is what he wanted more than anything for his child. It was as if he was looking for the support and direction within the interview space that he had experienced as lacking from his own inadequate father. Now he too felt inadequate as a father. Simpho seemed to be identifying with his absent and distant father. Henry also spoke of identifying with his son, in that it would be easy with a boy because then he would know how to dress him. This indicated how he felt that he would know better what to do because he is a male too.

> *If you have got a son, it is different to have a baby like a daughter, There are so many more things that you can do with a boy, go out together, I mean like it is different if it is a little girl you can go together out but for a baby boy it is very easy even knowing what you want him to look like or the clothes you want him to wear even go buy clothes for him, what you want him to look like and what you want them to wear so.*

Henry's anxiety was reflected in the quote below and it seemed that his anxiety related to the fact that he was feeling that he may not succeed in his child's life. He seemed to be hoping that his mind would change in reiterating "your mind will change" and that he would not be a failure but rather succeed, both he will succeed for his child and his child will succeed.

> *You know so you can succeed in your child's life. You have to, you see automatically your mind will change you see, your mind will be changed.*

He also seemed in some way to over identify with his son in the way that he spoke about himself and his child reflected a sense that the relationship seemed to be somewhat enmeshed in that there were blurred boundaries and it was difficult to tell who he was speaking about: "so you can succeed in your child's life" He sees something of himself in his child and that if his child succeeds then he will too. In that he has the wish to succeed through his child. Manny explained the lack of involvement of his own father while growing up, and how he did not want to be like this:

> *Um I would say it's not in what my father did do it's in what he didn't do. Yeah. So I think again thanks this experience has been therapeutic. Again looking back I think my dad also had that thing you know that you know ah taking care of the baby is for my mother and nannies then he'd come and play with me for 5 minutes at night or something.*

Manny seemed to be expressing hostility and anger towards his own father, his tone was criticising yet dismissive, as if it was difficult to express the hurt and easier to feel resentment and anger: "He'd come and play with us for 5 minutes at night or something". The words ' or something' are dismissive as if he didn't care to take the time to explain or understand this lack of involvement. This may also be suggestive of his father's dismissive way of relating that he had experienced as a child. He was determined that this would not be the way that he would father his own children. He then went on to blame this lack of nurturance of his father on tradition, more precisely Black tradition: "You know the man doesn't get involved in changing nappies, for goodness sake...Not like my father as well, those things were left up to my mother and you know, I'm not very close to my dad...My friends, you know fathers leave things to their wives, and that is Black tradition and its culture". Manny appeared to be placing his own relationship with his father in a broader culture and blaming his father's lack of involvement on Black tradition. This may be a type of

avoidance defence as it seemed difficult for Manny to sit with this disappointment which he seemed to feel strongly and it appeared easier to base this on a wider social phenomenon.

Manny also thanked the researcher after the interview, saying it "it felt therapeutic". When he was reflecting about his relationship with his dad it seemed as if Manny was grateful for this opportunity to share these things, as though he had not consciously thought about or verbalised the subject in this way. It also highlighted his awareness of the possible therapeutic gain in examining his relationship with his father and now with his children.

### 4.3.1 Post natal aspirations

The desires that the fathers had for their children were explored. Philip spoke of what he most wanted for his child in life:

> *Knowledge, I want to give him knowledge, I mean just to listen to other people and respect, if you have got respect then you have got success. If you respect someone then that person respects you, if you are falling down then that person will pick you up. That is a good thing if you have respect wherever you go. God is with you.*

Philip reflected the desire to protect his child and bring him up in such a way that he feels successful and supported. He also emphasised that he wanted to give his child knowledge and he seemed to link knowledge with gaining respect and success in life. Philip was at the time studying while working as a waiter in order to get his matric, so notably for him knowledge would be a success for himself at this time in his life. Philip also commented later in the interview that life was easier if you were educated and this seemed to reflect that he may have been feeling that his life was

difficult, especially financially and he wanted to protect his child from this by giving him 'knowledge' and all that this represented:

Henry also expressed his aspirations for his child's future:

> *Ah I am expecting a lot from him, I expect him to have a good life, better than us, better than I did…like financially definitely, like for me it was difficult I want to give money for him to go to school I want him to be good every time so that he can support himself and to go to school and support his family one day whatever. Ja. Compared to us it was difficult but for now I have realised some mistakes so I have to correct those mistakes to give him a better chance.*

There was a strong sense from Henry and most of the participants of wanting a better life for their children, better than they had experienced. For Henry this could perhaps be linked to his anxiety and related to difficult experiences in his own childhood. The use of the word 'expect' was reiterated and seems to imply that the child could possibly disappoint, which seemed to mark the possibility that Henry's superego may have been coming into play here. In that Henry appeared to be a fairly harsh judge of himself with a harsh internalised moral code, and this may be transposed onto his child through his expectations for him in his future life. However, Henry went on to explain what he wanted for his son in a way that seemed a little softer and more balanced:

> *Yeah he's still young, I mean like for him he has to chose whatever he wants. Yeah I mean like in this younger generation, you have to chose what you want. Something that you know something that you want to do. You're doing with like with your heart and your soul.*

This again reflected Henry's loss of a childhood dream to become a soccer player while his own father enforced the importance and learning and education. Henry felt

that he was unable to follow what he wanted in his "heart and soul". He wanted this for his son, for him to be able to do what he wants and to follow his heart, yet it came across strongly that he still wanted for his child to fulfil his dream rather than that which may come to be in his sons 'heart and soul". Perhaps his own father was too projecting his own loss of educational opportunity on Henry and now Henry seems to be doing the same with his son in that he is projecting his missed opportunity to play soccer.

Manny, suggested that he wanted his children to experience success in all the different facets of their lives and give them focus, awareness and a worldview:

> *And you how I measure which is to speak of my ambitions is to have successful you know in my children. And you know am not talking about necessarily about success only in careers or academics etc, but know the different facets of their lives. So I definitely want to encourage the great focus and awareness in them, on all the, of their facets of their lives. So like their proper world view, and a full world view. I want them to succeed in each arena. And that would so that's one be sort of one general generic objective.*

> *Um a specific thing is you know I want I mean you know I grew up in South Africa I have been travelling much and ah I want I want my children to be out there. So I definitely want that for my, for my ah children. Um you know you have worries about you know where the country going what's happening and things is like that. So I want them you know there is so much more out there and I want them to be exposed to that.*

Manny spoke of socialising his children, providing them with a worldview, he wants them to experience travelling, and experience the world and "be out there". Manny was sent to boarding school during the apartheid years to get an education and also his own father was involved in the struggle and it was thought better for Manny

and his siblings' safety to be away for school. It appeared that he wanted to redo some of the aspects of his own childhood in providing similar opportunities for his own child. At the same time Manny expressed later in the interview that he was feeling somewhat trapped and misunderstood in the work environment and with his wife, this wanting to give his children exposure and experience of the world may be related to this feeling of being trapped that he was currently experiencing as a father.

#### 4.3.1.1 A vessel for projections hopes and dreams

A father may see his child as representing an opportunity for self enhancement and as being a means for attaining a second chance and even immortality. Diamond (1994) explains that "adaptive grandiosity" is crucial since it entails both the father's projection of his special self into the child as well as his capacity to differentiate himself from his child.

Henry once more reflected his difficulty in accepting that he had never had choices and that his father had dictated what he wanted for his son. There seemed to be a strong type of resentment towards his own father, his experienced lack of autonomy and the barriers that he experienced with his dad. Henry lived away from his father for much of his childhood and felt that he was not understood and was not given the autonomy he felt he needed in order to fulfil his dreams. He also commented on the fact that his father was not open to discussion in that he knew what his father wanted but his father would not listen to his opinion.

> *For my dad I didn't have choices. That is us like the Africans maybe the Blacks [laughs]. You didn't have the chance to tell your father, "no I want this and that." No he has to tell you what he wants. And then you don't have to like to*

*argue with him. And we like we never argued with our dad. We couldn't. Still can't (laughs).*

Henry's laugh seemed to display his discomfort, a feeling he was experiencing in the interview and possibly the one he experienced with his father in not having a voice within their relationship. It appeared that it is still difficult for him to find his voice. Henry then expressed that these passions he was not allowed to follow, he will now encourage in his own son. However, it felt that he was following a similar path to his father in wanting his son to carry out these missed chances from his own childhood. He seemed to be unaware of this in the interview.

Neo recalled that at times in his life he has not felt 'alive' and that he wanted this for his children:

*And ah ah.. I want them you know often times I have realized in my life that I have been living but I haven't been alive you know and I want them to be alive.*

*Just not to go through life for the sake of going through life because, you have you know I want them you know to be driven in all aspects in their lives. I think I think that's very important, you know to be because if you are just you aren't driven don't want good jobs drive a nice car, you know that's just one aspect of your life. Someone who can fulfil others, that's what I mean. You're just living, you don't love living you are not alive to everything else. So I want them to be alive to everything. Yeah.*

He spoke of wanting his children to be alive and not just living. Neo's statement also reflected concern about bringing a child into the world, a world that, at times, can lack meaning. He felt this lack of meaning in his life and seemed to wish for a different experience for his children, which suggested that he hoped to achieve this meaning making for himself through his children's lives.

## 4.4 Reparation

### 4.4.1.1 Repairing relationship with own dad

"The older I get, the smarter my father seems to get" Tim Russer

Childhood experiences have powerful and continuing effects potentiating needs to find and create parallel situations and relationships, to redo, undo or repair. Bendeck (1970) talks of how reparation is often dependent on the social context to provide direction in the individuals life, here the possible context giving direction would be that of parenthood, and Diamond (1994) explains how parenthood allows for the re-experiencing of childhood memories along with the unresolved issues from one's own childhood often allowing atonement towards a loved object. In the quote below Philip was talking about both his feelings of blame towards his father and his increased understanding of the way that he was brought up:

> *Um it's both, both. It's both and like now I'm you know I'm actual dad and knowing my father I can say it's both. You know you he really has that ah um ah suppose he would speak from the outside looking in and he would say male chauvinists, you know. And then he also you know he really worked hard to provide for us and I suppose that's a contribution you can't underestimate and it's probably just as important to the nature in that ah you know my mother provided, cos it afforded me growing up with opportunities that's a lot many people you know I wouldn't have. Um so yeah it's definitely both, I did wish I knew him better as a child, but he was providing. Also I know how hard this is now.*

He utilised the word "both" and this suggested an ability to now better reflect, understand and integrate his experience with his own father, now that he is a dad himself and thus is better able to make more realistic judgements in identifying with this role as the father. Realising the need to be absent to provide financially during

these difficult times, seemed to resonate with Philip's understanding of the role of his own father. Philip was also able to contextualise the situation that his family and father may have been in during his childhood. Philip is from rural Eastern Cape and his father worked in Johannesburg away from the family in order to work. He seemed to have come to some type of healthy understanding as to why his father was the way he was, however, there were still ambivalent feelings, but in Philip being a father himself some of the anger and resentment he had been carrying seemed to have been resolved. He also spoke about how he doesn't spend as much time with his children as he would like, however, these repetitive struggles seemed to have healed the hurts of the past somewhat. Henry too seemed to experience some form of reparation in how he also does not live with his son. He reported:

> *Yeah I mean, I dismiss from work at half past eight, I find him like sleeping, so it's pointless to go in and see him. Yeah more on the weekends. If I am off especially there is always a soccer match or something. I want to get married and live together but it is too expensive you know, so he lives with my mom she can look after him.*

Henry seemed troubled by this distant relationship with his son and he became uncomfortable when telling the researcher that he was not married. While talking about this he frequently let out small giggles which seemed to be related his anxiety when he discussed this subject matter. Henry continued:

> *Yeah like you know the family there is always like someone else to judge, I mean you are not making a lot of money her family say. I mean like, it's going to be difficult for you to stay together, this is and that. Where are you going to take the child? That was I mean, that was my mom's idea. Like, its better maybe for you for her to keep the baby than the mother. My dad also made some of these decisions you know.*

Henry reported that his own and his girlfriend's family judge him and pose many questions regarding taking care of the child, and it seemed as if these were questions that he was asking himself too, "Where would I take the baby?, Would it be difficult for us to live together?" He demonstrated concern around being able to care for his child and provide for his family. It was apparent that while Henry spoke of being judged and questioned, that he related this back to his childhood and the decisions that his father made regarding how to rear his own children. Henry appeared to judge his father in previous statements yet he then seemed to soften when he considered the realities and challenges that fatherhood inevitably brought.

#### 4.4.1.2 Repairing deprivations of one's own childhood

Parenthood appears to offer the opportunity to redo and repair one's own troubled child-parent relationships. Manny's father lived in Johannesburg, while he resided in the Eastern Cape with his mom and the rest of his family. He reported seeing his dad every now and then, but his father's absence seemed to have been experienced as a deprivation in his life. This was an emotional topic for Manny, in that he believed that the context of the past was responsible for the distance he had experienced with his father. As previously mentioned Manny's father was involved in the Apartheid struggle and thus did not have the time that Manny seemed to require. He also mentioned later that the feeling of distance was the most prominent one when thinking about his family and the relationships between his family members. Manny spoke of his father:

> *As you may know by now my father worked very hard all the time. You know he was at work most of the time. It was also just because of the country at that time you know, it was hard. So I think through that I just learnt that no that's you know I want something different for my, for my, for*

*my baby. Particularly because now as a result of not really close with my father…*

*… and consciously just want something, you know I want to be close you know to my child and have a proper ah relationship you now with him. So is that respect I have learnt from my father, yeah. I don't want what we had, I know he needed to be at work and away and to provide, but I missed out, I missed out on having a dad, a real dad…*

It seemed that many of the participants' fathers were forced to seek work far from their children and endure privations and hardship which then were translated to their children. This account also demonstrated how social conditions placed constraints on how men were able understand and express fatherhood, and here it seems directly related to the social conditions of apartheid. Research on fathers in the recent period in South Africa has been the phenomenon of the absent father in this case due to physical absence due to social dislocations (Ritcher & Morell, 2009)

It seemed the position of the father cannot be measured simply in terms of physical absence or presence, as the father may be physically present yet emotionally absent. Neo often commented on the interview being therapeutic and mentioned that he had been thinking so many of these things and that now he was grateful for being given the opportunity to express these. Jacob also reported feeling emotionally deprived in that his father would play with him for five minutes. He also reflected that his father believed that the nurturing aspect of raising a child was the job of the woman: "taking care of the baby is for my mother and nannies". Jacob stated:

*So I think again thanks it feels like a therapeutic. Again looking back I think my dad also had that thing you know that you know ah taking care of the baby is for my mother and nannies then he'd come and play with me for 5 minutes at night or something. I am different now with my kids, I let them*

*know that I can also be there and love them.*

Jacob highlighted that he didn't want to be this way with his children, and that he aspires to be there emotionally for his children: "I can also be there and love them". This also reflects a different way of viewing the role of the father from the way that his father seemed to view the role. This could be linked with a type of changing of the idea of masculinity.

Henry also spoke of the material deprivation that he felt when he was growing up, about how he never got clothes and now with his son Christiano, he wants him to look nice: " I will spend the money that I make just for my boy to look nice like that". Philip appeared to be making up for the material deprivation of his past by buying his son Nike clothes. For Philip too, who works as a waiter and is trying to save up enough money so that he and his girlfriend can live together, making sure that his son wears fashionable clothes seemed imperative in making up for his own past deprivations:

> *When we were growing up it was never easy it was difficult, we never got what clothes we wanted, they never feel like they have to buy you clothes, but now I mean whatever if I go to the shops whatever anytime I will pick up something for him, but when we were growing up it was never easy like when you got your uniform and that was it like you got clothes for Christmas, but for now will spend it just for my boy to look nice like if I want my boy to wear that Nike then I will do that. I will say I want that Nike I like that Nike and I want my boy to wear it, and so I will spend the money that I make just for my boy to look nice like that. Like I never wore those things.*

In South Africa, poverty is still a scourge which primarily afflicts those who are Black. Philip had experienced poverty in his past and material deprivation, as many other

Black South African families would have experienced. Neo who spent most of his childhood in boarding school, reported experiencing his father and his family as not that close. This seemed to translate into a lack of nurturance and emotional support. He experienced this in the fact that he did not receive the encouragement that he felt he needed from his father. He also linked this to the fact that he was scared to fail and didn't feel good enough for much of the time. Important to note is the fact that Neo mentioned the words: "internal things that a father can give you". He was aware that fatherhood is about giving something internal so that the child can build up an internal sense of having being fathered and loved by their dad.

> *I think maybe it is the internal things that you feel that your father can give you. I think maybe it does just more from encouragement to you know to go out there and explore and explore things. You know um me growing up I was I was quite shy.*
>
> *Um and you know you know I came from ah you know a small village in the Transkei you know these learning boarding schools. So I was really exposed to all these different and new things and being shy you know there was a bit of ah you know um scared of failure. I never really had my father around for this type of encouragement. So I maybe didn't try out things that I should have tried out then. It's, it's um I, and I think, I think the last objectives of me looking at my life and saying what is missing. And I you know I don't want them um I want them to a better than have than I. Yeah I want them (his children) not be scared of the world, or scared to try.*

Neo spoke of socialising his children, in being a link to the external world, and encouraging independence yet still within a safe space. He reported needing and feeling deprived of encouragement from his father, and that he was scared of failure. Neo wanting to encourage independence in his children, which could be linked to

role of the father in encouraging individuation-separation that is highlighted in literature (Mahler, et al., 1975). This independence would then lead to the child feeling safe enough to explore the world. It seems that Neo felt that he never experienced this sense of freedom and he would like his children to have this. Neo was reflective about these issues in the interview and seemed to be forming some of the ideas as he spoke:

> *And you know I could be… there is so much to do you know take up mountain biking and they are so many mountain biking trails you know around Jo' burg. And you know do that kind of stuff so that you can live but you can do that so much and I suppose so it's such little things that I am talking about. Just be happy and experience the real things yeah. I mean what why else we are here really. Why else are we here?*

Neo related this sense of exploring and to trying new things to mountain biking, rather than doing the usual things like drinking and watching rugby. He wished he had done something different and full of adventure like mountain biking. He also became existential in exploring these questions in his own mind and asked: "Why else are we here really? Why else are we here?" These unexplored avenues seemed to be directly related to his father's lack of encouragement. Neo later reported that he wants his children to experience life to the full, to not be scared, to travel and explore, he suggested that he will encourage all this, unlike his father.

#### 4.4.1.3 Forgiveness versus unresolved anger

Manny gave an account of his ambivalent feelings towards his father:

> *Um it's both, both. It's both and like now I'm you know I'm actual dad and knowing my father I can say it's both. You know you he really has that ah um*

*ah suppose he would speak from the outside looking in and he would say male chauvinists, you know. And then he also you know he, he really worked hard to provide for us and I suppose that's a contribution you can't underestimate and it's probably just as important to the nature in that ah you know my mother provided, cos it afforded me growing up with opportunities that's a lot many people you know I wouldn't have. Um so yeah it's definitely both, yeah.*

*My relationship was probably just dysfunctional [laughs] um yeah and I would say um we had a dream. I mean my family unit only come together during school holidays, literally and ah yeah and even then it was you know coming for holidays it was just a great distance yeah there was a great distance yeah, distance is the word is the word that just keeps coming to mind when I think back. Yeah.*

Manny spoke of the time that his family would come together as a dream, as if it was not real, perhaps he never really experienced his family as being connected or being a unit. He kept reiterating the word distance when describing his relationship with his father. From this it seemed that he did not experience a close relationship with his dad, he then reasoned why this is so, as if to find a logical explanation for this feeling of distance:

*You know it was ah combinational of boarding school my father working so hard um and you know I think that maybe the times you know that I was growing up you know. There was so much of this stuff for me to be worrying about.*

It seemed as if Manny was still experiencing this feeling of worry, just as he explained similarly to the way he described himself worrying as a child. He reported that he is now worried about his own family unit and the distance that is again

apparent. Manny later revealed that he is now feeling insecure in his relationship with his wife, and he also mentioned that they have not been able to communicate about this. He seemed to avoid exploring this subject matter in the interview and it also appeared that he also may have avoided such dialogue in his personal life possibly to avoid this distant, anxious feeling. In the interview he gave the impression that such reflecting was difficult and overwhelming for him and thus he avoided it.

## 4.5 Experience of Fatherhood

The experience of fatherhood seemed to incorporate many different elements, the participants appeared to place varied emphasis on what the experience of fatherhood had been like for them, thus this section incorporates these unique experiences. One notable common factor, however, was that nearly all of the participants linked this experience now as a father to their childhood and their own father. In appeared that when the participants explored their experience of fatherhood their experiences of their own fathers was automatically triggered and thus appeared as a strong theme in the narratives.

Pruett (1983) explains that fatherhood "wounds" as it reawakens competitive struggles, injuries and conflicts, yet it also "heals" as fathers have a chance to reconnect with their own fathers and their own childhood experiences, and are in a sense offered a sense of generativity and at the same time a being afforded additional opportunities for working through their own unresolved issues at comparable developmental periods to those arising in their children.

#### 4.5.1.1 Fatherhood giving a sense of purpose and meaning

Neo spoke of fatherhood giving him a sense of purpose in his life:

*Yeah, it's increased since I had the baby because it's more real now. It's more real. Um you know you know the baby gives your life a sense of meaning which was actually not there before. And ah it actually filters through each other's aspects of your life you know it's like our home life suddenly has this greater meaning, and greater purpose. And when you leave home and come to the office you ask yourself what is the meaning of this, you know. So it a makes you feel very um unfulfilled and empty in the other aspects of your life as a result you know. And ah I think that's a good thing because it's makes you really question um you know what a are you doing with your life, and um you know it's not a nice thing because as I say you might feel I feel empty you know from 9 till till 5, or however long I'm in the office. Because I question meaning of it all and the purpose. I know you know in providing for the family so it's good in that perspective but you know you question it seems like I mean you get home and it's only that your that your day begins ,because you know there is this bright thing that is true meaningful, really, really meaningful so.*

Neo spoke of his life being more real since the birth of his child, and that he was questioning the meaning of his life before he had a child: "a sense of meaning that was actually not there before". He also commented on feeling "unfulfilled and empty" much of the time when he is away from his family, when he is working in the office and also how having a child has made him question the meaning of the other aspects of his life. The birth of his first child has in a sense seemed to cause Neo to question meaning, "the meaning of it all and the purpose". This sense of emptiness that he described also seemed to suggest that this emptiness that he is feeling will potentially be filled by his child and "give you [him] a sense of meaning".

#### 4.5.1.2 Existing outside the mother infant dyad

Jacob provided an in-depth account of how he felt left out of the mother-infant dyad:

*Um and then once the baby was born, you know again there was that natural connection, and then I did find month between month um 2 and 3 you know my mom, sorry my wife was on maternity leave and I was at work and as soon as I left to come back to work I could see the baby bonded so much more with my wife. And um because of that I have been became a bit out of the tune with the baby.*

*So whenever I held her she'd cry and she would want my wife. So you know that was hurtful and, and I did take it personally actually, even though everyone was telling me not to take it personally it's just a naturally progression of things... But it hurts and through that phase it was a bit part of ah being out of step and out of tune of each other for sure. Um you know I took it personally and it hurts like any other hurt you want to you want her presence, you want her to know you. So I tried to stop hurting. So I just made a conscious effort to stick it out you know every time I come home. It's just to stick you know stick out through the crying if you know she doesn't want me and eventually you rebuild you know now um that bond. And I am just found really I found I was more involved and hands on you know it really boost the bond quicker and a stronger bond between the father and the baby.*

Jacob experienced jealousy with the mother's preoccupation with the infant and experienced hurt when his child would always want his wife: "I took it personally and it hurt". He reported feeling "out of tune" with his child during this time. Although he was feeling hurt by this, Jacob seemed to have worked through these feelings and this difficult phase: "I made a conscious decision to stick it out and rebuild that bond".

Manny also seemed to struggle in the time soon after the child's birth and reflected that he and his wife were experiencing difficulty in their marriage:

> *Um I think she's just been so overwhelmed with the baby that ah to be very honest it's, it's not a conversation I have I've had with her but I think she is so overwhelmed with the baby that it's either A, she doesn't recognize that it's happened or B, you know she is just too overwhelmed to apply her mind to it you know to try to address it for the time being yeah.*

Manny seemed to be hurt by this increasing distance that he was experiencing between himself and his wife, his reasoning for this was that she was "so overwhelmed with the baby". He suggested that she is not even aware that this is happening. It seemed like Manny was experiencing a sense of loneliness during this time and felt like he was an outsider, existing outside of his wife and his child.

#### 4.5.1.3 Anxiety

Anxiety seemed to take on many forms in the participants accounts of fathering. Many of them experienced this in the form of the responsibility and burden of being the provider. Jacob seemed to have experienced a type of paternal preoccupation:

> *I worry a lot you know I want everything right for the baby. You now when the baby is experiencing any kind of discomforts I am experiencing even more of a discomfort. So you know am like that and you know I think most parents are. Ah um so you, you know you just want just want to you are always worrying about the baby being okay and comfortable. Yeah. All thetime. Yeah and um you know even if you know let's say if I am sleeping and my, my wife is taking care of the baby, it still affects me because I'll wake up every time the baby wakes up you know. I just have I don't know if you call it anxiety but you know she is in the next room, so I hear as well so*

*I do wake up. So it's just isn't you know realistically speaking there isn't that break yeah.*

Jacob reported that he experienced the discomforts of the child, just as maternal preoccupation is explained in the literature (Winnicott, 1960). He described this as being in a state of "always worrying" and later went on to say that he is obsessive when it comes to his child. His anxiety was marked and almost tangible within his narrative.

#### 4.5.1.4 Postnatal Ambivalence: Burden versus purpose

Neo took a philosophical stance throughout the interview process, raising many existential questions, and it seemed that having a child for him made him question and engage with the meaning of his life. His child is only 4 months old, yet seemed to have given his a life a great sense of purpose, a purpose that was perhaps missing before. He spoke about how real everything is now that he has had a child. He also commented on the other aspects of life feeling empty and unfulfilled. In that regard, he felt that fatherhood had "opened up his eyes"

Neo also seemed to be battling with the fact that he spends most of his time at work, he raised many questions for himself, such as: "Do you acknowledge this and then carry on regardless?" "Do you change your job if you feel that it is unfulfilling?" He was asking himself a lot of questions regarding lifestyle, purpose and meaning. He seemed to remain in this space of constant questioning and being unsure.
The overwhelming burden of fatherhood was also described by Jacob:

*Yeah it's, it's a lot of work. It's really, really is a lot, I can't over emphasize that enough and it's been a lot of work. I mean in terms of um physically, mentally, and emotionally. What you have to give and what you have to give you know. So if you come home exhausted from the day and it's like*

*you're doing another 9 to 5 as soon as you get home you know. And ah you can't switch off, you know there is no break because you know this little precious child is just so dependent on you. So you can't switch off. So it's a permanent thing.*

Jacob spoke of the demands "physically, mentally and emotionally" that being a father entails. This job has been all consuming for him and involving all aspects of himself. He spoke earlier of being completely preoccupied with his child and this seemed to leave him feeling quite exhausted like "doing another nine to five as soon as you get home". Balancing work and family life seemed to be challenging at this point for Jacob. Philip reluctantly used the word burden to describe his experience:

*I think you know that's ah sure I don't want to use the word burden, but ah burden does describe it. Actually you've got this weight on your shoulders that you have to provide for your child and for your family definitely. So I... I feel that very strongly and ah I feel even more strongly considering opportunities I've had in terms of schools you know for instance. You know I feel as if as if am a failure if I am unable to provide you know the same standard to my child ah um children and ah yeah.*

He reflected the fear of failing as a father if unable to provide a certain standard for his children and he felt weighed down by this huge responsibility. He was thinking towards the future in terms of education and opportunities he would need to afford his children. Jacob reflected a similar sense of pressure that he felt: "Yeah it's a lot of pressure and now I feel you know I spoke in the beginning of how you know you worry um about your child's comforts and all of it. I know if I don't give them that standard, you know I'll feel as if I haven't brought them up properly".
He felt the strong need to bring up his children "properly", which for him means providing properly and giving them a good standard of living.

## 4.6 Perceived Role of the Father

The perceived role of the father seemed to include being the protector and the provider and providing a safe environment for the mother and the child.

### 4.6.1 Protective role

"I cannot think of any need in childhood as strong as the need for a father's protection" Sigmund Freud.

The protective role seemed to incorporate the father's ability to provide for his children in the financial sense. This seemed to be an overarching understanding of the function of protection. Both Henry and Philip reflected this, Henry explained: "The first thing I think it is important to be ok financially, like you have to have the money, like when you have the kid that is one of the important things. You know so you can succeed in your child's life". Henry viewed the role of being able to financially support one's child as being directly related to success, in that having money was one of the most important things for enabling his child for his future. Henry also spoke of his own father emphasising that nothing comes easily in life and that you have to work hard in this life to achieve things. In some sense, this is possibly what he was thinking when he spoke of having money as one of the most important things for your child. His father put an emphasis on working hard and having money too. Philip gave a similar view:

> *Eish you know, I think it is so tough, there are so many challenges in being a father but the most important is you have to make sure you look after your family and give them all they need from you, you must provide, this is the first thing, it is a responsibility… I mean my father did this for me, it is a way of life as a father you know.*

This need or expectation to provide seemed to come from themselves as well as society's expectations of the role of the father. This two-fold expectation seemed to place a great deal of pressure on these fathers. Also in the sense that providing in this way often meant that they could not be as involved with their children as they would have liked to, such as spending more time with them and being involved more as a nurturer. A conflict in thought and action seemed to exist for some of these men, a thought of sensing the need to be more actively involved and the demands of being the breadwinner in the family which seemed to consume much of their time. On the one hand they maintained and perpetuated the discourse constructed around the role of the father as the provider and on the other, questioned it as this meant time away from their children as a result of this.

This protective role seemed to also encompass a higher moral standing for Manny who reported that when you have a child it's important to be involved in the right business and with the right people, as these things influence your life and inevitably the life of your child, Manny reflected:

> *I have appreciated my eyes being open to get to know this person operating the right kind of business that I should be a associated with you know. Um so.. so that these things don't worry me for my family.*

> *…but definitely you have there have been people that you know I have and I still need to cut of my life as cruel as it sounds. But it's not, definitely not alright. Because there is just this natural feeling that this is the right thing to do, when you have a child, you need the right people around you.*

This protective role for Simpho seemed to that of providing a holding environment for the mother and the child, in that if you provided for the mother then she could

care for the child. This related to the Winnicott's supporting role of the mother-infant dyad.

> *The role is I'm not sure, To be a father you have to make sure the child is getting educated, and getting clothes, getting food (pause) what they need, anything I think also maybe for the mother, you can give these things to the mother and then she can take care of the child if she is there or like me I can give these things to my mother and she can give it to him.*

Interestingly, Simpho also applied his supporting role to that of his own mother, in that because his child now lives with his mother, he now supported his mother financially as she is taking the maternal role in caring for his child. It appeared that this supporting and providing role that he embodied, shifted to whomever was taking care of his child. Overall, the protective role of the father seemed to be a common belief when the participants spoke of what was expected of them.

### 4.6.2Broadening of masculinity

Fatherhood has played an important role in the renegotiation in forms of masculinity in many countries, including South Africa, in providing new, positive, transformative roles enabling men to be more engaged and more involved in their relationships with their children (Richter & Morell, 2009). Men's stories about being a father consistently seemed to demonstrate challenges to traditional forms of masculinity. The experiences reported in regard to this were dynamic and involved changes and a renegotiation of roles, especially with regards to that of men and women. However, Jacob spoke of how the roles of men and women were embedded in culture:

> *Um you know it's work out good and you know it's important to be involved. You know um you know I met a lot of my friends you know fathers and leave*

*things to their nanny and to their wives and I think that's because it's really Black's tradition and his culture that we do that you know. You know the man doesn't get involved in changing nappies, for goodness sakes you know. And I am just found really, I found I was more involved and hands on you know it really boost the bond quicker and a stronger bond between the father and the baby. I mean they you know it's not in our nature to be to be doing what really calls women work you know.*

*…yeah so it stems from that. So it's not just you know on the baby. You know family man like my Black friends don't want to don't want to do the dishes because that's unusual. So it's not just confined to how they handle the baby but it's a general…*

Jacob seemed to have renegotiated the more traditional roles of the father that he had experienced as a child. He commented on the importance to be involved and hands on with his children. He compared himself to his friends and others whom he felt were reportedly operating in a more traditional way. Jacob seemed to find it important to comment on how he perceived his role differently to this. He also compared the role of the father to gender related issues in general and he implied that how one approaches masculine and feminine roles would also in fact determine how one would perceive the father role. Neo reflected the changing roles from when he was growing up:

*There is no longer that way in which the mother and the father do those specific things, like our fathers would never do that stuff like domestic things, cleaning the nappy and feeding you know, I think I am a new father (laughs).*

Neo spoke of being a "new father", this may have related to the fact that he perceived himself to be a new or different father to that of his own father. He stressed later in his interview that he had consciously decided to be more present.

The use of the word "new" also perhaps reflected that he perceived the role of the father in these times to be changing from the old (his father) to the new (being a father).

Henry explained his view on fatherhood in comparison to how he experienced his father:

> *Absolutely, because I am more of a soft guy now (laughing) anyway I am not the same as my father, because now I understand everything, because now I know that a child needs this and that, and I would say good boy and that he could talk to me to see what he wanted.*

Henry wished to enable his child to talk with him in order to establish a more open relationship which he never had. It appeared that these three participants reflected a changing role from that of their own pasts. They spoke about changes within men's practices changes from past or traditional to new or modern forms of involvement. It seemed as though maternal undercurrents in the psychological identity of these fathers had begun to emerge.

## 4.7 Transitioning into Fatherhood

Jacob expressed the surreal quality in becoming a father:

> *It has been quite surreal. Um it's, it's really not what um I expected you know you've heard some you know a lot of people telling you this and that until you're actually in it's a such a complete different ball game and you really don't know what you are in for. And it's true what they said that um you only understand when it's you in it. So it's been quite surreal. I still pinch myself but it's ah you know it's a great blessing. So it's is really is, it's really, really is a gift you know from God. Um but, but with that gift comes with a lot responsibility. And um it's a lot of work; it's a lot of work.*

Jacob gave the sense that he had experienced fatherhood as being quite overwhelming and different from anything he could have expected. He utilised the word surreal suggesting a dreamlike quality to his experience. He acknowledged that having a child is a gift yet he was also was quick to point out that it came with a lot of responsibility and work.

It seemed from the interviews conducted that these men experienced family dissolution during childhood and adolescence. These fathers as children nearly always seemed to reside with their mother. This widespread absence of the father is a common experience in South Africa (Richter and Morell, 2009). In South Africa, the harsh realities of the apartheid system and the migrant labour system literally took men away from their families, making it impossible for fathers to be available to care for, nurture and participate in their children's lives. All but one of the participants reported that they were not able to live in the same place as their fathers due to the political situation of the country at that time. This deprivation of not having a physically present father was apparent in the narratives of the men.

### 4.7.1 Modelling on their own fathers

When individuals become parents their first frame of reference would most likely be that of their own parents (Guzzo & College, 2003). This was the case for all the fathers who were interviewed. Phillip told of his childhood:

> *Well you see my father, my father…I Actually I grew up with my mother, my father was working you see, he was working here (Johannesburg) so I was staying at home with my mother and then after school I came here, he would come on holidays, and then leave you see. So I was normally seeing my father not every day but sometimes, but now only when I was leaving school I started to join in and enjoy and live with my father. I think some of*

*the things I was supposed to see, but only now I saw some of the things from my father much later, later even now only when I have my own child I think some of the things I should have learnt then from my father, I only learnt now so some of the things I didn't see before because I wasn't staying with him. So I had so many questions for him because then I didn't have time to ask him but now when I got the chance I could ask him these questions. Yes so if anything happens now, I can call him and we can sit down and we can talk man to man.*

Philip recalled missing out on his father when he was younger and didn't seem to experience a present father while growing up "Actually I grew up with my mother". He seemed to have experienced an absent father during this time of early childhood, as he only lived with his father after he had finished school and didn't seem to feel that he had received the input that he wanted: "I think that some of the things I should have learnt then from my father". Interestingly he didn't seem angry when he related his story or reflected that his father was not around in these important early years. He spoke of now being able to talk "man to man" to his father. The way he spoke of his relationship with his father was very adult like, as if he had never been the child or interacted in a father-child relationship. This is consistent with the fact that he had never had his dad around when he was younger. Neo related how it is only now in being a father that he thinks back to what his father did and said:

*My father used to tell me when I was small that I was going to be father one day just like him, what I am teaching you is the things that you are going to learn now and to teach your children again. I think a lot about that now, only now though, I don't think I listened to these things before, it's funny.*

Neo seemed to be describing that it was only now in being a father that he could relate to some of the things that his father had said and done. Neo seemed to have

formed a relationship and stronger identification with his dad in becoming a dad himself and understanding and relating to what his father may have experienced with him.

Henry described his relationship with his father:

> *I mean there's a lot that I learnt from my dad, he is a great guy a great character, I mean he can tell you what he likes and what he doesn't like, I mean I think I've learnt a lot from him, he always wanted to protect his family, especially us the kids. He taught us how to, to like how to be a man, that not everything comes easily that you have to work hard for what you get, that not all comes from the heavens that you have to work hard for it, that is one of the things that I will have to transfer to my son, but this love you have to work at it, like to put in that extra effort you know even work hard with my son.*

Henry described his father as a great character who taught him how to be a man however, from his narrative it seemed that there was an absence of emotional engagement with his father and a certain element that highlighted that he may have felt misunderstood by his father. It was clear that his father promoted a strong work ethic within the home and he expressed to his son that nothing came easily in life and that you had to work hard for all that you achieved, and the repetitive use of the word 'hard' reflected that their relationship perhaps had been somewhat of a struggle and he was anticipating this hard work with his own son. It also came across that his father perhaps had a very strong voice within the home in that Henry recalled: "You always knew what he liked and didn't like". It seemed that Henry's own voice may have been overpowered and drowned out by his fathers. Henry's father was the one who did not encourage his soccer but rather put great emphasis on his academic work. He explained that soccer was the thing that was in his heart to pursue yet he was not given the freedom to explore this passion by his father.

Henry seemed to be hoping that he would be able to see if he was making the same mistakes: “I mean as you grow up you can even see that you correct some mistakes, you seem to learn where you're dad was making those mistakes”.

## 4.8 The Internal Father

The internal father is in some sense the one who performs paternal functions and contributes to the internalised paternal representation in the child, this father representation has been shown to even develop in children who have had minimal or no contact with their fathers (Jones, 2005). This theme 'the internal father' incorporates the participants’ own experiences of having a father and being a father. The overall experience of being a father , as mentioned above includes knowledge of what fathering is in terms of more Western ideas from books and more traditional ides from ancestors, as well as their own internal and emotional experience of being a father. Simpho spoke of the instinctual nature of being a father, in ‘how you just know what to do without anyone telling you’. He also referred to his ancestors as being lots of fathers, and this seemed to link with the Jungian concept of the archetypal father, as the father held in the collective mind.

> *Yes it was him, I think so and sometimes you just know what you have to do for your child you know it's difficult but inside you, you are now the father and you must do these things, I think. Even if nobody has told you. Traditionally I believe in your ancestors so you have lots of fathers that you can relate to and they can understand better that the father here on earth, the ancestors know a lot about this earth and the people and also the children and who look after them, the ancestors can help you in this…what, sometimes when I don’t know what to do, I look to my ancestors even about my child you see, this is my culture.*

Simpho related this sense of the internal father to his connection with his ancestors and spoke as if he drew off them in order to guide him with his child and he seemed to have internalised a sense of fatherhood from this.
Jacob described his sense of the internal father as an internal sense of being highly connected with his child:

> *All the time he is with me in my head. Yeah and um you know even if you know let's say if I am sleeping and my wife is taking care of the baby, it still affects me because I'll wake up every time the baby wakes up you know. I just have I don't know if you call it anxiety but you know she is in the next room, so I hear as well so I do wake up. So it's just isn't you know realistically speaking there isn't that break yeah.*

Jacob described a type of paternal preoccupation, "you can't switch off, the precious child is so dependent on you, I worry a lot because I want everything right for the baby" and "when the baby is experiencing discomfort I am experiencing even more of a discomfort". He spoke of this care taking as being emotionally exhausting and referred to himself as being compulsive obsessive about making sure that the baby is okay and comfortable. For him, his internal father was an experiential one, made up of his very strong emotional reaction to becoming a father.

## 4.9 Conclusion

This study explored the perceived roles and experiences of black South African fathers. It considered experiences of being a father as well as being fathered. The narratives that were analysed brought about themes which were then analysed using a meaning centred approach. The focal themes that emerged were; prenatal experiences, identification, reparation, the experience of being a father, transitioning into fatherhood and the internal father. Under these main themes further

areas were explores according to the participants responses and narratives. Becoming a father seemed to bring with it a host of different emotions and anxieties both within the prenatal and post natal stages. Becoming a father also seemed to cause the majority of the participants to reflect on their own childhood and their experience of being fathered. Fatherhood also seemed to provide the opportunity for some type of reparation with the participants own father through their new role as a father. Transitioning into fatherhood proved to be difficult for most of the participants where the loss of certain aspects of their life such as their more carefree youth and feelings of less responsibility.

Interestingly to note is the point that although all the participants were Black males, little information regarding traditional beliefs around fathering emerged. Possible reasons for this may have been the fact that the researcher was a white female and one of the participants even said that the researcher would not understand some of these more traditional aspects. Another possible explanation is that all the participants seemed to be ambitious in their careers and of a relatively high socio economic status, this may be linked to functioning in more of a western society and leaving behind some more traditional African beliefs.

# 5 CHAPTER 5: Discussion

## 5.1 Introduction

Parenthood represents an opportunity to develop one's personality and potentialities, along both the self and object relational lines of development (Diamond, 1994) in that one can advance both as an autonomous self and in relation to loved objects. With particular reference to fathering, there is an opportunity for the personal development of the father within the new role of fatherhood and also in relation to both his child and his own father. The fathers who were interviewed for this study appeared to be grappling with their new roles that accompanied fatherhood. These new roles seemed to be linked in their minds to both their experiences of having been fathered and their experiences of fathering.

The consideration of fatherhood is relatively new, particularly within psychoanalytic developmental theory (Diamond, 1994). Within the literature there seemed to be a split between the academic researcher and the clinician, with minimal interaction between the two, however, this study aimed to merge this gap somewhat, in providing findings through the psychoanalytic interviews that was conducted with these fathers. After being almost forgotten within the vast amount of literature on mothering, the appreciation of fathers as significant and real objects in their children's development is finally emerging. From a historical perspective there seemed to be an over reliance on Oedipal theory which portrayed the main role of the father as a symbolic figure for masculine identification (Ross, 1982). This would purport that the father only becomes a figure in the child's internal world during Freud's oedipal phase of development, although Kleinian theory would dispute this. Klein's view on the Oedipus complex was that it began far earlier than the age purported by Freud (Klein, 1928). The role of the father also only seemed to come under scrutiny in the case of the absent, neglectful or abusive father (Diamond, 1994). Thus it is clear that within psychoanalytic theory there has been a degree of

neglect with regards to fathers as real people capable of making major contributions to their children's development.

Mothers have been seen as solely accountable for their child's development and fathers have in general been relegated to the background. This is consistent with Winnicott's idea of a father as providing a holding environment for the mother and only being introduced as an object later in the infant's development (Winnicott, 1960). The father as the forgotten parent in literature seemed to be reiterated in the fathers' experiences as recorded in this study. More recent psychoanalytic theory has, however, begun to take note of the importance of fathers and acknowledge the various roles that they play in the development of their children.

The perceived roles and the experiences of the fathers within this study were viewed through a psychoanalytic lens. The role of the father in current psychoanalytic theory understands that the father is known to take on varied roles in the father child relationship. Some of these being: the father as an attachment figure, the internalised good and bad father, a facilitator for separation individuation, and the father as a self object (Jones, 2005). Societal and cultural factors have also been known to play an important role in determining the role of the father or the level of the father's involvement with their children. These factors, especially in South Africa have also been known, at times, to contribute towards sustaining the belief that fathers play a relatively inconsequential role when considering child rearing (Richter & Morell, 2006). It is also consistently noted in literature that there is the lack of attention paid to the fathers' internal experiences of fatherhood.

This chapter will discuss the themes that emerged from the interviews with the six fathers who participated and concurrently explore these in relation to the research questions posed at the beginning of the study. The sections covered will be broadly divided into three sections: the experience of being a father, which included

prenatal, post natal and the experiences of transition into fatherhood; the relationship between the past and the present (being fathered and being a father) through exploring identification, reparation and examining the participants conceptions of the internal father; and the perceived role of the father, which although incorporating many of the aspects of fatherhood previously stated, seemed to be heavily dependent on ideas relating to broader issues such as socio historical influences and ideas relating to masculinity.

## 5.2 Experience of Being a Father

### 5.2.1 Prenatal Experiences

The prenatal period seemed to be an important one for the majority of the participants. For some it was a period of excitement and anticipation and for others it embodied a more ambivalent experience. The ambivalence seemed to occur in those participants who were more reflective about this time and more able to link this period with their entire experience of fatherhood. The ambivalence reported included increased feelings of responsibility and anxiety, a fear of the unknown and feelings related to a sense of a loss of youth and freedom. However, for some these feelings of anxiety were accompanied by excitement as well as the recognition of the opportunity to be a good father. The relationship to the mother was also highlighted by two participants as being very important in this time, in providing a bonding experience for the expectant parents. One of the participants also expressed anxiety around the possible change in relationship with the mother of his child.

Another common element in the participants responses was that of the desire to have a son as opposed to a daughter. The wish to have a male child was reported in all but one of the participants' narratives. The desire to have a son also seemed to be linked to the perceived ability of the father to identify with a male child, the wish to

continue the family name as well as some sense that the male child would be able to embody some of the fathers' unfulfilled dreams.

There is currently a growing documentation of the experience of the pregnancy of the expectant mother (Jordan, 1990) but there has been little systematic enquiry and documentation around the parallel experience of the expectant father during this time (Jordan, 1990). There has also more recently been a shift in the increased involvement of fathers in pregnancy and the birthing process (Combs-Orme & Renkert, 2009). Thus there is a need to better understand the male experience of expectant fatherhood or the transition into parenthood. Although it was not specifically investigated none of the fathers reported anything regarding involvement in doctors' appointments related to the pregnancy or the birthing process. One participant reported being highly involved in this period in a different sense; in that he used to talk and sing to his unborn child and claimed that this formed an initial bond with his child.

The prenatal stage although under investigated is known to precipitate major reworking in the father to be, in terms of past and present relationships with his father, mother and wife as well as his sense of self (Jordan, 1990). Two of the participants reported strong feelings and intrapsychic processes and transitions that were occurring during this time. These were mainly considerations of the anticipated change with relation to the mother of their child as well as some sense of the renegotiation of their identity. This allusion to identity in the participants seemed related to the inevitable incorporation and negotiation of a paternal identity and what this would mean. Two other participants did not seem to view this stage of fatherhood as an important one and did not seem to be very physically or emotionally involved in the pregnancy. Their transition into fatherhood appeared to commence only once their child was born. This is consistent with Jacobson's (1950)

study which concluded that for many men, the baby only becomes a reality after birth and then transition is necessitated.

Reasons for this lack of involvement as proposed by (Diamond, 1994) are that fathers during the prenatal stage have less time to adjust to internal conflicts evoked by becoming a father. Unlike expectant motherhood, expectant fatherhood cannot be described in terms of its biological immediacy, and descriptions of the fathers' experience must rely on its experiential components such as hope, appropriation and responsibility. The father during this period is said to experience the prospect of becoming a father through that of the mother, as he is not the one physically carrying and forming this bio-psychological bond with the baby. Thus the dad has to experience all these feelings from some distance. This may serve as another possible reason for the fathers that seemed uninvolved during this time, in that these two participants did not live with the mother of the child during this time and so could not adequately experience becoming a father through that of the mother perhaps due to geographical distance.

Hertzog (1982) reported that men who are already intimately involved with their partner would be more likely to participate and be fully bonded in the experience than those men not involved in that level of intimacy. This too seemed to be the case for the fathers who were interviewed in this study, as those with a reportedly intimate relationship with the mother prior to the pregnancy, also seemed to be bonded to the unborn child and the mother during the prenatal phase. As previously mentioned Simpho and Henry were not living with the mother of their child during this prenatal time and this may have been the reason that they were unable to recount or provide any in depth account of their feelings or experiences of this time. A study carried out by Greenburg and Morris (1974) demonstrated that fathers who were more involved in prenatal happenings seemed later to become more involved and in-tune fathers later in their child's life. This study in part supported this finding, particularly in the

case of Simpho who was not able to reflect on the prenatal period and reported a distant relationship with his child who is now four years old. However, Greenburg and Morris' (1974) finding seems not to be applicable to all fathers, as Henry, who was also not able to comment much on his feelings during the prenatal period and was not living with the mother, reported currently being actively involved with his child even though he still doesn't live with him.

Ambivalent and conflicting feelings such as hope, responsibility and loss have been known to emerge during this prenatal time (Diamond, 1994). Jacobson (1950) stated that:

> Man approaches the birth of children with all varieties of mature and infantile object-libidinous and highly narcissistic fantasies and conflicts. It is the actual birth of the child which enables him to gradually eliminate disturbing infantile and narcissistic elements and to transform these fantasies into healthy paternal love relationships (p. 145)

Ross (1982) explained that the male's fantasies and feelings during the prenatal period tend to cluster around the theme of excitement and nurturance toward the mother and foetus along with attendant worry about the adequacy of one's own internal and external supplies and potential contributions. This was prevalent in the participants' responses, where the immense feeling of responsibility seemed overwhelming. This feeling of responsibility seemed to incorporate as well as question both internal and external abilities of the father to provide and be good enough. Henry stated: "You have to be okay to look after this person" and Simpho said: "You are not just looking after yourself now". These two quotes seem to highlight the pressure felt by these fathers to provide both materially and emotionally for their child.

First time expectant parenthood involves dealing with the transformation of the dyadic group into a triadic group as the introduction of the third person causes for considerable realignment (Jordan, 1990). The prospective father has been known to become a carrier of various expectations and fears around this pending change in dynamics (Diamond, 1994). These anxieties and expectations around the effects that this third person (infant) may have on the intimate dyadic relationship between man and woman was highlighted as a major anxiety in the narratives of many fathers in this study, however this seemed to be more pertinent after the child was born and thus will be discussed in more detail in the later section dealing with post natal experiences.

Becoming a father inevitably carries with it fears and anxieties as well as the prospect of loss: the loss of the dyadic relationship, the loss of a sense of freedom and carelessness of youth; and the loss of being a child in some way. This loss and mourning seems to be a process of disengaging from infantile parental objects (Jones, 2005). In becoming a father it means that one is somehow no longer a child. Through the adoption of a paternal identity, the man now becomes responsible for an infant who is dependent on the father, hence, it seems to entail a shift of conscious and unconscious representations of the self. Simpho and Henry both gave ambivalent accounts of the prenatal period, acknowledging that there were both good and bad things that they were expecting upon the arrival of their child. They both demonstrated the ability to express some of these more difficult emotions and fears. Henry spoke of his anxieties about increased responsibility and with this increased responsibility came the loss of being able to be more carefree in life. Simpho and Henry, both of whom recognised this loss associated with parenthood, gave narrative accounts that reflected a greater awareness of negative emotions and a greater ability to communicate openly about them.

Some of the other most prevalent anxieties highlighted in the literature include: paternity concerns, losing one's spouse or child, being replaced by the infant, increased responsibilities, and existential issues pertaining to life and death

(Diamond, 1990). Concerns regarding being a son as well as a father and issues pertaining to past-present as well as reality-fantasy issues also seem to be negotiated during this prenatal experience (Diamond, 1994). Reworking of past or current relationships has been known to be prominent during the pregnancy phase, as well as a shift in sense of self and what would be required of the father. Important to note is that the most prominent anxiety highlighted by all the participants in this study was that of the anxiety of increased responsibilities and the burden that fatherhood would bring. Simpho spoke of the necessity to be right as parents, Philip recalled that when he knew he was expecting a baby he had thought it better and more responsible to socialise with different people, Neo seemed to enter into an existentialist dialogue, he reported being concerned about the meaning of everything, his work and his past when he found out he would be a father. This study supported these findings in that the participants were found to be negotiating issues related to past and present as well as being aware of a shift in their sense of self.

The prenatal experience for the majority of the fathers in this study brought with it intense emotional responses laden with ambivalence, anxieties and excitement. For some it was the beginning of the formation of the paternal identity, in that during this time some of the participants began fantasising about their future existence with a child in their life. They also seemed to be regarding the changes that may occur in their relationship with the mother of the child as well as reconsidering their own identity and how it would shift in terms of adapting to this new role of fatherhood.

### 5.2.2Existing Outside of the Mother Infant-Dyad

Although the participants expressed that having a child brought with it a large amount of responsibility, most of the participants also described some sort of pride and satisfaction in the experience of performing the supporting, protecting and

providing role to the mother and their new born child. This role seemed to resonate with most of the participants and appeared to be easily incorporated into their paternal identity. More specifically this role included the provision of safety, financial and emotional support for this mother-infant dyad. The participants who best described this function were Neo and Philip. Neo described that in providing this protective role for his new child it enabled him to be a nurturer in his own way. Philip spoke of making sure the environment was right in all senses for his family, that they would always be safe and that they would be surrounded by good people. Both these participants seemed to be performing the role of the protector of the mother-infant dyad and they seemed to express a sense of gratification in this role. Neo even spoke of this function as providing the expression for the nurturing aspect of fatherhood. Traditionally one of the roles highlighted in literature is for the father to provide a nurturing, holding environment for the mother and the child, especially during the period when the mother is involved in maternal preoccupation (Diamond, 1994). These participants demonstrated satisfaction in performing this well documented paternal role.

The father's protection of this dyad is thought to be essential in enabling this bond between mother and child, serving as an external buffer against the social world for the mother-child dyad. The father's respect for and protection of this dyad is crucial in the child's relationship with the mother (Winnicott, 1956) and this role encompasses both the providing function and the empathetic responsiveness. Thus the two above mentioned participants seem to have developed this empathic responsiveness as a father.

On the other hand one of the participants, Jacob, experienced jealousy with the mother's preoccupation with the infant and he felt left out of this mother-infant dyad and reported feeling hurt by this. He did not seem to identify with this external protective role. This may be due to the fact that he also seemed to experience his

own sort of maternal, or more correctly, paternal preoccupation with the infant, in that he reported that when his baby was experiencing discomfort so was he. He also expressed that he could not shut off from his child even when the mother was attending to him. This then resulted in what he described as obsessive compulsive-like behaviour with regard to his child. Jacob seemed to experience the need to play a more nurturing or as Winnicott would term the preoccupied maternal role.

Diamond (1994) explains that when fathers lack adaptive and reality-oriented abilities, more omnipotent expressions render these fathers unable to maintain empathic sensitivity with their wife and baby as separate individuals and they then may be unable to provide the necessary holding functions, as they are threatened by exclusion from, and overly needy of inclusion into, the mothering dyad (Diamond, 1994). This suggests that Jacob may lack these reality-orientated abilities in that he was unable to maintain empathic sensitivity to his wife during this time. Jacob was unable to provide the necessary holding environment as he described that he was jealous and hurt and thus threatened by the exclusion from the mother-infant dyad. Although he may have had a lack of reality-orientated abilities he also wanted to be involved in the nurturing of his child. This could also reflect an aspect of maturity in him, in that he had processed where he had experienced his own father as lacking and unavailable and he desperately wanted to right these wrongs from his own childhood. His own father had not been involved in his development and he wanted to repair this in his relationship with his child.

### 5.2.3Interdependence/Oedipus Complex

Manny spoke of the instability of his relationship with his wife since the birth of his first child. He described that they were no longer as close as they used to be and he linked this distance to the arrival of their children. Manny also commented that his wife was overwhelmed with the children and therefore she had not noticed this rift in their relationship. In the interview he appeared to be deeply affected and emotional

regarding this subject, he even stated that he thought his marriage would not last. Jacob also spoke about the hurt he had experienced by feeling left out of the mother-infant dyad when his child was born.

The interdependence that is generally established between spouses or partners is generally shaken during the pregnancy process as well as in the early stages of infancy (Jordan, 1990). This seemed to be true for both Manny and Jacob. The fact that the mother becomes more involved with the child and less emotionally and physically available to her husband may intensify feelings of separation and heighten dependency needs in the father (Diamond, 1986). Both the previously mentioned fathers seemed to be expressing these difficult feelings of separation and in fact they both expressed elements of increased dependency in their relationship with their wives. Manny and Jacob as well as Philip both commented on the element of time and that there was not enough time to spend with the mothers of their children. This was even present when Philip spoke of prenatal anxieties stating: "There isn't even enough time for us to spend together now". He was referring his fantasy that when his child was born there would not be enough time for himself and his wife. The experiences of certain fathers in this study supported Jordan's (1990) findings.

These feelings of separation and feeling left out are said to be related to the man's own experience of being parented such as ones maternal object ties with his own mother and interruption of these attachments as a child. During this major transitional period of fatherhood, earlier developmental conflicts are often reactivated (Zayas, 1987). These, in turn, influence adaptation to current life processes which is consistent with psychoanalytic theory. This early stage of fatherhood may reactivate specific infantile conflicts, such as the oedipal process which demanded the son to be separated from his mother (Diamond, 1995), and

now the father being separated from the mother. These feelings appeared to be reactivated in Manny, Jacob and Philip.

Interestingly Jacob, in two instances, mistakenly used the word mother instead of wife, before correcting himself. This seemed to suggest that during pregnancy his wife became partially equated with his mother in his mind. Intense anxiety was triggered by his wife's pregnancy and the birth of his child. These experiences may have reinforced Jacob's association or identification with his wife as a maternal figure. Although an exploration of the fathers' experiences with their mothers and siblings did not form part of the interview or narratives of the fathers in this study, a study by Gerzi and Berman (1980) found that pregnancy in the wife, in emphasising her maternal role, often reactivated conflicts and inhibitions in the father that were initially evoked around sibling rivalry. This sibling rivalry which may be evoked in the father may then also serve as a source of anxiety in the new father. However this was not explored in this study as information regarding the fathers' siblings or attachment to their own mothers were not explored.

Here it seems important to again comment on the cornerstone of psychoanalytic theory, the oedipus complex. In theory, a resolved oedipal conflict consists of a scenario where the child relinquishes the desire for the parent of the opposite sex and identifies with the parent of the same sex. Zayas (1987) argues that like other resolved instinctual conflicts in which conflict is absorbed by the intrapsychic processes of maturation and development, the resolution of the oedipal struggle often remains incomplete. Benedek (1970) proposed that when a shift in the intrapsychic balance is generated by internal or external stresses, the nuclear conflict may be reactivated, such as in the critical phases of parenthood. Expectant and new fatherhood is said to be a critical phase of parenthood, when oedipal strivings are reawakened in the man. These oedipal conflicts seemed to be reactivated in Manny, Jacob and Philip.

Important to note here is the fact that all three of these participants had a distant relationship with their fathers. Jacob had a poor relationship with his father and reported that: "We are not close, he would sometimes spend five minutes with me at night as a child". Manny repeatedly commented on the distance in his relationship with his father and Philip had grown up with his mother and only lived with his father in his late teens. For these participants it appeared that they had experienced some disruption in this psychological equilibrium when their own children were born. It may be that these men had adequately resolved only a portion of the oedipal conflict. The conflict that did not seem adequately resolved may have been the struggle with regards to identifying with one's own father, this may be due to feelings of resentment and neglect in the case of Jacob or just a feeling of distance for Manny and Philip. This is a tentative hypothesis and although there is not enough evidence to comment specifically on the resolution of the Oedipal complex for these men, for Jacob it does not seem to have been resolved based on the intensity of his left out feelings and the difficulty he expressed in finding his role as a father.

The arrival of the participants' children now seemed to be triggering these unresolved conflicts. The process of identification with the dyadic father requires the father's reciprocity as he identifies with and makes himself available to his son (Freeman, 2008) The father provides his son with direct recognition through approval as well as validation through identification, however, this lack of availability would have made this identification difficult, and possibly may not have occurred for some of the aforementioned participants. The reasons for this were different for each participant whether due to geographical, emotional or psychological distance.

A man's successful identification with his father is one of the most important determinants of how prospective and new fathers will relate to their own children

(Jacobson, 1950). In a later paper Jacobson (1964) proposes that it is this love and acceptance from his father rather than castration threats that resolves the oedipal conflict and contributes to a positive father identity later in life. It is possible that these participants did not experience this love and acceptance from their fathers in order to satisfactorily resolve the oedipal conflict in childhood.

This quote tends to capture the importance of the father to the child and to the man. “Until a man's father sees him clearly and accepts him for who he is and was, it is difficult for him to grow up himself and become a father to his children, a husband to a wife, or a mentor to the younger generation” (Osherson, 1986, p 43). This seems to highlight the importance of identification with one's own father for the development of the man in future critical periods in his life, including that of parenthood. Jacobson (1950) discussed that the process of identification by incorporating and internalising loved objects is important and that having children may signify ones wish for the revitalization of identification with one’s own parents. This may be applicable in the participants having children symbolising the wish for the revitalization of this missed opportunity for identification with one's own father.

## 5.3 Linking the Past to the Present

### 5.3.1Identification

In this study it seemed as if some of the participants had not formed an adequate identification with their own father and thus still sought out approval and validation from other sources. In the case of Simpho this was apparent from the interview process, when he engaged in the topic of fatherhood he seemed to seek some sort of recognition from the researcher while expressing the distance between himself and his own father growing up. Henry also gave the impression of a lack of identification with his father, expressing that the relationship between he and his father was one sided . This meaning that he was aware of what his father wanted but that his father did not know what he wanted and essentially did not know who he was. Jacob reported that he had learned more from what his father had not done that from what he had. Jacob as well as Manny and Henry all expressed his wish to be different from their fathers.

Identification is based on an emotional tie with the object, typically the parent. Freud treats identification as a process in which the sequential interplay of forces, internal and external, impel the child to take on the characteristics of the parent (Freud, 1923). Although Henry mentioned the wish to be different from his own father it was apparent in his narrative that he was unconsciously taking on some of the characteristics of his own father. As is later described Henry, in the same way as his father, expressed a desire for his child to engage in his passion rather than letting his child find his own passion. He complained that his father pushed him into an area of interest that was not his own and it now appears that Henry is doing the same.

The process of identification is represented explicitly as a mechanism for resolution of the Oedipus complex (Diamond, 1994). While the child begins with preliminary identification with both parents, in the case of the boy, the identification develops into a sexual object cathexis towards the mother, followed by the realization that the father is obstructing this, hence, the wish to replace the father results in an ambivalent identification (Freeman, 2008). The identification with the loved versus hated object are inextricably fused (Bronfenbrenner, 1960). In order to recapture a lost love and loving object and to defend against paternal threat or aggression the son forms anidentification with the father. As previously discussed in the previous section, a few of the participants seemed to have struggled in this identification with their father, with reasons for this expressed above. Importantly to mention here is that in the majority of the participants' accounts of their childhood it became apparent that they had not had the opportunity to grow up with their own father. This may have affected the process of identification.

Most of the participants expressed the desire to be different from their own fathers in that they wished to be more involved, emotionally available and for some more nurturing. This desire to be a more involved father may also be echoing the literature on new fatherhood that positively affirms change from the past (Finn & Henwood, 2009). Henry and Philip spoke directly of wanting to be more caring and emotionally expressive and more involved and attentive than their own fathers. In this way he was disconnecting his own fathering to that of the previous generation. This may be associated with the distant and stereotypical father of the previous generation.

Adaptive grandiosity entails both the father's projection of his ideal self onto his child, as well as his capacity to differentiate himself from his child. When asked about their ideals and aspirations for their children, a few of the participants' answers related more to what they wanted and expected of themselves,

demonstrating that these desires were more entangled with the fathers' pasts and their superegos. Here the example of Henry should be utilised in that it seemed difficult for him to separate himself from his son and that the strong identification that he had made with his son seemed to be projection of his own ideal self. He seemed to view his child as a vessel for these unfulfilled dreams.

There are three aspects of the parent after which the child may pattern himself, the parent's overt behaviour, his motives, or his aspirations for the child. The participants' aspirations for their children seemed to be a subject that had generally been thought about to a large extent. These aspirations for almost all of the participants were of great importance as all of them had thought about an ideal for their child, whether it be a star soccer player or a university graduate. These aspirations and dreams also seemed to be inextricably linked to each father's own ideals for his former self, thus potentially projecting an ideal self into the child.

The male's wishes to continue the self through becoming a father may also reflect a more narcissistic type of identification in terms of the father identifying with the child. This type of identification entails the wishes that may be gratified by having children in whom the father will survive (Diamond, 1986). Notably all of the participants expressed their wish to have a son as opposed to a daughter. Benedek (1970) illustrated that the almost universal preference for a male child may indicate this more narcissistic or omnipotent dimension in the father. All of the participants expressed their wish was to have a son as opposed to a daughter. Some of the reasons the participants gave for this were: being better able to relate to a son and that the son would carry on the father's name. These reasons seemed to be more conscious ones, while the need to survive in their children or their sons may have been more unconscious.

Bendeck (1970) also reported that pregnant mothers too tended to indicate this preference for a male child, this may be related to the father's narcissistic needs, or this may also reflect the operation of penis envy. This may be as a means to fulfil the mother's belief that men have more potency in today's world and that life is somehow easier for men. The mother would then want this perceived better position for her child. Two of the participants, Henry and Manny reported that their wives/girlfriend also wanted a son in order to fulfil the man's wishes as this was important to them

### 5.3.2Reparation

Bendeck (1970) explained how reparation is often dependent on the social context to provide direction and an opportunity for this in the individual's life. Here the possible social context giving direction would be that of parenthood, now that the once child is the father. Diamond (1994) highlighted how parenthood allows for the re-experiencing of childhood memories along with the unresolved issues from one's own childhood, often allowing atonement towards a loved object. The participants, in talking through their experiences as a father with their children, brought up a host of interrelated information from their pasts and how they experienced their own fathers. Discussion around their own fathers included: an appreciation of their fathers contribution to their upbringing, a respect for learning a work ethic and responsibility from their fathers, the physical and emotional distance that they had experienced with their fathers, and lastly, the lack of attunement and autonomy they experienced as children in the relationships with their fathers.

Diamond (1994) also explained that repetitive struggles can awaken narcissistic injuries and conflicts within the father, yet it also heals, it reconnects the man with his own father in a sense of generativity and the father is also afforded additional opportunities to repair unresolved conflicts related to his past. Wishes to have

children are frequently based on those related to the need to repair, improve or expand the relationship with one's own father (Ross, 1982). The male's desire for the child may be that the child serves as a reparative wish for the father to relive his own childhood or even a desire to give to the individual's own parents the child that he can no longer be.

There seemed to be a common preoccupation among most men that their fathering would be affected by unresolved difficulties in their own relationship to their fathers (Hertzog, 1982). The time of becoming a parent is often perceived as a time of straightening out these past unresolved conflicts. In being a father, the man can now perceive things from his past in relation to his own father. Manny even brought up the issue of only now being able to relate and to see what his father was doing right in all those years. This deeper understanding achieved through now being a father, seemed to provide some of the participants with a more integrated experience of their own fathers, seeing both the good and the bad and perceiving these parts from a different perspective, as a father.

A common element that emerged in this theme was that the majority of the participants expressed the desire to be more involved and available to their children, there was a strong wish to undo this emotional distance that many of the fathers had experienced. This need to nurture can be seen as being mediated through a personal response to the lacking aspects of the father of their childhoods.

Continuity across generations regarding the way these fathers wanted to be the same as the traditional father was also apparent. The majority of the participants also commented on the importance of their own father as the provider when they were growing up. Most of the fathers wanted to continue and possibly improve these elements in being the provider and protector for their families. Coexisting with some of the rejected aspects of traditional paternity was the continuity of the moral

traditional father of the previous generation, as he who instilled courage, strength and a sense of hard work. This supported other studies of men's constructions of fatherhood (White, 1994).

Although the need for integration of one's paternal object is imperative, Diamond (1994) also highlights that the wish to be un-ambivalently loved and admired are relegated to less conscious areas of the psyche as one grows up. The anticipation of an infant's un-ambivalent admiration and love seem to offer unlimited possibilities of repair among adult males so needy of gratifying their healthy symbiotic wishes (Diamond, 1994). Fatherhood seems to offer the opportunity for the man to be un-ambivalently loved and admired by his infant. Henry seemed to experience this sense of unconditional love from his son: "He's my boy, he loves me and he knows that I am his dad". His comment suggested a sense that just in being a father he would inevitably be a recipient of this un-ambivalent admiration.

Fatherhood appeared to create a parallel relationship in which the fathers in this study could attempt to repair and re experience unresolved issues from their childhoods. Reparation for the participants in this study was a central theme and seemed to take on the form of redoing, attempting to undo or repairing aspects of their own childhoods and relationships with their fathers. Fatherhood seemed to provide these men with a social context to in which they were now fathers and could repair some of the perceived unresolved issues with their fathers through their own children. This experience seemed to offer some of the participants an ability to better understand, reflect on and integrate their experiences of being fathered and fathering. As in the case of Jacob, he reported that he was better able to identify with his father after having had a child, thus creating the opportunity for reparation.

## 5.4 The Internal Father

Ogden (1989) points out that parenting has everything to do with each parent's internal father figures. This seemed to be the case for the participants in this study as their narratives were interspersed with their own experiences of having been parented and they seemed to be making comparisons between themselves and their own fathers, some before even being prompted regarding their own parents. These two aspects of fathering and being fathered seemed inseparable. When referring back to their own fathers, this idea of the internal father seemed to emerge for Neo. Neo mentioned the words: "internal things that a father can give you". He was aware that fatherhood was about giving something internal so that the child can build up an internal sense of having being fathered and loved by their dad. This seemed to have come from his own internal father, that he now felt he could pass on to his children: "I think maybe it is the internal things that you feel that your father can give you".

Psychoanalytic theory as a whole has a great deal to say about the importance of the unconscious meanings of the father and the symbolic father in the formation of identity as an individual and as a father (Diamond, 1994). Fathers are always psychically present even in fatherless children (Gill, 1991) and the internalised father is always an interaction of fact, fantasy, familial and cultural influences (Bendeck, 1970).

Within this study all of the participants were able to provide a vast amount of information when asked to explore their own relationships with their fathers. It seemed as if reflecting back to their own childhoods and fathers brought a particular clarity to what they had had been engaging in when referring to their thoughts on their own fathering. It also seemed that this internal father was provoked through

exploring this link between their own fathering and being fathered. This topic seemed to open up enormous space for exploration, and indicated that the participants' fathers or 'internal fathers' occupied a vast space within their psyches and the way in which they had responded to the role of fathering in their own lives. Although Neo was the only participant to utilise and explain that he felt that a father was internal, Manny also seemed to hold that one's father is something that you carry with you: "Of course that experience as a child becomes part of you now as a parent".

Bendeck (1970) believed that the instinctual roots of fatherhood include both his function as a provider and a capacity to develop fatherliness that render his relationship to his child an internal and developmental experience. She hypothesises this trait to be genuine fatherliness, explaining that it is instinctually rooted, enabling the father to act towards his children with immediate empathic responsiveness. Jacob, who demonstrated engrossment in his baby, offers support for this idea. He spoke of preoccupation and absorption with the infant and this bond could be viewed as the innate potential of fathers triggered by early contact with the infant.

Paternal imagos are intra-psychically built upon real and fantasised relationships within the family system and serve to orient children in adaptive and defensive ways throughout their development (Lansky, 1992). However it is the real person or 'good enough father' that enables the formation of a sufficiently nourishing paternal imago. The nature and construction of the internal imago play an essential role. If the father has a good and caring side, it is also true that it has a potentially destructive side, such as preoccupation with power and control. This ability to understand the good and the bad would aid in the formation of an integrated internal imago.

The notion of the internalised other is a central concept in psychoanalytic tradition and specifically in object relations theory (Jones, 2005). Davids (2002) suggests that

it is only the object that performs maternal functions that contributes to the formation of the internalised object, however, Jones (2005) states that the converse is also true in that the person who performs paternal functions contributes to the internalised paternal representation. In this study the internal father although not always referred to as this was notably present within many of the participants' narratives.

## 5.5 The Perceived Role of the Father

There are many factors that would influence how men experience fatherhood, however literature has pointed out that a major determinant is likely to be their own experience with their fathers growing up (Guzzo & College, 2003). Theories of socialisation and psychoanalysis would suggest that behaviours and internalised perceptions of important figures in their lives would affect their own behaviour in their father roles in the present. Thus it is important to understand the motivational bases of paternal involvement that are rooted in childhood (Cabrera, Tamis-LeMonde, Bradley, Hofferth & Lamb, 2000). Within this study it was apparent that this theory was supported. In describing the role of the father it became apparent for the majority of the participants that these perceptions were informed mostly by their own relationships to their fathers. Even if the participants, like Neo, had expected something different from their fathers, the role that their fathers did play seemed to be the basis on which these perceptions were based. In the case of Henry, who wanted his father to take more notice and let him make his own choices, he still pointed out the fact that it is the father's role to guide his child and teach him to be a man and be successful. Even though he had not agreed with the way that he was brought up, his father still played a vital function in his perceived role of the father. Also, despite his expressed wish to be different with his child and not disregard his child's choices, he appeared to unconsciously be behaving just as his own father did, imaging his child living out his unfulfilled dreams of being a soccer player. This is a good example of how the internal father can be transmitted without conscious awareness.

### 5.5.1 Protector/Provider

Prominent psychological mechanisms that are known to create stress in fathers that are discussed in the literature are: the man's recognition of the increasing responsibilities facing him (Jordan, 1990), the reactivation of unresolved parental issues generally in the form of ambivalence (Mikelson, 2008), disruption of dependency needs (Amato, 1994; Jordan, 1990) and rivalrous feelings towards both the wife and the child (Jordan ,1990).

Common to all the participants in this study was the conscious recognition of the increased demands and responsibilities that having a child brings. These findings support those of Benedek (1970) who pointed out that this realisation often finds its way into unconscious concerns of men, resulting in heightened levels of anxiety, tension, guilt and apprehension. This seemed to have occurred in most of the participants who recalled this increased responsibility as a burden and two of them even suggested that they would feel like a failure as a father if they were not able to provide adequately for their children.

Common to the men in this study were the notions that providing for your children's sustenance, ensuring their current well being and establishing a better future for them were priorities regarding the role of the father. It is important to emphasise that the most significant pattern within the men's stories about the meaning of fatherhood was the recurring emphasis on the provision of economic stability for their family. This role seemed to supersede all the others that were described. All of the participants reflected the importance of providing financially and the fear of failing to do this.

Findings in this respect were consistent with a study carried out by Williams (2009) investigating fatherhood and masculinities, which also emphasised the value placed on men and their ability to provide materially for their family. This pressure to

provide also indicated a source of considerable stress associated with fathering, shown by the fact that three of the participants utilised the word burden when reflecting on their responsibility of adequately providing for their children. This burden seemed to be exacerbated in that a belief held by most of the participants was that if they did not provide a better life than they had experienced they would perceive themselves as a failure as a father.

In describing this protective role and the integral aspect of financial contribution it also appeared that a conflict seemed to exist for some of the participants, in that there was also a strong desire to spend more time with their children yet the demands of being an 'adequate provider' meant that they had little time to spend with their children.

### 5.5.2Nurturer/Attachment Figure

Parke and Swain (1976), in an article on the re-evaluation of the father's role, highlighted some of the traditional views of father's role, these being: that fathers are more uninvolved with newborn infants, fathers are less nurturant towards infants than mothers and that they prefer non-caretaking roles. Although this article was published some years ago it appeared that the participants in this study were still grappling with these more traditional roles versus a more active and nurturing role in infant development. The time in which this article was written would have been the time in which the participants' own fathers were assuming the role of fatherhood.
Manny even mentioned that it was considered inappropriate in his culture for fathers to take on more of the nurturing role. The fathers who did partake in more of a nurturing role still tended to find this somewhat inconsistent with their perceptions of the traditional roles of fatherhood.

Parke and Swain (1976) highlighted that opportunities for a father to take an active role with their infant is an important antecedent to fuller actualization of nurturant

and care taking capacities, as these initial interactions may serve as the basis for the subsequent formation of strong attachment bonds between father and infant. The participants who had been more involved in the early infancy with their child did seem to support this finding, in forming a strong attachment with their child.

### 5.5.3Role of Socialising

Fathers are said to play a pivotal representational role in introducing their infants to the exciting larger outer world (Diamond, 1994). In an old Indian fable, the parental roles are described as follows: The mother holding the small baby says: "I will comfort you", the father then takes the baby to the mountaintop and proclaims: "This is the world, I will introduce you". This socialising role was apparent in many of the participants' narratives, where the participants would emphasise how they want their children to be okay in the world, and to be able to travel and experience life. Thus, the narratives of the fathers in this study seemed to support the idea that the father's role is to facilitate separation individuation outside of the mother infant dyad and socialise the child (Mahler et al., 1975). The father, in serving as an alternate safe attachment figure, plays an essential role in aiding this separation, in that he then inhibits the child from being permanently merged with the mother (Mahler et. al, 1975). The father is aligned with reality which helps the child to test his emerging self, followed by the formation of an individualised sense of self (Freeman, 2008; Jones, 2008). This role seemed to be natural for most of the fathers in the study.

### 5.5.4Masculinity and Fatherhood

Evidence around the topic of fatherhood reflected a tension that men felt around the need to continue to fulfil the role of the provider as well as their aspirations to be more involved fathers (Hatter, Vinker & Williams 2002). This seemed to be linked to the ideas of modern masculinity, which have been described as being in a state of transition. Whitehead (2002) highlighted that this may lead to men feeling vulnerable and unsure of their nature and purpose in the world. This was then often translated into experiences of conflict between family and work responsibilities for fathers as well as a conflict in identity.

Fatherhood has also played a role in the renegotiation of masculinity. The participants stories about being a father consistently seemed to demonstrate challenges to traditional forms of masculinity. The experiences reported in regard to this were dynamic and involved changes and a renegotiation of roles especially with regards to that of men and women. The participants in this study reflected an understanding that practices of men and women within families seemed to be changing. As compared to the role of the mother and the father when they were growing up, there had been great shifts and all the participants spoke of this in their narratives. Henry spoke of being a softer guy than his father, while Jacob explained that he too changes nappies and does those things that only his mother would have done.

It seemed as if most of the participants were struggling in terms of their paternal identity and the role of the father, in that they did not seem to adopt the traditional breadwinner role i.e. the wife is at home to care for the children and the father is concerned primarily with financial concerns, nor a non-traditional role i.e. deeply involved in daily care of the child and equal distribution of all responsibilities. It seemed as if neither of these adequately captured the role that these fathers were describing. Being the provider and the protector as well as expressing the need to be involved in a nurturing way seemed to be stressful for these men and put strain on their paternal identity. The men who did not adopt a conscious role, either traditional or non traditional seemed unsure of their place with their child and the behaviour expected of them. A possible reason for this role confusion could be due to the fact that many of these men expressed dissatisfaction with the way that they had been fathered while growing up. Thus, it was more difficult for them to identify with their fathers' nurturing and generative functions, which would have consequently encouraged the development of their own paternal identities (Diamond, 1994). It appeared that some of the participants never received this necessary nurturance from their own fathers. Philip recalled: "I saw him sometimes in the

holidays, but only got to know him when I finished school". Jacob stated: "My dad never spent much time with us". Manny recalled: "My father was very distant". Thus, the distance in the relationships with their own fathers may be why some of these participants were battling in forming their own paternal identity. This could also be related to the importance of having an internal image of one's self as a father or difficulty in achieving a father identification. The importance of a man's relationship to the care taking qualities of his own father cannot be underestimated (Zayas, 1987). In this study the majority of the participants provided an interwoven account of fatherhood, with their current experiences as a father intricately linked to their experiences of their pasts and their own fathers. Thus, this study reiterates this strong link between fathering and being fathered found in the literature (Diamond, 1994; Zayas, 1987).

Despite this struggle to clearly define their roles as fathers, their wishes for their own children's futures seemed to serve to reassure the fathers of their own masculinity. This appeared to occur through their identification with their own fathers' fatherliness, in turn ridding them of their fears and enabling them to reverse the dependant role i.e. infant-parent to parent-infant through nurturing the more needy child. Neo spoke of his father not always being around, yet providing a sense of nurturance through the financial support which he consistently provided for his family. Neo described that at first he felt let down by this, but now in becoming a father he reported being better able to understand the demanding roles and the difficulty of being a perfect dad. In now being the provider himself he seemed be relating to his own father's fatherliness, in that now he was embracing this role, with both its good aspects and the challenges.

Manny recalled the interview experience as being therapeutic and appeared to find that his fatherhood experience was therapeutic in much the same way. He spoke of not having had a close relationship with his father, in that he felt he needed so much

more of him yet he only gave him five minutes in the evening. Now, however, Manny seems more at ease in his role as a father than as a child, perhaps due to the fact that the dependency role has been reversed. Although Manny reported not being close to his father, it still seemed that his own children appeared to reassure him of his own masculinity.

Yet becoming a father also appeared to involve loss, predominantly the loss of being the child to their own parents. Within this study most of the participants when relating their accounts of being a father tended to bring up experiences from their own fathers. While some of the fathers in the study seemed to have grappled with the loss that accompanies the transition from child to parent, some had not. It appeared as if Simpho had not reversed this dependant role nor identified with his father's fatherliness, as in the interview he presented with child like attributes and involved the researcher in a discussion as to what to do in his future life. Simpho did not seem to have identified with his own father, as he did not grow up with his father, as his parents got divorced when he was very young. He also does not live with his own child and reflected in his interview that he feels that he is not a good father.

Two of the participants compared their fathering roles to those in their social circles and communities. Jacob suggested: "My friends are not like that, they are more traditional in their fathering" and Philip spoke of needing to change his group of friends now that he had a child, because they were not the same in their beliefs and morals. Although these men compared themselves as fathers to others, the multiple positions occupied seemed to reflect a complex interchange with regards to what is represented as each father's individualised sense of meaning within the broader socio-cultural context. While the broader contextual environment appeared to play a role in defining these men's perceptions of their father roles, it did not form the base of the fathers' paternal identity. Jacob clearly stated that he is a different type of

father to that of his friends. Philip also spoke of changing his social environment and some of his friends in order for it to better suited the way in which he wanted to be a father, he wanted to change the contextual environment in order to better fit into his own paternal identity. It appeared for most of the participants in this study that their own childhoods and experience of their own fathers had a more profound influence on their paternal identity.

### 5.5.5Social and Historical Influence

Many researchers have viewed fatherhood as a cultural representation that is expressed through different socio cultural processes embedded in a larger ecological context (Marsiglio, 2008). Within the narratives of the participants it was very apparent that the social and political environment in South Africa during the time in which they grew up had a great influence on the way in which they experienced their own fathers. During the Apartheid years it seemed that many of the participants' fathers were forced to seek work far from their children and endure privations and hardship which then were translated to their children. These privations recalled by the participants were those of lack of material possessions, lack of time with their fathers, and a lack of encouragement from their fathers. These accounts also demonstrated how past and current social conditions placed constraints on how today's fathers were able understand and express fatherhood. Research on fathers in the recent period in South Africa has been on the phenomenon of the absent father, in this case due to physical absence due to social dislocations (Richter & Morell, 2009). During these times the mother would have become the sole nurturer and fatherhood would have been better equated to material provision, which was the case for three participants who described their fathers' main role as provider. This system deprived many men of the ability to lead and become role models in their families and in their broader communities, let alone be present fathers for their children.

Furthermore it seemed to have influenced participants today in the parenting of their own children, in that there seemed to be a strong narrative emerging in the interviews regarding the lack of father role models from their own childhoods. Benedek (1970) highlighted the importance of having a good enough male mentor, who is able to express his tendencies and emotional availability to the child. This echoed Freud's (1923) notion of the importance of a productive identification with one's own father, who replaces the mother as the nurturing figure, and with whom the boy can identify.

However, even when one's father is physically available this does not mean that he is emotionally available. Two of the participants recalled that they did not engage in this way with their father: "He was there, when I was young but not so involved with the kids", and this seemed to translate into a distant relationship later in life: "I am not close to my father".

Although the role of the father has seemed to encompass a wide variety of functions in these participants, it is clear from the above that the socio and historical influence had a major influence on the way in which these participants felt in some way that they were robbed of their father. The political climate in the country when these participants were children did influence the availability of men and thus fathers in particular. This seemed to have stirred feelings of ambivalence and anger in some of the participants, that the contextual environment seemed to have had a great influence on the way in which they were able to experience their own dads.

## 5.6 Conclusion

It is important to recognise the interplay between the coexisting "modern" and more traditional views of fatherhood that emerged from these urban Black South African fathers. The men in this study were able to identify with a new type of fatherhood in terms of putting aside more traditional masculine roles and expressing the desire to be involved and nurturing with their children. This desire for increased involvement seemed to stem from the perceived inadequacies of their own past and relationship with their own fathers. The majority of the fathers seemed to experience difficulty in identifying with their own fathers and expressed the need to repair and redo some of these aspects in their own fathering. However it seemed that the role of the father was also viewed with some confusion in that this reported softening of masculinity was overlain and interwoven with a more gender specific and traditional view of masculinity. The men also spoke of being the provider and the protector as well as being rational, responsible and strong, thus resulting in a somewhat ambiguous construct of fatherhood. These realities in as much as they pertained to identification, reparation and meaning making dynamics they were highly conditional upon interpenetrating socio historical frameworks, mixed cultural expectations and personal histories which involve inter-subjective, relational connections as well as disconnections across generations. Adopting the psychoanalytic framework has allowed this study to bring into view a range of mediating dynamics infusing the intrapsychic and unconscious processes as well as considering object relational ties, attachment behaviours and socio historical constructs.

# 6 CHAPTER 6: Conclusion

This paper has presented a psychoanalytic perspective on the experiences of being a Black South African father, the perceived role of the father and the link between being fathered and being a father. The themes that emerged were analysed through a psychoanalytic lens utilising a meaning centred approach. The findings were presented according to the themes that emerged from the narrative analysis. Developmental transitions such as fatherhood invariably present both challenges and opportunities to the individual person. Apart from the real life stresses involved in such a transition there are also unconscious processes at play, as conflicts with origins in earlier life are reactivated and may consequently colour the new experience. This overlap between fathering and being fathered was apparent in the majority of the narratives.

## 6.1 Findings of the study

- The prenatal stage of fatherhood was experienced very differently by the fathers in this study. This appeared to be linked to the degree of commitment between the father and the mother of the child at the time of conception and whether the baby was planned or not, with those fathers in a more committed relationship where the baby was planned feeling more bonded to and invested in the unborn baby. Although two of the participants did not perceive this stage as incorporating that of being father and suggested that their role only starts one the baby is born, the other participants expressed both excitement and ambivalence related to this stage. Two of the participants reported a strengthening of the relationship with the mother of the unborn child during this stage. Anxiety was also a prevalent experience for the participants during this time, the majority of the anxieties that were reported seemed to be those of the anticipation of increased responsibility,

the fear of change and the unknown that the child would bring. This time also seemed to stimulate aspirations that the fathers had for their own children and what was most apparent was the wish of the fathers to have a son.

- The perceived role of the father seemed to be that of being the provider for the family. Being the provider seemed to feel like a burden for these fathers and there was a lot of internal pressure to provide for their families and give them better future than they themselves were experiencing. The role also seemed to incorporate that of socialising their children and aiding them in their wider exploration of the world. One notable common factor when the participants gave their perceptions on the role of the father was that nearly all of them linked this experience now as a father to their childhood and their own father. It appeared that when the participants explored their experiences of fatherhood their experiences of their own fathers was automatically triggered and thus appeared as a strong theme in the narratives.

- It seemed that many of the participants' fathers were forced to seek work far from their children and endure privations and hardship which then were translated to their children. The social consequences of the neglect around the importance of fathering during Apartheid times were apparent and it appeared that such fatherlessness has greatly contributed to the participants' sense of lack with regards to primary male relationships. This was a strong theme that emerged from almost all of the participants, some of them seemed able to reconcile the distance they had experienced from their fathers due to this socio-historical period in the country and others still seemed angry and resentful towards their fathers and the system that had caused such turmoil in their close relationships as children.

- Although some participants expressed resentment and anger towards their father and the lack of emotional connectedness that came with this, it seemed as if fatherhood had offered an opportunity to reconcile some of these difficult feelings through reparation with their own children. Parenthood had given the opportunity to redo, undo and repair some of these deprivations of the past. Yet even with this reconciliation and understanding that parenthood enabled, the participants seemed to express a sense of the loss that parenthood brought. For the participants, this loss seemed to imply the loss of freedom, the loss of the existing relationship with ones partner and ultimately the loss of the known.

- Emphasis was placed on a sense of an internal father for most of the participants, as the participants were able to describe the internal sense that they had received from their own father and the importance of their own children emotionally experiencing them as fathers.

## 6.2 Clinical Implications

It is imperative that as psychologists and Psychology as a profession on the whole gains a deeper understanding of a large segment of the South African population in order to provide culturally sensitive services when working with children and families of diverse cultural backgrounds. This study aimed to provide a more in depth account into the experiences of Black fathers in South Africa. A better understanding of different cultures and experiences of fathers would increase the awareness of the perceived role and therefore improve the ability to include fathers from a wide range of cultural backgrounds in appropriate family and child interventions.

Psychologists in South Africa engage increasingly with culturally diverse families and individuals and it is therefore essential that psychologists begin to establish a much needed data base of these diverse socio-cultural beliefs and practices as lack of

information regarding issues surrounding different cultural issues such as fatherhood, may serve as a barrier in adequate service provision to much of the South African population. Urban Black South African fathers have experienced a unique situation in that they have been exposed to both traditional and more western influences in their lives. The participants in this study (all but one) lived in more rural areas of South Africa as children and now are finding their way in urban Johannesburg where they are exposed to a different social and contextual environment. Social care and mental health services have found it difficult to engage with fathers successfully (Shaw & Hazel, 2000), and although this research was conducted in America, it is thought that in South Africa, with less research being conducted here, fathers may too be difficult to work with due to the lack of research and understanding of the experiences and beliefs within this specific population. This study provided some in depth accounts of urban Black South African fathers' experiences. These will hopefully lead to a deeper more enriched understanding of this unique population for those working with families and fathers. It is imperative to implement clinical applications which incorporate a deeper appreciation of the experience and role of fathering.

There is also considerable cross cultural evidence that negligence, absence, or the lack of active involved fathering is related to many social and familial problems (Lansky, 1992). In gaining understanding in this imperative area of fatherhood this would hopefully guide and inform those dealing with fathers on an individual level or on a broader social level in encouraging more involvement and participation from fathers.

Qualitative studies provide an understanding of the "life world" of a client, which is different to that of the practitioner and thus difficult to enter and understand. This study highlighted the difficulties and ambiguities facing these now Urban fathers, expressing the need to be more actively involved and different parents to their own

fathers however it was apparent that coming from a different historical and geographical background proved difficult in negotiating the role and identity as a father. It would be imperative for clinicians to recognise this population and the struggles that come with straddling the African versus Western traditions that are both actively affecting them at all levels.

## 6.3 Limitations of the study

Although the study identified some significant findings specific to this group of fathers, the sample only consisted of six participants and therefore would not enable generalizability. The sample was from a relatively homogenous group that consisted of educated men who were economically secure, they were chosen as relatively little has been written about this group of fathers. Broadening the sample to include other socio economic groups would allow for greater generalizability.

It was also thought that the research tool (psychoanalytic interview) used in this study brought with it many complexities. Firstly the complexity of interpretation, as the narrative analysis called for a large amount of interpretative and analytical skills on the part of the researcher, thus bringing with it a somewhat subjective perspective during the analysis process. Although measures were taken to lessen this subjectivity, such as discussion with the researcher's supervisor, it is likely that the researcher's subjective perspective on fathering may have influenced certain interpretations of the fathers' statements. Critical reflection regarding one's own identity as a white female researcher was necessary, as this psychoanalytic interview was heavily reliant on transference and counter transference and the ability of the researcher to recognise and give meaning to defences and narratives that emerged in the interview process.

It was also noted that although the psychoanalytic interview process aimed to acquire a deep understanding of unconscious processes and object relations, the superficial nature of the interview due to its brevity and the relationship between the

researcher and the participants made it difficult to access such deeper meaning at times, and the participants seemed to feel unsure and ill at ease with exploring such a personal and in depth topic in the limited period of time. It was thought that these factors would have affected the openness and responses of the participants thus affecting their narratives and perhaps influencing the areas of discussion that the participants were willing to engage in.

Attributes of the interviewer should also be considered when thinking about limitations of the study as the interviewer was a White female interacting with Black South African males which constantly affected the interaction, communication and understanding in the interview between the researcher and the participants. Although one participant was explicit in this regard, other participants may have felt that the researcher may not have understood certain traditional elements and may have neglected to share these in the interview which would have affected the truthfulness of the narratives.

Another factor thought to impinge on the interview was the utilisation of an audio recorder within the interview setting, the participants were talking about personal experiences and some of the participants, although they were informed of confidentiality, they appeared somewhat inhibited by the presence of the audio recorder.

## 6.4 Recommendations for further research

As this research focused on the experiences and perceived role of fatherhood within Black South African males, further studies could investigate cross cultural beliefs and perceptions between the many diverse groups in South Africa. It could also investigate and look at possible differences between fathers living in urban versus more rural areas of the country.

Future research should aim to develop programmes of intervention in order to better understand fathers, their relationship with their children and families in order to better serve the diverse cultures within South Africa .It was found that most of the participants were struggling somewhat with their paternal identity in negotiating the desire to be more involved and nurturing yet still experiencing the pressure to assume a more masculine role in being the provider and protector of the family. It is thought that this paternal identity would be useful to investigate further.

Also these participants seemed to be struggling with the negotiation of westernised versus more traditional practices in their role as a father. Moving from the place that they grew up with their family and now trying to transpose this model into their new contextual environment seemed to be a difficult one. The participants also expressed wanting to do things differently to that of their fathers. It would be useful to specifically explore this further and investigate how these fathers would like to change things with regards to fathering now.

# 7 Reference List


Ainsworth, M. D. S., Behar, M., Waters, E. & Wall, S. (1978). *Patterns of Attachment: A Psychological Study of the Strange Situation*. New Jersey: Hillsdale

Albelin, E. (1975). Some further observations and comments on the earliest role of the father. *Int J Psychoanal*, 56, 293-302.

Amato, P.R. (1994). Father-Child relations, Mother-child relations, and Offspring Psychological Well being in Early Adulthood. *Journal of marriage and Family*, 56, 1031-1042.

Anderson, A. (1996). Factors influencing the father infant relationship. *Journal of family nursing,* 2, 306-324.

Benedek, T. (1959). Parenthood as a developmental phase. *Journal of American Psychoanalytic Association*, 7, 389-417.

Benedek, T. (1970). Fatherhood and providing. In Anthony, E.J. & Benedek, T. *Parenthood: Its psychology and Psychopathology*. Boston: Little brown.

Bowlby, J. (1969). *Attachment*. London: Penguin Press.

Braun, V. & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic Analysis in Psychology. Qualitative Research in psychology, 3, 77-101

Bronfenbrenner, U. (1960). Freudian theories of identification and their Derivatives. *Journal of Child Development*, 31, 15-40.

Brown, D., Rogers, Y. H. & Kapadia, K. (2008). Multicultural Considerations for the Application of Attachment Theory. *American Journal of Psychotherapy*. 62, 353-362.

Burck, C. (2005). Comparing qualitative research methodologies for systemic research: the use of grounded theory, discourse analysis and narrative analysis. *Journal of Family Therapy,* 27, 237–262

Cabrera, N.J., Shannon, J.D., Mitchell, S.J. & West, J. (2009). Mexican American mothers and fathers' prenatal attitudes and father prenatal involvement: Links to mother-Infant Interaction and Father Engagement. *Sex Roles*, 60, 510-526.

Cabrera, N.J., Tamis-LeMonda, C.S., Bradley, R.H, Hofferth, S. & Lamb, M.E. (2000). Fatherhood in the Twenty-First Century. *Child Development*, 71, 127-136.

Cartwright, D. (2004). The Psychoanalytic Research Interview: Preliminary suggestions. *J Am Psychoanal Assoc*, 52, 209-242.

Cath, S.H., Gurwitt, A. & Ross, J.M. (1982). *Father and Child.* Boston: Little, Brown.

Collins, K. J. (2000). *Study Guide: Research in the Social Sciences*. Pretoria: University of South Africa

Combs-Orme, T. & Renkert, L.E. (2009). Fathers and their Infants: caregiving and Affection in the Modern Family. *Journal of human behaviour in the social environment*, 19, 394-418.

Connor, D. (1988). *Adult adjustment, Early Parenting*. New York: Free Press.

Cowan, P. A. & Cowan, C. P. (1990). Becoming a family: Research and Intervention. In Siegel, A & Brody, L. *Family research* (pp. 246–279). Hillside, NJ: Erlbaum.

Crossley, M. (2007). Narrative analysis. In Lyons, E. & Coyle,A. *Analysing Qualitative Data in Psychology* (pp. 131-144). London: Sage.

Davids, M.F., (2002). Fathers in the Internal world. In Trowell, J. & Etchegoyen, A. *The Importance of Fatherhood : A Psychoanalytic Re-evaluation*. Brunner-Routledge.

Diamond, M. J. (1994). Fathers with sons: Psychoanalytic perspectives on "good enough" fathering throughout the life cycle. Los Angeles Institute for Psychoanalytic studies: Unpublished manuscript.

Diamond, M.J. (1986). Becoming a father: A psychodynamic Perspective on the Forgotten parent. *Psychoanalytic Review*, 73, 445-468.

Diamond, M.J. (1995). Someone to watch over me: the father as the original Protector of the mother Infant Dyad. *Psychoanalysis and Psychotherapy*, 12, 89-102.

Diamond, M.J. (1998). Fathers with sons: Psychoanalytic perspectives on 'good enough' fathering throughout the life cycle. *Journal of Gender and psychoanalysis,* 3, 243-299

Etchegoyen, A. (2001). Psychoanalytic ideas about fathers. In Trowell, J & . Etchegoyen, A. *The importance of fathers: A Psychoanalytic Re-Evaluation*. New York: Brunner-Routledge.

Fay, B. (1996). Do we live stories or just tell them? In Fay, B. *Contemporary Philosophy of social science (pp.* 178-198). Oxford: Blackwell Publishers.

Finn, M. & Henkwood, K. (2009). Exploring Masculinities within men's Identificatory imaginings of first time-fatherhood. *The British Psychological Society,* 48, 547-562.

Freeman, T. (2008). Psychoanalytic Concepts of Fatherhood: Patriarchal Paradoxes and the presence of an absent Authority. *Studies in Gender and Sexuality*, 9, 113-139.

Freud, S. (1927). The Future of an Illusion. In Strachey, J. *The standard edition of the complex works of Sigmund Freud*(pp. 3-56). London: Hogarth Press.

Gadsden, V.L. & Smith, R.R. (1994). African American Males and Fatherhood: Issues in Research and Practice. *Journal of Negro Education*, 63, 634-650.

Gerzi, S and Berman, E. (1981). Emotional reactions of expectant fathers to their wives' first pregnancy. *British Journal of Medical Psychology*, 54, 259-265.

Gill, H.S. (1991). Internalization of the Absent Father. *International Journal of Psychoanalysis,* 72: 243-252

Goodman, J.H. (2004). Becoming an Involved Father of an Infant. *JOGNN*, 34, 190-200.

Guzzo, K.B. & College, L. (2003). New Fathers experiences with their own fathers and attitudes towards Fathering. Journal of family Psychology, 32, 259-287.

Hatter, W., Vinter, L. & Williams, R. (2002*). Dads on dads: Needs and expectations at home and at work*. Manchester: Equal Opportunities Commission

Hertzog, J.M. (1982). Patterns of expectant fatherhood. A study of the fathers of a group of premature infants. *British Journal of Medical Psychology*, 59, 301-314.

Horton, R. (1967). African Traditional Thought and Western Science. *Journal of the International African Institute,* 37, 155-187.

Jacobson, E. (1950). Development for the wish of a child in boys. *The Psychoanalytic study of the child*. New Haven: Yale University Press

Jones, K. (2005). The role of Father in Psychoanalytic Theory: Historical and contemporary trends. *Smith College Studies in Social Work*, 75, 7-28.

Jones, K. (2008). Reconsidering Psychoanalytic Notions of Paternal and Maternal Roles in Situations of Father-Absence. *Journal of Contemporary Psychotherapy*, 38, 205-213

Jordan, P.L. (1990). Laboring for Relevance: *Expectant and New fatherhood. Parent and child nursing*. University of Washington: Seattle.

Klein, M. (1928). Early stages of the Oedipus complex. *Int J Psychoanal,* 9 , 167-180.

Lamb, M. (2000). The history of research on father involvement: an overview. *Marriage and family review*, 29, 23-42.

Lamb, M. E. (1980). Observational studies in the family setting. In Pederson, F. *The father-infant relationship* (pp. 121–153). Boston: Alien & Unwin.

Lamb, M.E. (1987). The *Father's Role: Cross Cultural perspectives*. New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Lamb, M.E. (1997). The development of father infant relationships. In Lamb, M.E. *The role of the father in child development* (pp. 104-120). New York: John Wiley and sons, Inc.

Lansky, M.R. (1992). *Fathers who Fail*. Hillsdale. New Jersey: Analytic Press.

Larkin, M., Watts, S. & Clifton, E. (2006). Giving voice and making sense in interpretative phenomenological analysis. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3, 103-120

Lewis, S.N., West, A.F., Stein, A., Malmberg, L.E., Bethell, K., Barnes, J., Sylva, K. & Leach, P. (2008). A comparison of Father –infant Interaction between primary and non primary Caregiving Fathers. *Child: Care, health and development,* 199-207.

Mahler, M., Pine, F. & Bergman, A. (1975). *The Psychological birth of the human infant.* New York: Basic Books.

Marsiglio, W. (2008). Understanding Men's paternal experience and the father involvement connection: Assessing Baby Steps. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 70, 1108-1113.

Marsiglio, W., Amato, P., Day, R.D. & Lamb, M.E. (2000). Scholarship on Fatherhood in the 1990's and Beyond. *Journal of Marriage and the family*, 62, 1173-1191.

McMahon, A. (1999). *Taking care of men: Sexual politics in the public mind.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Mikelson, K.S. (2008). He Said, She Said: Comparing mother and father reports of Father Involvement. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 70, 613-624.

Miller, W. & Maiter, S. (2008). Fatherhood and Culture moving beyond stereotypical Understandings. *Journal of Ethnic and cultural Diversity in Social work,* 17, 279-300.

Mowrer, O. H. (1950). Identification: A link between learning therapy and psychotherapy. In *Learning theory and personality dynamics*. New York: Ronald.

Ogden, T. (1989). *The Primitive Edge of Experience*. Northvale, NJ: Aronson.

Parke, R.D. & Swain, D.B. (1976). *The father's Role in Infancy: A Re-Evaluation. The Family Coordinator*, 25, 365-371.

Parke, R.D. (2004). Fathers, Families and the future: a Plethora of Plausible Predictions. *Merril-Palmer Quarterly*, 50, 456-470.

Phares, V. (1992). Where's Poppa? The relative lack of attention to the role of fathers in child and adolescent psychopathology. *American Psychologist,* 47, 656-664.

Pruett, K.D. (1983). Infants and primary nurturing fathers. *Psychoanalytic study of the child,* 38, 257-277

Radin, N. (1994). Primary care giving fathers intact families. In Gottfried, A. E. & Gottfried, A., W. *Redefining families: Implications for children's developments* (pp. 11–54). New York: Plenum.

Richter, L. & Morrell, R. (2006). *UBABA: Men and Fatherhood in South Africa*. Cape Town: HSRC Press.

Rohner, R.P. & Veneziano, R.A. (2001). The importance of father love: history and contemporary evidence. *Review of General Psychology*, 5, 467-476.

Ross, J.M. (1975). The development of paternal identity: a critical review of the literature on nurturance and generativity in boys and men. *The American Journal of Psychoanalysis* , 23, 783-817.

Ross, J.M. (1983). Father to child: psychoanalytic reflections. *Psychoanalytic Review,* 70, 301-320.

Schiavetti, N., and Metz, D. E. (2002). *Evaluating Research in Communication Disorders* . Allyn and Bacon.

Schore, J.R. & Schore, A.N. (2007). Modern Attachment Theory: The Central Role of Affect Regulation in Development and Treatment. *Clinical Social Work Journal,* 36, 9-20.

Seligman, E. (1892). The half alive ones. *Journal of Analytical Psychology*, 27, 1-20.

Terell, B.P. (2005). The impact of Ethnic Socialization and Ethnic identity on Self esteem and parenting attitudes of African American fathers. *Best practices in mental health*, 1, 86-105.

Townsend, N. (1997). Men, Migration and Households in Botswana: an exploration of connections over time and space. *Journal of Southern African studies*, 22, 405-420.

White, N. R. (1994). About fathers: Masculinity and the social construction of fatherhood. *The Australian and New Zealand Journal of Sociology*, 30, 119-131.

Whitehead, S.M. (2002). *Men and masculinities*. Cambridge: Polity Press

Williams, R. A. (2009). Masculinities and Fathering. *Community, Work and Family*,12, 57-73.

Winnicott, D. W. (1956). Primary maternal preoccupation. In Winnicott, D. W. *Through paediatrics to psycho-analysts* (pp. 300–305). New York: Basic Books.

Winnicott, D.W. (1960). The theory of the parent-infant relationship. The *International Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 41, 585-595.

Zayas, L.H (1987). Psychodynamic and developmental aspects of expectant and new fatherhood: clinical derivatives from literature. *Clinical social work Journal*, 15, 8-21.

# Appendix A: Information Sheet

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*

Good day, my name is Theresa Quinn, and I am conducting research for the purposes of obtaining a Masters degree at the University of the Witwatersrand. My area of focus is that of the role of fatherhood and how it is experienced by South African fathers. There is not a lot of information available about how fatherhood is viewed by South African men; therefore it is a very important area to investigate within South Africa. As a South African father, I would like to invite you to participate in this study.

Participation in this research will entail being interviewed by myself. The interview will last for approximately one hour. With your permission this interview will be tape recorded in order to ensure accuracy. Participation is voluntary, and you will not be advantaged or disadvantaged in any way for choosing to participate or not to 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. Results may include direct quotes from participants' answers but these will remain completely anonymous. The interview material (tapes and transcripts) will only be processed by myself and my supervisor. They will be kept safe in a locked filing cabinet for five years after the research has been completed. You may refuse to answer any questions you would prefer not to, and you may choose to withdraw from the study at any point with no negative consequences. If you do wish to access results from the study the researcher will provide individual participants with a summary of the results, alternatively the research project will be held at the University of the Witwatersrand if you wish to view the whole document.

Your participation in this study would be greatly appreciated. This research will contribute both to a larger body of knowledge on the perception of the role of fatherhood in South African culture.

Kind Regards

_____

Theresa Quinn
(Researcher)
Dept of Psychology
University of the Witwatersrand
(tel) 083 704 9557

_____

Dr Katherine Bain
(Research Supervisor)
Department of Psychology

University of the Witwatersrand
(email) Katherine.Bain@wits.ac.za

# Appendix B: Written Informed Consent



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 Theresa Quinn for her study on 'The experiences of fatherhood in South African Culture'
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 without any negative consequences.
- That data will be kept in a safe place and will only be accessed by the researcher and supervisor.
- Tape recordings will be kept in a secure locked cupboard five years after the research is completed.
- No information that may identify me will be included in the research report, and my responses will remain confidential.
- Results may include direct quotes from participants' answers but these will remain completely anonymous.
- If I wish to access results from the study the researcher will provide individual participants with a summary of the results.
- There are no risks or benefits attached to my participation in this research
- The research may be published in an academic journal.

Signed _____ Date_____

# Appendix C: Consent for Tape 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 _____ give consent for the interview to be tape-recorded by Theresa Quinn for her study on 'The experiences of fatherhood in South African Culture'.

I understand that:

- The tapes and transcripts will not be seen or heard by any person in this organisation at any time, and will only be processed by the researcher.
- Tapes will be kept in a locked filing cabinet in the researcher's home.
- All tape recordings will be kept in a secure locked cupboard five years after the research is complete.
- No identifying information will be used in the transcripts or the research report.
- Results may include direct quotes from participants' answers but these will remain completely anonymous

Signed _____ Date_____

# Appendix D: Semi-structured Interview Schedule

- Can you tell me about your experience of being a father?
- What did you learn from your own father about the role of a father?
- How else have you learned about the role of a father?
- What are some of your traditional beliefs regarding fatherhood?
- How do you think the role of the mother and a father are different from each other?
- Can you explain your relationship with the mother of your child?
- What was your relationship like when she was pregnant with your child?
- What were your feelings towards your unborn child?
- What were your expectations for your unborn child?
- Did you have any preference for the gender of your child?
- Can you tell me more about this?
- Now that your child has been born has there been a change in
- The relationship with your child?
- The relationship with the mother of your child?
- In your role as a father?
- Has becoming a father caused you to reflect on your own childhood in some way?
- Can you talk a little bit about this?
- What are your ambitions as a father for the future?
- What are your ambitions for your child for the future?
- Do you think the role of the father has changed since you were a child? If so How?
- Do you think different cultures have different roles/expectations of fathers?

# Appendix E: Information for Referral



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*

Dear Participant

Thank you for taking part in the research project. Your contribution to South African Psychological research is greatly appreciated. Should you wish to view the final report a copy will be kept at the University of the Witwatersrand in the psychology department or you may contact the researcher if you would like a copy to be made available to you.

If you would like to speak with a trained mental health professional please contact one of the following organizations

- Emthonjeni Centre (011) 717-4513
- Family Life Centre (011) 788-4784

Alternately if you would like to contact someone telephonically you could contact the following organization

- Life line (011) 728-1347

Kind Regards

_____

Theresa Quinn
(Researcher)
Dept of Psychology
University of the Witwatersrand
(tel) 083 704 9557

_____

Dr Katherine Bain
(Research Supervisor)
Department of Psychology
University of the Witwatersrand

(email) Kartherine.Bain@wits.ac.za

# Appendix F: Ethics Clearance Certificate