

**CAREER NARRATIVES OF SINGLE BLACK AFRICAN MOTHERS: A
POSTMODERNIST EXPLORATION**

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DECLARATION - PLAGIARISM

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Signed.....

Supervisor: Prof Nhlanhla Mkhize

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ABSTRACT

Career counselling with women is not the same as with men because women's career development is highly intertwined with their roles as mothers and wives (Sharf, 2002). The current study argues that career counselling with black South African women cannot be the same as that of men nor that of all women because their career development is intertwined with an Afrocentric and a relational view of the self. Career counselling with black South African single mothers is unique because their career development is intertwined with their roles as single parents coupled with their relational view of themselves. It argues that modernist approaches to career counselling are inappropriate and irrelevant when working with black South African single mothers. To support this argument the study explored the unique career development experiences of Black South African single mothers using a postmodernist framework. The narrative inquiry framework was used to explore the career experiences of nine black South African single mothers. The narratives were analysed using Doucet and Mauthner's (2008) voice-centred relational method. It was found that the unique experiences of black South African single mothers include the need for flexible working hours, social support and the need to play the role of both parents to their children. Modernist approaches to career counselling are unable to take these relational and socio-economic dilemmas into account when working with black South African single mothers. A Post-modern approach such as the Relational Cultural Approach is recommended as an appropriate career counselling tool when working with black South African single mothers.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Research

South Africa has seen a major influx of women, particularly Black women to the labour force. This has had a substantial effect on career psychology in that career counsellors have had to learn how to deal with career issues which are specific to women (Drummond & Ryan, 1995; Sharf, 2002; Naidoo & May, 2006). This is because men do not face the same challenges that women often do such as discrimination, sexual harassment and disruptions due to child rearing (Sharf, 2002). This has meant that career psychology theory and practice has had to develop new methods to handle the needs of women. Particularly investigating at the South African context, traditional or modernist career theories and practices dealing with women's career needs have their shortcomings due to the country's diversity in language, ethnicities and cultural backgrounds. This means that traditional career counselling can no longer meet the needs of clients because matching one's interest and values to an occupation is no longer relevant, rather black single mothers are concerned with survival issues such as providing for their families (Casale & Posel, 2002). Many of these theories are silent on issues of gender and racial discrimination. Thus, applying modernist theories to black single mothers in the South African context with its history of apartheid becomes problematic.

The term "career" no longer refers to one occupation for life but rather a series of occupations over a life span (Collin & Young, 2000). For many women the assumption that career paths are characteristically orderly, sequential and continuous does not fit because women's career paths are often interrupted by childrearing and family responsibilities. Rather, these women need career development theories that take on a more constructive view of career and which are free of gender-role and racial stereotyping (Naidoo & May, 2006). Gilligan (1982) argues that many theories in the social sciences are based on male human development. She further argues that masculine identities are defined by separation and individuation while feminine identities are defined by attachment and relationships. Women's development is thus different to men's as is seen in the relational nature of women's experiences. This informs women's career development because it explains the psychology of their choices and

experiences. This has implications for career counselling as it means that career planning needs to be combined with personal counselling (Maree, Ebersohn & Molepo, 2006).

Everingham, Stevenson and Warner-Smith (2007) found that women held multiple meanings of the definition of work. They had jobs, did voluntary work and took on work experience in occupations that interested them. As a consequence, these life roles become more intertwined creating a situation in which career counsellors have to work with these women's life trajectories as opposed to exclusively working with their career paths (Savickas, Nota, Rossier, Dauwalder, Duarte, Guichard, Soresi, Van Esbroek & Vianen, 2009).

There seems to be little to no research on single Black South African mothers and their career stories. The career development experiences of black women are unique to the South African context due to the history of Apartheid. South African black women faced barriers that women from other countries did not such as restrictions on the type of career that could be pursued (Mathabe & Temane, 1993). For most single mothers career is inseparable from their life struggles. When researching the experiences of these women it was imperative to ensure that the research instruments and research theories used were context sensitive. Thus, a postmodern approach was taken to interpret the unique experiences of single black South African mothers.

1.2 Research Problem

Many of the studies on single working mothers are comparative studies that investigate the difference between married and single mothers. These studies often accentuate negative perceptions of single mothers. A study done by Wallis and Price (2003) on single South African working mothers found that single working mothers developed characteristics such as strength and independence from their experiences of being single working mothers. Studies that explore the experiences of single working mothers are limited and yet global statistics indicate that a quarter of all families with dependent children are headed by single mothers (Burns & Scott, 1994). This indicates that the unique experiences of working single mothers may be overlooked. It also indicates a clear need for more studies on the unique

experiences of single working mothers. The relational approach is useful when working with the career narratives of black South African single mothers because it will be able to take into account issues of gender, race and culture within the career development experiences of these women (Brown & Gilligan, 1992).

The current study seeks to present the career developmental needs of black single mothers within the South African context. It seeks to explore their career narratives in order to narrate their unique career development needs and experiences. The relational approach to career development is suggested as a method that is more relevant and appropriate in facilitating the career development of black single mothers within the South African context (Brown & Gilligan, 1992). As South Africa moves away from its history of Apartheid, it continually establishes itself in new ways of thinking and viewing itself. This has begun to situate South African people in a postmodern context (Viljoen & van der Walt, 2003). The postmodern context requires a shift from stability to flexibility in the sense that employees need to learn to keep up with new careers so that they can develop the necessary skills to accommodate the demands of the ever-changing environment (Savickas et al., 2009). This is especially so for Black people, women in particular, who historically had limited career options (Stead & Watson, 1998).

In the field of career guidance, practitioners note that modernist theories and assessment tools are outdated and irrelevant thus creating a need for new ways of thinking about career guidance or career counselling. Career guidance is a field of interventions focused on serving those engaged in career planning and career decision-making (Herr, 1997). South Africa like many other countries has seen the increase of women in the labour force. This has had implications for career counselling since most career counselling models and theories have been centred on serving men, in particular White middle class men (Stead, 1996). If career counselling is to remain relevant it needs to meet the needs of the people it seeks to serve. In order to meet these needs career counselling must firstly recognise what these needs are. Frizelle (2002) showed that black South African women's career development was affected by environmental and financial circumstances to a large extent. Fabiano (2010) found similar results in her study of black female psychologists in South Africa. She also found that the

career development of black females in South Africa was influenced by environmental and financial factors; for example, many of them faced financial constraints to the extent that their studies were interrupted by the need to work. A study has been done on the career development of black South African women and on black female psychologists in South Africa as mentioned above but no study has yet been done on black South African single mothers. The current study seeks to fill that gap.

1.3 Rationale

In order for career counsellors and researchers to form objectives and methods for career counselling with women, they need to begin to understand the issues and barriers to women's career development (Betz, 1994). Many of the theories in career psychology are westernised and most of the research found in career development are either Eurocentric or focus on male samples (Naidoo & May, 2006). There have been a few studies done on black women's career development in South Africa (Fabiano, 2010; Frizelle, 2002). This population has been little researched thus creating a need to explore how work life and community expectations have affected these women's self-image as well as the meanings, constructions and challenges that these women have faced in designing their careers. A relational methodology is used because it situates the person in culture and community. It also takes the historical and psychological realities of the person into account (Mkhize & Frizelle, 2000).

The term "career" is used here to mean the pattern of an individual's occupations across their working lifespan (Collin & Young, 2000). If career counsellors can begin to understand the challenges, needs and skills of the clients they deal with, they will be able to formulate new and better models of helping these clients. The context of career counselling is changing as the nature of work evolves. Career theory and career practice is highly influenced by the environment. This is seen in the fact that most career theories are based on westernised values such as individualism and independence (Nel, 2006). This makes it difficult to transpose to a non-western context. This is particularly so in the South African context where the majority of the population is black and most black people value interdependence and a sense of community (Stead, 1996). In the field of career counselling the client populations have become more diverse and multi-barriered (Ebersohn & Mbetse, 2003). This relates to black

single mothers because they face many barriers to their career development. Their career development is intertwined with their life struggles such that career theories that focus on matching the self to occupations become inadequate. This makes it even more salient that career theory and practice should be more context-sensitive. This shift from Modernist career theory to Post-modernist career theory has already begun in career theory and practice where before career counselling was based on modernist theories which merely focused on matching people to careers, with Frank Parson's (1909) Trait and Factor theory or more commonly known as his matching model and has now begun to take context into account with Post-modernist theories such as Narrative Theory and Relational Cultural Theory. The matching model was critiqued for not giving a contextualised perspective of the individual. Postmodern theories arose in response to this need by focusing on a more holistic approach such as the relational cultural approach to career counselling which is more context sensitive (Mkhize, 2011).

Many of the traditional approaches to career theories and counselling have been silent in dealing with the career development of black women. These theories focus on an individualistic notion of the self which is assumed to be singular and stable (Stead & Watson, 1998). These theories have not dealt with issues of gender, race or culture in the African context and yet many black people and black women in particular are engaged in various forms of work. The relational approach takes into account that the self is relational in the sense that one person can occupy various roles making the self an entity that has multiple aspects to it (Brown & Gilligan, 1992). These varying roles have a profound effect on the career development of an individual. In the case of black single mothers in South Africa these experiences can be gendered, cultural or economical. Using the relational approach to career development would thus be instrumental in facilitating the career development of black women in South Africa.

The current study focused on the career narratives of black single mothers, using postmodern career counselling perspectives as a theoretical point of departure. Given the changing context, career narratives will consequently also have to be redefined. The career narratives of women have changed immensely and new narratives have emerged such as the fact that

women have a greater range of career choices, less social surveillance and more equality with their partners (Everingham *et al.*, 2007). It seems then from current research that the career narratives of women and single mothers in particular are constantly changing and developing. The relational approach becomes useful and is suggested as an appropriate approach to investigate the career development of black women within the South African context.

1.4 Research Aims and Objectives

The purpose of the current study was to explore and describe the needs, challenges and career constructions of Black South African single mothers. This took the form of exploring the narratives of single mothers to understand how they create meaning in their careers. The objective was to find out how these women constructed their career narratives as well as how they managed to maintain the multiple roles in their lives. The current study sought to explore the career needs of Black single mothers so that career counselling with this population could be improved. It was one of the aims of the study to establish up-to-date research to inform the development of new and appropriate career models. It is envisaged that the study will inform, in some way, career theories and career assessments with this population of South African women.

The objectives of the study were to find out:

1. The meaning of ‘career’ for black African single mothers;
2. The challenges faced by single black African mothers in pursuing their careers;
3. How these mothers balance job/family roles; and
4. How these mothers experience motherhood

1.5 Methodology

The study used a qualitative design and a social constructionist paradigm to inform the design. Social constructionists propose that the world is constructed by people as social actors through the medium of language (Thrift & Amundson, 2005). Social constructionism then focuses on the social processes and dynamics of social interaction (Blustein, Schultheiss &

Flum, 2004). Identity and career identity are constructed within these social relationships (Collin & Young, 2000). The self is not seen as separate from the social context but rather as interconnected with it. This has relevance for these single mothers whose career identities are connected to their social contexts.

Narrative is a form in which human experience is made meaningful (Gibson, 2004). In using the narrative approach within the interviewing process of these single mothers the study aimed to describe how these women made their career experiences meaningful and also how they constructed their career trajectories. The voice-centred, relational methodology, which enables the researcher to listen for the way the narrator feels and speaks of him or herself, was used to analyse the data (Doucet & Mauthner, 2008; Gilligan, 1982; Mkhize & Frizelle, 2000).

1.6 Definition of Terms

Career Guidance: this involves, in the narrow focus, finding a job through the use of tests and assessments (Drummond & Ryan, 1995).

Career Counselling: This has to do with making career exploration, planning and transition decisions with person over their life span through the use of assessments as well as a counselling relationship between the counsellor and client (Drummond & Ryan, 1995).

Career: The term 'career' does not only speak of the specific job an individual holds but for the purposes of this paper; it is defined as all the different domains within a person's life that affect their aspirations, dreams and goals such as the environment, the economic climate and so forth (Collin & Young, 2000).

Social Constructionism: this is a theoretical orientation that states that there are many truths which are perspectival and situated in relationships. Knowledge is recognized as being socially constructed and is contextually embedded (Stead, 2004).

Constructivism: is a theoretical orientation that argues that each person constructs the world of experience mentally through cognitive processes. It proposes that the world cannot be known directly rather the mind imposes its own constructions of the world (Young & Collin, 2004).

Relational Perspective: is the view that the self is not separate from others but is interconnected with others. It is the recognition that the self and others are interdependent and that the self is embedded in a complex web of intimate and larger social relations (Gilligan, 1982).

Postmodernism: Postmodern thought is constituted within two arguments, the first is that knowledge is formed collectively through forms of discourse, and second, knowledge is plural where multiple truths exist (Hekman, 1990).

1.7 Dissertation Outline

Chapter 1 gives a general introduction which includes the rationale, methodology and key terms used in the study. It also offers a concise version of what the aims and objectives of the study are. Chapter 2 presents a review of the relevant literature and highlights the gaps in current research that the current study seeks to address. It also presents the theoretical frameworks that underpin the study. Chapter 3 presents the design of the study, the sampling techniques as well as the data collection procedures that were used. It then describes the data analysis methods and the rationale for using the voice-centred relational approach. Chapter 4 provides the results and a discussion of the results in relation to the literature and the theoretical framework that underpin the study. Chapter 5 presents the concluding comments and recommendations based on the outcomes of the study.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter, through a review of literature, seeks to show the need for research on the career needs of black single mothers in South Africa by highlighting the research gap in studies related to their career development. The review begins with a background on career counselling in South Africa, followed by a description of traditional career theories and practices in relation to the career development of black single mothers in South Africa and how they have dealt with issues of gender, race, culture and economic status. The review then presents extant research and literature in career theory and practice as they relate to black single mothers in South Africa. Postmodern approaches are then introduced. The relational approach to career development is proposed as an appropriate model for exploring the career development trajectories of black African single mothers in the South African context.

2.1 Career Counselling in South Africa

In South Africa, Apartheid has affected the distribution of career counselling resources within the population. Thus, in examining the social context of South Africa one has to look at the influence of colonisation as well as apartheid within the social fabric of the country. From as early as the 16th century, race was the dividing factor in society where Blacks, Coloureds and Indians were denied basic human rights (Stead, 1996). The indigenous people of South Africa were forcibly dispossessed and subjugated such that they formed a large part of the farming and industrial labour supply (Maree, 2009). The situation was exacerbated in 1948 when the National Party pursued its policy of Apartheid (Stead, 1996). Access to careers for the black South African population was restricted through the implementation of the Bantu Education Act No 47 of 1953 to regulate the entry and supply of the job market (Nicholas, Naidoo & Pretorius, 2006). This policy created many inequalities in society such as differences in the availability of jobs and quality of education, due to the introduction of black learners to Bantu Education Act No 47 of 1953 which advocated that black people should be taught skills to meet the demands of secondary industries (Mathabe & Temane, 1993). Consequently many black learners continue to prefer Social and Investigative types of careers due to poor high school Maths and Science results birthed by lack of exposure as well as the perception of these careers as more economically viable (Mkhize, Sithole, Xaba & Mngadi, 1998). Career

guidance was limited to White schools, and even when Black schools received career guidance in 1981, it was insufficient due to untrained guidance personnel (Stead, 1996).

The lack of career choice skills within the Black population has meant that the aspirations of these learners were poorly matched to labour market trends. As a result, the country continues to see a high unemployment rate (Stead & Watson, 1998). Apartheid policies have left many Black people unskilled or semi-skilled, meaning that their occupational knowledge is limited. Career counselling is an expensive service and cannot be accessed by a large amount of the population due to economic disparities (Maree, Ebersohn & Molepo, 2006). Black people remain disadvantaged when it comes to choosing a career simply because of their limited occupational and personal knowledge. Few rural and township learners are exposed to career counselling, consequently, they are denied the opportunity to realise their full potential (Maree, 2009).

2.2 Career Counselling with Women

South Africa is a developing country, which means that, while the country is highly in need of skilled labour, the majority of the population is either unskilled or semi-skilled (Stead, 1996). The country is highly in need of career counselling that is relevant to a diverse population as is the case in South Africa so that it can be useful. This is based on issues such as cultural ignorance where career counselling is largely facilitated by privileged counsellors who lack an understanding of the cultural as well as political struggles that the marginalised population face (Maree, Ebersohn & Molepo, 2006). The career assessment tools used are also unhelpful because they are based on western principles and therefore do not represent the majority of the population which is black.

The issue is that career counselling is founded on western principles which often advocate for an isolated view of the self, where the individual is viewed outside of their community, family and social context (Asante, 1991; Mkhize, 2004; Ntuli, 1999). Black people identify with the African principles of interdependence and connectedness where the self is seen to be in connection with other people and the environment (Mkhize, 2004; Stead, 1996). The career assessments tools are especially irrelevant to Black South African women because most of

these assessments are based on research conducted on White American men (Naidoo & May, 2006). Traditional theories to career development often assume that career paths are orderly, sequential and continuous. Naidoo and May (2006) however argue that this is not the case for many women because they are often focused on how their work and family roles may fit together in the future. They further argue that these women need career development theories that are free of gender-role and racial stereo-typing.

Theories related to the career development of women have been evolving over the past 50 years. Farmer (2006) writes that many of these theories use foundational concepts from traditional theories of career development and choice such as an individualistic view of the self. She states that these emerging trends are more relevant to various subgroups of women who have career development needs similar to men. While these theories address the effects of socialization, they continue to rely on traditional approaches to career development which are culture-bound to the western context, making them inappropriate to transpose to the African context. A turn to traditional approaches to career development is made to illustrate this point.

2.3 Trait-Factor Theories to Career

Trait-Factor theory was a major building block in the development of career counselling instruments (Ackerman & Beier, 2003). Trait theory is one of the key frameworks used for understanding human personality. Trait theory argues that there exists fixed patterns of behaviour, thought and emotions within individuals and these habitual patterns are referred to as traits. These traits are regarded as the building blocks of the human personality. It is envisaged that they define individuals and influence every aspect of their lived experience. Trait theory investigates the differences between people by focusing on the combination and interaction of various traits that form a unique personality. The theory serves as the underpinning of all modernist career models or theories as it provides a framework to understand the behaviour, thoughts and emotions of the self in the working environment.

Frank Parsons (1909) established his vocational guidance agency in 1908 and proposed a model which later became known as the matching model. The model has three premises: that people are different from each other; that jobs are different; and that through the study of both one could achieve a match between the person and the job (Parsons, 1909). In order to find congruence between the person and the job, valid and reliable data was needed which was gathered in the form of tests and assessment tools (Kidd, 2006). This person-to-environment fit approach worked on the assumption that people's traits were to be matched with factors from the working world in order for people to find their desired occupation. These career assessments focus on the individual and ignore the fact that the individual is influenced by contextual factors. Theories based on the trait-factor model present a mechanist view of an individual, because they assume that the person is made up of traits that are static and rigid. This is further explained in Holland's theory of Career Typology (Nel, 2006).

2.3.1 Holland's theory of career typology

This theory centres on finding congruence between the six personality types and the six environment types proposed by Holland (1996). These personality types are Realistic, Investigative, Social, Conventional, Enterprising and Artistic. The job of the career counsellor is to help individuals match their personality type to an environment of the same name. The Realistic type was described as practical, frank, genuine and inflexible. The Investigative type was described as analytical, independent and rational. The Social type was explained as being empathic, patient, friendly and responsible whilst the Conventional type was described to be conforming, orderly and persistent. The Enterprising personality was seen to be ambitious, self-confident and extroverted. Finally the Artistic type was described as creative, impulsive and sensitive. The career typology theory states that a person will present more than one of these types and that in fact; each individual has a unique combination of several of the types from the six types that the theory proposes. The personality types that present themselves the strongest in the individual are then coded by using the first letter of each type in order of magnitude (Spokane & Cruza-Guet, 2005). Generally the strongest three letters of the type code are used. Holland (1996) argues that these types present themselves in a hexagonal model and this model is used to investigate the relationships between and among the six types. This model is alleged to be the same for all social and cultural groups (Spokane & Cruza-Guet, 2005). By testing the individual to see

which personality types they present Holland's (1996) theory proposes that people will search for work environments that match their personalities so that they will be able to freely express their preferences and values. The theory assumes that people will naturally be drawn to environments that they feel they would be competent in. Holland (1996) argues that a good indicator of job satisfaction is congruence between the individual and the work environment.

This model tends to be gender-biased in its reinforcement of social stereotypes about the personalities and suitable careers of women. Men have been noted to score higher in the Realistic, Investigative and Enterprising personalities whilst women often scored higher in the Social, Conventional and Artistic personality types (Nel, 2006). This type of personality testing inhibits women's entering into the Science-Engineering-Technology (SET) fields because it feeds pre-existing social, cultural and structural stereotypes about women and as a consequence can be one of many barriers to women entering the scientific professions (Naidoo & May, 2006).

Holland's (1996) hexagonal model was found to not be applicable in the South African context (Nel, 2006). A study done by Watson, Stead and Schonegevel (1998) on 529 black South African adolescents found that the structure of interests of the black adolescents did not have an acceptable level of fit to Holland's hexagonal structure. Holland's theory is underpinned by the trait-factor framework and thus can also be criticized for being too individualistic and westernised for the South African context. One of the reasons is that it assumes that the individual and or the environment do not change over time. It also assumes that an individual's interests do not change over time and that they make a career choice only once in their lifespan (Watson & Stead, 1999). Individualistic cultures emphasise the inner and self-determining nature of the self, whereas collectivist cultures emphasise the contextualised and relational nature of the self (Eaton & Louw, 2000). Traditional Western views of the self are around the notion of an independent self which is argued to exist outside of social and contextual factors (Mkhize, 2004). This individualised notion does not take into account that an individual's family, socio-economic status or even gender can influence their interests and behaviours. This theory and related personality tests and assessments are inappropriate to use when working with black South African single mothers. This is because

black South Africans come from a collectivist culture which means they are aware of and believe in the interconnectedness of everything in the universe such that they describe themselves in specific and contextualised ways (Eaton & Louw, 2000). Their decisions incorporate the social and contextual factors to the extent that personality and career theories cannot explain.

2.3.2 Super's seven career patterns for women

One of the first theorists in the field of career psychology to specifically acknowledge women's career developmental needs was Donald Super (1957). He proposed that women had seven possible career patterns that characterize their career development. These were: stable homemaking, conventional, stable working, double track, interrupted, unstable, and multiple trial. He argued that the career development of women was influenced by three core elements, namely, homemaking, childcare and their participation in the labour force. The stable homemaking career pattern describes women who focus on building their home life and never entering the labour force after they have completed their education. The conventional career pattern describes those women who participate in the labour market until they marry after which they completely focus on the home and family life. The stable career pattern describes those women who never marry and participate in the labour force their whole lives. The double track career pattern in turn describes those women who juggle both work and family. The interrupted career pattern describes women who leave the labour force due to childrearing and return once the responsibilities of childrearing have lessened. The unstable and multiple career patterns describe women who have various forms of unstable and irregular work histories (Osipow & Fitzgerald, 1996).

Due to the lack of research on women's career development, Super's book focused on the career development of men. However, his classification was useful in categorizing women's career values. This notwithstanding, it does not help in guiding women's career development because women are often more concerned about how to integrate home and career commitments as well as how to integrate their careers and interpersonal identities (Naidoo & May, 2006).

2.3.3 Gottfredson's theory of circumscription, compromise and self-creation

A growing amount of career theories and career research regarding women's career development arose due to a growing disquiet over the lack of appropriate career theories and research on women (Bimrose, 2001). While traditional theories to career were adapted and changed to meet women's career development needs, these theories still relied on a matching model. One such example is Gottfredson's theory of circumscription, compromise and self-creation. Gottfredson's (2002) theory proposes that self-concept is the view persons hold of themselves. The self-concept is then matched with a person's image of occupations or stereotypes of occupations. Image of occupations is the knowledge a person has about a particular occupation, such as what the occupation entails, its benefits, and downfalls. People's self-perceptions, Gottfredson says, are influenced by their genetic make-up and social world and develop during childhood and adolescence. Gottfredson (2002) argues that the person then goes through a process of circumscription which is a process of narrowing one's options by compromising occupations that they cannot access for occupations which are more seemingly suitable to their self-concept. Women are more likely to go into social types of careers because they are genetically prone to and are socialised to develop social interests and abilities. Thus, when they are going through the process of circumscription they begin to rule out occupations that are not within their self-concept. Gottfredson's theory has the advantage of acknowledging the effects of socialisation on the self-concept. However, she still uses a matching model which assumes that career choice and development is a once off event (Watson & Stead, 1999).

The understanding of the self has changed over time from viewing the self as stable throughout the lifespan to viewing the self as constructed, multiple and flexible (Thrift & Amundson, 2005). Evidence of this is seen in the career development of women. Developmental and postmodern approaches to career theory are premised on the notion that people change over time as what may be suitable at one stage of their life may not be suitable at others (Hopfl & Atkinson, 2000). This is particularly evident in the career development of women who either take career breaks or change careers to suit family obligations. This means that career counsellors have to work with the meaning of career in these women's lives than exclusively with occupations and skills. Eaton and Louw (2000) conducted a study on the relationship between culture and the self. They found that most South African students

coming from an African or collectivist background were more likely to describe themselves in contextualized and social ways. Popular idioms within the Nguni languages illustrate this idea such as the isiZulu idiom which says “umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu”. This translates into “a person is a person through other people”. The study found that South African female students’ self-concepts were more relational than those of the males implying that women incorporate social relationships into their self-concept more than men do (Eaton & Louw, 2000). This study indicates that women’s career development is different to men’s due to the difference in self-concept.

Additionally women’s career development is often hindered by barriers such as gender discrimination where cultural and organisational beliefs influence women’s career progress. An example of this was found in a study conducted by Petersen and Gravett (2000) who explored the career experiences of women academics in a South African university. They found that women often experienced gender discrimination due to male-centred organisational structures which hinder the progression of women into high level positions. Women academics were also experiencing work role strain where they felt their workload was double due to work and family responsibilities (Petersen & Gravett, 2000). This role conflict often becomes a huge challenge in women’s career development as they have to learn how to balance and negotiate the role of being career women as well as the role of being mothers. Researches into the career development of women clearly delineate the barriers that women face in their career development.

When examining the appropriateness of traditional approaches to career development of women, Crozier (1999) argues that many of the underlying assumptions in these theories seemingly do not apply to women. The assumptions Crozier (1999) lists are: that work is assumed to be the primary life role for developing one’s identity and fulfilling one’s needs; occupational choices are made freely without barriers, limitations or stereotypes affect one’s choices; the paid work role can be separated from other major life roles and consequently career counselling should be separated from personal or lifestyle counselling, and lastly the assumption that career achievement can be accomplished independently and therefore is in the control of the individual based on their ability and initiative. Traditional approaches to

career development thus assume that the environment does not act upon the self. Such an approach has many limitations when applied to women and particularly those in the African context. This is because it does not describe or explain other barriers and challenges to women's career development such as gender discrimination, cultural context and notions of the self. Holland's and Gottfredson's theories are particularly difficult to transpose into an African context, mainly because they assume an isolated, individualized view of the self (Ntuli, 1999; Stead, 1996; Watson & Stead, 1999). Postmodern approaches are more suited to the career development of black women particularly in the South African context due to their ability to recognise the relational view that black South African women have of the self and career (Mkhize & Frizelle, 2000).

2.4 Critique of Traditional Approaches to Career Theory

Career guidance arose out of a need to match individuals to newly available jobs due to the rise of industrialisation (Mkhize, 2005). Frank Parsons (1909) proposed the matching model to meet this need and this model became the foundation of most traditional career theories to career development. This means that these career theories were based on a logical positivistic paradigm (Peavy, 1992). This is related to the fact that modernist approaches and theories tend to assume that the world is a fixed, objective entity that can be measured and made known to humans given the correct instruments (Thrift & Amundson, 2005). Career theories and practice often claim to be based on objective and value-free methods to career guidance and counselling. However this is not the case; they are embedded in a western scientific value system. Modernist approaches to career guidance were developed at a time when career choice was a once in a lifetime activity (Patton & McMahon, 2002). But this is no longer the case. With the continual advancements in technology, new careers are arising with each day. This means that individuals are expected to become lifelong learners, otherwise their skills become outdated and irrelevant (Savickas et al., 2009).

Most positivistic theories of career tend to assume that the career development of an individual is sequential, patterned and normative (Collin & Young, 2000). The career development of an individual does not occur in a vacuum, it is a subjective process that is influenced by contextual factors such as culture, family or even the economy. An individual's

understanding of the world is not static or value free rather it is influenced by culture which is continually developing over time (Cohen, Duberley & Mallon, 2004). Collin and Young (1986; 2000) argue that modernist approaches to career theory often present a de-contextualized view of the individual where the focus is on the intra-individual factors and neglect environmental factors. They further argue that subjective experiences of the career actors are often overlooked. They state that it is only since the 1990s that South African researchers have been questioning the appropriateness of these career theories for the South African context.

Traditional or modernist approaches to career theory and practice are based on individualism (Nel, 2006). The matching model has the underlying notion that individuals possess a pattern of traits that are used to assess a person's potential. Isaacson and Brown (1993) argue that this model assumes that individuals make use of cognitive processes to arrive at career decisions. They further argue that this type of reasoning assumes that career development is solely an individual endeavour. Traditional approaches to career guidance often ignore contextual factors to career development thus making it inappropriate to use in South Africa. Stead and Watson (1998) argue that career research in South Africa is based on career theories and research from the United States of America. Collin and Young (2000) argue that the term career does not have a universally- accepted meaning. Stead and Watson (1998) maintain that economic realities often undermine individual values for the South African person. Watson (2009) argues that South Africa's historical context has served to restrict the career development of its people. This is because South Africa has a unique history of apartheid which has served to influence the career development of all its citizens. Mathabe and Temane (1993) state that in South Africa the impact of the individual's external culture is more potent than their internal culture on their career development. In order to understand the career development of South Africans therefore the multicultural and economic context has to be taken into consideration (Stead & Watson, 1998). This means that South Africans need career theories that are context-sensitive in order to meet their career needs.

Crites (1969) identified three necessary conditions for career choice. These are: the individual making the choice must possess career options or career alternatives, the person must possess

the motivation to choose and finally the person must possess the freedom to choose. The realisation of these conditions in South Africa is not always possible. These conditions to a large extent are not available to many South Africans due to the country's history of having had a separatist and discriminatory political ideology which served to restrict and affect the distribution of the economic resources and consequently career development and career choice (Mathabe & Temane, 1993). Career choice in South Africa is compounded by variables such as gender, culture and socio-economic circumstances (Ebersohn & Mbetse, 2003; Stead, 1996).

For a long time the non-white population in South Africa had a limited career path due to oppressive laws enforced by the Apartheid government. Black people in particular faced many barriers to career development due to laws that restricted their career options in tertiary institutions as well as in the labour market. Black women in particular had previously faced a twofold difficulty due to the fact that their career path was not only limited by gender but by race as well. There were acts such as the Vocational Education Act No 70 of 1955 which prohibited Blacks from attending selected tertiary institutions in South Africa which made it difficult for Black people to enter higher positions in the job market (Mathabe & Temane, 1993). These women also had to contend with the status of being considered legal minors before the passing of the Matrimonial Property Act in 1984 which abolished the husband's control over his wife's right to negotiate and undertake contractual agreements (Erwee, 1986). Women's career choices have expanded within the current post-apartheid context. However, many black women do not always possess the freedom to choose their own career paths due to factors such as lack of finances for tertiary education, child-rearing and family responsibilities.

Traditional approaches to career development, although claiming to be universal, are culture-bound to the Euro-American context. They come with embedded assumptions like the notion that the individual possesses career choice. It has been established that this is mostly not the case for many South Africans due to contextual variables. South Africa therefore needs an approach to career that is sensitive to issues of culture, gender, politics and socio-economic circumstances.

2.5 Research on Women's Career Development

2.5.1 The feminisation of the labour market

When discussing the topic of career counselling with women, a description of the history of women in the working world becomes necessary. Interest in the feminisation of the labour market as well as career counselling with women began in the United States of America, largely due to amendments to the civil rights and higher education legislation in 1972. This legislation advocated for gender equity in education and the workplace (Farmer, 2008). This largely changed the face of work for women. Women's education opportunities increased, enabling them to enter higher-level managerial positions and consequently they were able to get much higher salaries (Burger & Woolard, 2005). This also meant that women spent more time out of the home and this created a need for balance between work and family. Career counsellors were now faced with the task of helping women balance their career and family lives so that they lessened work/family role strain (Drummond & Ryan, 1995). South Africa as well as many other countries faced similar changes with regards to women entering the workforce.

In South Africa women's career development has been immensely influenced by the changing political context. Career development for women took on a new turn post-apartheid (Geldenhuys & De Lange, 2007). Women and particularly black women, who previously had limited access to career development now lived in a society where gender equity legislation encouraged their career advancement (Riordan & Louw-Potgieter, 2011). The transforming labour market and increasing educational opportunities for women has contributed to the changing role of women in the workplace (Geldenhuys & De Lange, 2007). Women have become more educated and this has increased their employment opportunities in the labour market (Casale & Posel, 2002). The growth in female employment increased dramatically between 1995 and 2002. However, women were overrepresented in poorly paid domestic work and informal self-employment (Burger & Woolard, 2005). While most females are drawn to the labour market due to economic demand, most South African women are drawn to the labour market out of economic need (Casale & Posel, 2002).

Research that has been conducted on working mothers has tended to focus on women in high level positions and has neglected those in lower paying positions (Patel, Govender, Paruk & Ramgoon, 2006). In South Africa, Black single mothers seem to be over-represented in the lower paying jobs, making it even more salient to research this population (Burger & Woolard, 2005). The current study seeks to fill this gap by focusing on single mothers in the lower paying positions as well as those in the higher paying positions.

In 2000, 40% of the economically active population in South Africa were women (Whitehead & Kotze, 2003). One of the reasons for the increase in female participation in the labour force is the increase of female-headed households particularly in African households. This is due to the fact that most of these women are widowed, divorced or never married (Casale & Posel, 2002). Susan Ziehl's (1994) study on single parent families found that South African black single mothers often opted out of marriage due to men's attitudes and behaviour when it came to the economic resources within the family. Ziehl (1994) reported that these women complained of men who did not pull their weight financially, who wasted money and placed unnecessary financial strain on the family. In a paper discussing single motherhood and marriage markets in South Africa, Gustafsson and Worku (2006) maintain that the increase in unmarried black single mothers is as a result of the lack of economically attractive men. They further maintain that black couples are more likely to postpone marriage because of the amount of time it takes to raise the bride price or more commonly known as *ilobolo*.

The social fabric of South Africa like many other countries is transforming. The traditional western family structure of the father as breadwinner and mother as housewife is falling away due to multiple factors such as the HIV/AIDS pandemic and financial need. The South African family structure is particularly unique due to the effects of the HIV/AIDS pandemic, apartheid and the migrant labour system. Over 2 million children have lost their fathers to the HIV/AIDS pandemic (Holborn & Eddy, 2011). Single mother families as well as dual-worker families are becoming increasingly prevalent. According to Gustafsson and Worku (2006), while study of the 2001 South African Census, they found that more than 48% of black mothers had never been married and were likely to be living as single mothers with their children. A Russian study done by Lokshin, Harris and Popkin (2000) maintained that single

mother families were especially vulnerable to poverty due to the lack of a second provider. This means that single mothers are more subject to contextual factors than married mothers which make their career development even more unique.

Career counselling with women is not the same as career counselling with men. Women face a wider range of career concerns than men due to choices about marriage and children (Sharf, 2002). Most women and particularly single mothers find that their career development is highly intertwined with their role as a parent (Naidoo & May, 2006). This means that career counselling had to be tailored to their specific needs. Career guidance and career counselling models were traditionally developed for men. Most of the theories and models were developed based on research conducted on White, middle class men (Watson & Stead, 1999). As more women entered the labour market therefore, career counsellors had to meet the new demand. This meant that the field of career guidance and counselling with women developed and expanded. Career counselling has to take the needs of women and even more specifically the needs of black women into account as more and more black women enter the labour force. Black single mothers are more likely to enter the job market than married women due to the lack of a second provider as well as financial need.

One of the salient factors in career counselling with women and the career development of women seems to be the need for support. Whether the support is social or economic it seems to be vital in aiding females create a fulfilling career trajectory (Sandfort & Hill, 1996). Sandfort and Hill's (1996) study on the effects of early economic support of American single mothers, found that mothers are more likely to be self-sufficient later on simply because the money they receive enables them to remain stable and helps them further their education. It also allows them to find jobs and gain job experience to allow for future self-sufficiency. The study also found that self-sufficiency depended a great deal on what the mother did after the birth of the first child, that is, whether she chose to study, to work or to stay at home (Sandfort & Hill, 1996).

In an article examining work-family conflict among low-income unmarried mothers, Ciabattari (2007) reported that American single mothers were more likely to maintain employment stability and financial self-sufficiency if they received access to support resources such as paid sick-leave, health insurance, child-care subsidies and supportive co-workers. One of the most relevant needs for single mothers reported by Ciabattari (2007) was the need for flexible work schedules to allow these single mothers to handle family needs.

2.5.2 Barriers to career counselling with women

2.5.2.1 Culture

Certain cultural beliefs have posed as barriers to women due to beliefs about how males and females are meant to behave. Some of these beliefs are also engrained in the way males and females are socialised such as the activities and toys boys are given which are very aggressive as opposed to those given to girls who are gentle and caring. These beliefs then become embedded in the types of careers that men and women choose. For example, men are more prone to choose careers that require leadership skills and involve risk whilst women will tend to choose social careers such as nursing and teaching that require caring and patience (Gottfredson, 2002). Women often experience psychological barriers to career advancement due to a low self-esteem and a fear of rejection (Lewis-Enright, Crafford & Crous, 2009).

There are also structural barriers in organisations. For instance, selection for management positions is based on male experiences of management. This means that women are measured by ideals that have traditionally served men best (Moorosi, 2007). These are influenced by cultural beliefs which still carry deeply embedded patriarchal values that hinder the achievement of gender equity in the workplace (Chisholm, 2001). A study conducted by Mathur-Helm (2006) investigating career barriers to women's career advancement in South African banks, found that most of the organisations practised a culture of long and demanding working hours which women with family obligations found difficult to maintain. Women found these conditions unfavourable in trying to pursue a career in top management. This makes it even more difficult for black single mothers to move into higher paying jobs.

2.5.2.2 Balancing work and family

Studies have shown that family obligations are one of the biggest barriers to career advancement for women. Many women have turned down job opportunities due to family responsibilities. Van Aarde and Mostert (2008) studied the effects of job and home characteristics on the work-home interaction of employed South African women and found that women who experienced high time and work demands experienced negative work-home interaction. This meant that the high job pressure and work overload negatively impacted these women's home domain. Conversely when employed South African women experienced high levels of autonomy, supervisor support and colleague support they experienced positive work-home interaction and this had a positive spill over into their home domain. It also means that support, autonomy and flexible working hours are required in both domains for employed South African working mothers to find a positive working balance between work and family life.

Exploring the situation of black mothers in South Africa it is noted that they, more than other racial groups, experience high work-home conflict. According to a study conducted by Van Den berg and Van Zyl (2008), Black South African career women reported the highest stress levels compared to women in other race groups. This was because black women were exposed to more non-work-related stressors such as psycho-social stressors, poor infrastructure and socio-economic problems. This indicates that the barriers to employed black mothers are particularly unique to the South African context.

2.5.2.3 Discrimination in the workplace

Moorosi (2007) argues that most management positions in South Africa are still associated with masculinity. She notes that career fields such as those in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) arena are influenced by gendered social practice that serve to disadvantage and hinder women's career development. Moorosi (2007) suggests that these social practices need to be challenged in order for gender equity to be achieved. The Employment Equity Act 55 of 1998 (Republic of South Africa, 1998) has made it easy for more women are being placed in management level positions. However, these women lack resources such as training, decision making authority and social support (Van Den Berg &

Van Zyl, 2008). During the Apartheid era black women mainly worked as domestic workers, teachers or nurses (Martineau, 1997). In the current post-apartheid context black women still find themselves being treated as subordinates due to the history of apartheid. Most organisations often support a male culture which creates huge pressure to reach performance targets and budgets. Single mothers are often discriminated against due to a perception that they are not committed enough to their work since family obligations often draw them away from long hours of work. These environments are often extremely competitive and those who work at different paces are often discriminated against (Lewis-Enright, Crafford & Crous, 2009). This indicates that the fight for gender equity must not be just a superficial one but rather one in which women are given the proper training and support so that they do not then receive discrimination based on perceptions of incompetency. South Africa has deeply embedded patriarchal beliefs within its communal and organisational cultures (Mathabe & Temane, 1993). Power differences thus serve to limit women's advancement in their careers. These power differences often play themselves out in men intimidating women where women often face issues of sexual harassment in the workplace. Jewkes, Penn-Kekana, Levin, Ratsaka, and Schrieber (2001) studied the prevalence of abuse of women in three South African provinces and 3% of women reported being forced to have sex with a man to obtain a job and 2% were told they would lose their jobs if they did not have sex with their bosses. These are some of the many challenges women face in their career development.

2.6 Postmodern Approaches to Career Counselling as a Point of Theoretical Departure

The field of career psychology is filled with research, assessments and methodologies that have been designed for white American males. The use of these methodologies on black women in South Africa only serves to silence and disempower these women simply because these career assessment tools are inappropriate and do not take into account the psychology of these women (Naidoo & May, 2006). To ignore the lack of relevant career tools for black women serves to reinforce the inequalities placed on black South Africans by the apartheid government. It has already been discussed within this literature review that the career development of black people in South Africa has been limited, to say the least (De Bruin & Nel, 1996). The lack of resources and career assessment tools for black people has not yet been addressed. This is disturbing especially since the career opportunities for black South

Africans are continually expanding in South Africa. This is even more evident for black women with acts such as The Employment Equity Act of 1998.

South Africa is a diverse nation with diverse settings. Thus, continuing to use etic approaches to career counselling is to disadvantage the majority of the population. Career counselling needs to make use of cross-cultural approaches that can be useful to the nation as a whole. This is because a career is not just perceived to be something separate from the person but is rather seen as a life project in which people design, construct and place meaning on their careers (Savickas et al., 2009). Career Counselling has to meet the career needs of people but it cannot do so through the use of traditional career models and theories because they are no longer relevant (Savickas et al., 2009). This is because postmodernism has brought with it new ways of defining the self and the world (Thrift & Amundson, 2005). Postmodern thought is constituted within two arguments. The first is that knowledge is formed collectively through forms of discourse, and second, knowledge is plural where multiple truths and or realities exist (Hekman, 1990). A postmodern context therefore is one in which reality is relative and not objective. The postmodern era has brought with it discontinuity in the sense that the organisation can no longer define and contain the employee rather the employees have to script their own career stories in order for them to make sense thereof. As social constructionism puts it, the social world is constructed by individuals through social practices (Cohen et al., 2004). The career narrative of the individual is a social process which means that the career of a person is constructed and endowed with meaning (Cohen et al., 2004).

New conceptualisations of the term 'career' arise out of the postmodern context. This has huge implications for the individual as well as career theory and practice particularly in the way in which the meaning of career is constructed and ascribed. Postmodern Approaches to career development speak to the situational and local experiences of the South African people. It is for this reason that these approaches have been chosen as a main point of theoretical departure for the current study. Most postmodern career counselling approaches have several key principles such as 1) there are multiple truths or realities, 2) each person's life is a narrative or story, 3) meaning is constructed and, 4) the most important meaning is constructed in relationships (Locke & Gibbons, 2008; Peavy, 1996). Social constructionism,

the narrative approach and the relational approach all touch on these principles in connection with their influence on the career development of black South African single mothers.

2.6.1 The narrative approach

The narrative approach is useful when working with black South African single mothers because career counselling is based on the interpretation of personal meanings and meaning is made visible through stories (McCormack, 2000). These stories or narratives are socially constructed between self and society through language (McCormack, 2000). An individual's narrative about the world is constructed through personal experiences with others; it is also constructed through the language used to collectively describe these experiences (Thrift & Amundson, 2005). Meaning making is a collective rather than individual process, narrative and language becomes the centre of this meaning-making process in the sense that it both creates and reflects social practices (Cohen et al, 2004). This is done through the process of reflection, meaning making and construction where the tool of narrative is used to reflect on one's life, make sense of it and construct new identities (Mkhize, 2005). The stories people tell about their careers are important because they enable career counsellors to extrapolate meaning from them (Savickas et al., 2009). Postmodernism affects career counselling in the sense that the meanings individuals give to their work experiences are interpreted subjectively by making use of narratives where narratives about the world are people's own personal creations. Narratives are thus used to make sense of their experiences and ascribe meaning (Thrift & Amundson, 2005).

Narrative is a form in which experience is made meaningful where individuals use the process of storytelling to understand themselves and the world around them (McCormack, 2000). People not only use narrative to understand their world but they also use them to connect their past, present and future in the sense that narratives contain themes of the past. This allows the individual to see where they come from and how they can move forward (Polkinghorne, 1988). The client is considered to be the expert on his or her own story. Storytelling carries rich information that helps support the counselling process and in this way the counsellor is able to obtain what clients need to know about themselves (Maree, Ebersohn & Molepo, 2006). The implications of postmodernism is that it has brought with it

a decentralisation of career in the sense that employees can no longer plan to work in one company their whole lives but rather work in shifts or assignments throughout their lives. This requires employees to script a story or a narrative to make sense of their career path and career development (Maree, 2007).

2.6.2 Social constructionism

Social constructionism is essentially interested in how the world becomes endowed with meaning, as well as how these meanings are negotiated, reproduced and transformed through social practice (Cohen et al., 2004). Social constructionism argues that the meaning of experiences is not given subjectively but rather is constructed socially between people through the use of language. They argue that there are multiple realities and truths. Social constructionism puts forward that there are many truths which are situated in relationships and they are perspectival (Stead, 2004). This means that truth can be interpreted and constructed from multiple vantage points (Hermans, 2001).

Hermans (2001) argues against the idea of the existence of one centralized self or 'I'. He argues that there are many 'I' positions that can be held by the same person. Early understandings of the dialogical self were presented by William James (1890) who made a distinction between the 'I' and 'Me'. The 'I' being a self as known with a sense of sameness through time and a sense of being distinct from others, while the 'Me' was presented as where the self is known and is composed of elements that are considered to belong to oneself (Hermans, 2001). James (1890) concluded that all that can be called the person's own can also become a part of the known self. This incorporates, amongst others, people's mental processes, their bodies, families, houses, ancestors, friends and even the surrounding environment (Hermans, 2001). This means that as a person is confronted with different social contexts; these contexts will stimulate different ways of being oneself (Salgado & Hermans, 2005).

The self is central to the idea of career counselling simply because in looking at what career counselling is, we begin to understand that within psychology, interventions are mainly

orientated around the self. In this way we see that self and other or self and context are not separate or outside of each other rather; they are relational to each other (Hermans & Kempen, 1993; Hermans, 2001). The idea of the dialogical self was developed from Bakhtin's (1973) notion of the polyphonic novel which proposes that an individual has multiple voices that can be embodied in one person (McIlveen & Patton, 2007). These voices can agree or disagree with each other; the self then can be in communication with itself and with others (Salgado & Hermans, 2005). As the person moves from one self to another or one job to another they continue to compromise through negotiation between themselves and the environment (Chen, 1997). This dialogue between the self and other or between the different voices within the self implies that career development is inseparable from the socio-cultural context due to the relational nature between self and environment. The self is founded on making and maintaining connections. Thus it gains meaning from relationships (Miller, 1991). Significant relationships have a huge influence on the career development of individuals because it is within these relationships that discourses are constructed and maintained. Individuals then conform to these discourses due to a need for affirmation and attachment.

The career, as Young and Collin (2004) describe it, is a representation of a unique interaction between self and social experience where the self is constructed over time and within a context. Social constructionism proposes that knowledge is attained through social processes. Social processes are social interactions that take place within a specific context in which people ascribe meaning to specific experiences (Maree, 2010). Blustein, Schultheiss and Flum (2004) maintain that socially constructed views of the world can elicit various interpretations and lead to associated patterns of social action. This means that social action can occur from these various interpretations such that it leads to existing traditions of knowledge being challenged (Blustein et al., 2004). Burr (1995) explains that constructions are based on language which is shaped by social and cultural discourses. Among these discourses are meanings, representations or stories that come together and provide a way of interpreting and giving meaning to the world and the people in it. Burr (1995) argues that discourses are connected to prevailing distributions of power in society where powerful groups will put forward discourses that are of interest to them and silence groups of people that threaten to disrupt the status quo.

This is seen in the situation of women entering management or STEM career positions which were traditionally thought to be male-orientated. Since these career fields are dominated by men, men will seek to intimidate women to maintain the status quo. The situation is worse for black women since South Africa has a history of white males holding positions of power and these power groups seek to silence black women based on their race and gender. Career counsellors need to be aware of the discourses they uphold otherwise they carry the potential to silence clients during career facilitation (Maree, Ebersohn & Molepo, 2006). The process of using narratives in the facilitation of career development with black single mothers in South Africa will require the deconstruction of patriarchal, discriminatory and separatist discourses and construction of discourses that are free of gender-role and racial stereotyping.

2.6.3 The relational cultural theory

The Relational Cultural theory was developed by studying the experiences of women and gender-related developmental issues (Miller, 1991; Miller & Stiver, 1997). The relational theory is embedded in the field of Critical Psychology. Critical Psychology is a branch of psychology that deals with critiquing social forces and beliefs that exploit or disempower people and reveal social structures or conditions that contain unequal control over power (Fossey, Harvey, McDermott & Davidson, 2002). Within Critical Psychology we find the feminist approach to research which is concerned with uncovering and questioning the issues of relationship and power (Way, 1997). The relational cultural theory does exactly that by arguing that Modernist theories do not address the relational experiences of women and other marginalised populations (Jordan, 2001). Gilligan (1982) contends that women's development is different to men's because the feminine personality defines itself in relation and connection to others more than the masculine personality does. Women grow through connection and derive meaning and a sense of well-being from being in relationship throughout their lives (Jordan, 2001). Modernist theories have often focused on the development of males where the central focus of identity is individuation and autonomy. However, for most women the central building block of identity is staying in relationship (Gilligan, 1982).

The core principle in the relational cultural theory is that human growth occurs within and through connection with others (Jordan, 2001). Relational experiences are central to career facilitation because many aspects of interpersonal and intrapersonal relational struggles reflect natural human strivings for connection, affirmation, support and attachment (Schultheiss, 2007). These relational experiences will therefore serve to hinder or benefit the career development of the individual. The relational perspective assumes that people are involved in interrelation activity in their social context and thus, work represents one of many ways to enter into a complex interdependent relationship with their communities (Schultheiss, 2007). The relevance of the relational approach in career facilitation with black single mothers is that it focuses on the meaning that these women attach to their careers and work roles in connection with other systems of influence such as the community, family or colleagues (Schultheiss, 2005). These systems of influence serve to highlight the key discourses that are connected with work-related experiences during career exploration (Flum, 2001). The most prominent systems of influence in career development are the family and other significant interpersonal relationships (Blustein et al., 2004). This is because these significant interpersonal relationships are the primary connections that women have and thus will have the most influence on their career development (Schultheiss, 2005).

Modernist theories are often inappropriate when studying the experiences of women since they often focus on individuation where women are assumed to exist in isolation to their socio-cultural conditions. Yet the career development of women often focuses on staying in relationship with others and themselves (Brown & Gilligan, 1992). Modernist theories assume separation and explore the parameters for connection whilst postmodern theories assume connection and explore the parameters of separation in relationships (Gilligan, 1982). The relational cultural theory is an appropriate approach to use in order to uncover the relational experiences of women in connection to their career development because it redresses the inequalities of the past by empowering and giving voice to the relational and career experiences of black South African single mothers. This theory is used for the current study and proposed as relevant and appropriate for any research work done with marginalised populations.

2.7 Conclusion

This chapter has shown that the career choices of women are highly impacted by their circumstances and life experiences. The traditional approaches to career counselling become particularly inappropriate when working with women in the African context because these approaches focus almost exclusively on the individuals independently of their context and rely on the assumption that individuals are free to make their own career choices. In the context of South Africa, we noted from the research presented that this was not always the case and to a large extent is not the case for black people due to apartheid laws that restricted the career choices of black people. In the current context of South Africa black single mothers find themselves facing multiple barriers to their career choices such as work-family conflict, lack of support and financial constraints. The research conducted on black South African single mothers which was presented in this review indicates a need for career counselling tools that acknowledges contextual factors that act on career choice and development. It also indicates a need for theories that do not focus on a fixed notion of the self and the environment but rather those that take a constructed view of the self and environment. These women do not have a static view of themselves but rather a constructed view of themselves that is defined by meaning. Single mothers make meaning of their lives according to the social practices of the time. For example, women from older generations were expected to be at home to be mothers while younger generations are expected to play both roles of mother and worker (Everingham, Stevenson & Warner-Smith, 2007). Postmodernist approaches were thus suggested as relevant and appropriate tools to use in career counselling with diverse nations such as South Africa. In the next chapter post-modern research methodologies are used to analyse and interpret the career narratives of the single mothers.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In the previous chapter a review of the literature indicated the need for up-to-date research regarding the career needs of black South African single mothers. It also highlighted the need for post-modern approaches to be used in career counselling with marginalised populations. This chapter discusses the way in which these needs were met by outlining the way in which the research data was collected and analysed. It firstly describes how a qualitative design was used to meet the aims of the study. Within the qualitative design the narrative inquiry framework and the relational feminist ontology were used and these are discussed and justified. Secondly the research methods of the study are described under six headings, namely: sampling, interview schedule, procedure, data analysis, validity and reliability, and ethical considerations. Finally the chapter concludes with a summary of the research design and research methods.

3.1 Research Design

3.1.1 Qualitative design

In order to achieve the aims of the current study a qualitative design was used. Qualitative designs focus on capturing unique phenomena or experiences in order to describe their meaning (Terre Blanche, Durrheim & Kelly, 2006). Qualitative designs are useful when investigating meaning: the aim is to describe and explain the experiences of the participants but never to predict them (Willig, 2001). The goal is not to impose preconceived meaning to events or experiences but rather to study the meanings that the participants attribute to events or experiences. A qualitative design ultimately aims to provide illumination into complex psychosocial issues (Marshall, 1996). In the current study the aim was to explore the way in which Black South African single mothers attribute meaning to career and career challenges. The aim was to explore the career needs of black single mothers so that career counselling with this population can be relevant and appropriate by describing what the unique experiences of these women are. It has been established that current career development models are irrelevant to the current environment in the literature review (Savickas *et al.*, 2009). The goal was to further establish up-to-date research to further inform in some way the

development of new and appropriate career models. A qualitative design is concerned with describing people and events within their social settings; in so doing it attempts to uncover current social conditions and engage in social change (Neuman, 1991). Such designs therefore recognise the importance of the social context for understanding events, behaviours and experiences because the same events, behaviours and subjective experiences can have different meanings depending on the cultural and historical context (Neuman, 1991).

3.1.1.1 Narrative inquiry framework

The narrative inquiry framework was used during the interviews because it makes use of story-telling to extract meaning from individual life experiences, making it suitable for the current study (McCormack, 2000). This is because this approach allowed the mothers to tell their own stories, and it was within these narratives that meaning was captured and analysed. This narrative process was appropriate for the current study because it was able to capture language, context and the experiences of these single mothers. The narratives of these single mothers were captured by conducting individual interviews. While the single mothers' experiences were captured in narratives, the relational feminist ontology was used to analyse the data. The relational feminist ontology complements the narrative framework because both approaches seek to present a contextualised view of the participant.

3.1.1.2 Relational feminist ontology

The feminist approach adopted does not only take cognizance of localized phenomena, it also exposes issues of gender and power. Modernist approaches relying on testing were considered inappropriate for the current study whose objective was to take into account contextual and personal influences on career development. At the core of the feminist approach is the need to centre the diverse situations and experiences of women (Punch, 2005). This is because feminists argue that social science research has ignored the unique experiences of women (Millman & Kanter, 1987). The feminist approach is based on the awareness that women's developmental experiences are different to men's and aims to give voice to women's subjective experiences (Neuman, 1991). This approach criticises the pervasiveness of the male perspective in research (Neuman, 1991). Feminists argue that

social scientists tend to use the same western male standards of research methods when researching women and this only serves to silence and oppress women's voices (Millman & Kanter, 1987). This is because these research methods are founded on a decontextualized notion of the self where the impact of race, gender and economic status are not taken into account (Asante, 1991; Mkhize, 2004; Ntuli, 1999).

The feminist approach is interested in describing the 'private' domestic, intimate and lived experiences of research participants, specifically women, in order to retain their voices in the production of research accounts (Edwards & Ribbens, 1998). Feminists argue that non-feminist research is sexist as it generalizes the experiences of men to all people and ignores gender as a social division (Neuman, 1991). The feminist approach is concerned with issues of power in relationships. Feminists argue that research is inherently a relational process where the researcher engages in a shared story with the research participant and thus has the power to silence or highlight the voice of the research participant (Way, 1997). The aim of feminist approaches therefore is to give voice to the experiences of the marginalized and in this way raise awareness with a view to bringing about social change (Punch, 2005). This approach is thus appropriate and relevant to the current study which deals with black South African single mothers who are a highly marginalised population. The voice-centred relational method recognises the importance of relationships for constructing and maintaining discourses within women's experiences. It focuses on the spoken as well as the unspoken within the research participant's narrative (Gilligan & Machoian, 2002).

By studying and listening to the voices of women, feminist researchers found that women developed through relationships, interpersonal connections and interactions (Brown & Gilligan, 1992). The voice-centred method aims to uncover the many voices within interpersonal relationships which are reflections of the research participants' political and social realities (Beauboeuf-Lafontant, 2001). The voice-centred relational approach is based on a relational ontology which states that an individual is not independent but rather is interdependent (Gilligan, 1982). This means that the individual is not seen as separate or self-sufficient but is rather seen embedded in a complex web of intimate and larger social relations (Gilligan, 1982). The relational ontology is translated into the voice-centred

relational method by the researcher listening to the research participant's narrative accounts for their relationships to others as well as their relationships to the social and cultural contexts which they are a part of (Mauthner & Doucet, 1998).

3.2 Methods

The methods that were used to collect and analyse the data are discussed under five headings within this section. These are; sampling, interview schedule, procedure, data analysis, validity and reliability, and ethical considerations.

3.2.1 Sampling

Non-probability sampling was used for the current study. This means that the concept of randomness was not put into effect (Durrheim & Painter, 2006). This method of sampling is more effective when trying to gain access to a specific sample of the population. Participants were selected through the use of purposive sampling (Kelly, 2006). This method of sampling was appropriate as the researcher was looking for a specific sample within South Africa, namely Black single mothers. The criterion for the sample was that the participants must be black single mothers of South African nationality who had never been married before. The current study was interested in researching a sample of single mothers between the ages of 24 and 60 and specifically investigating women who had children outside of the marriage context. The purpose was to gain rich information about their career experiences. The aim of qualitative studies is not to describe bits of real life phenomena; rather it is to place the phenomena into perspective in order to gain 'thick' descriptions thereof (Terre Blanche et al., 2006). The researcher also made use of snowball sampling. This refers to the process whereby participants are requested to refer or direct the researcher to potential participants that meet the sampling criteria (Durrheim & Painter, 2006). Most of the single mothers knew other black single mothers and directed the researcher to them.

3.2.2 Description of the participants

The sample comprised black single mothers who had never been married before and who are South African citizens. These women were sampled from the province of KwaZulu-Natal. Most of them were either English or IsiZulu speaking. Nine participants were drawn from the sample population and these women were of varying income levels. Four women were from the Umlazi Township in the Durban area whilst five of these women were from various suburbs in the Pietermaritzburg area. Of the women who were from Umlazi area two were domestic workers, one was a cleaner at a garage and one worked in a factory as a presser. Of the women from the Pietermaritzburg area, two were teachers, one was a researcher, the other a dentist's clerk and the last worked as a hotelier. These mothers' ages ranged from 26 years to 52 years. The number of children these mothers had ranged from one to four children, with the majority having one child each.

3.2.3 Interview schedule

The researcher made use of an interview schedule to guide the interviewing process (Appendix A). This is because the interview process helps the researcher to gather thick and detailed information about the phenomena under study (Polkinghorne, 2005). Individual interviews and not focus groups were used simply because some of the information that the mothers were sharing was of a sensitive and confidential nature. Individual interviews allow for high levels of confidentiality which allowed the mothers to be more open and truthful in their accounts and thereby increased the reliability and validity of the study (Knox & Burkard, 2009). The interview schedule is helpful in accessing the specific experiences that were of interest to the researcher (Seidman, 1991). By making use of the voice-centred rational listening guide and keeping the research questions in mind the researcher was able to develop interview questions that made important relationships and power dynamics more apparent within the single mothers' narratives. The questions focused on eliciting the way in which these mothers constructed career and motherhood through narrative. This schedule was guided by the voice-centred relational listening guide developed by Doucet and Mauthner (2008). In the interview guide the questions mainly focused on the women's experiences of being single mothers. This was because this population had been little researched before as was indicated by the literature review. With the increase of working single black mothers in

the workforce it has become even more important to find out what the needs of this population are. One of the aims of the current study was to explore the way in which contextual and familial factors impacted the career development of black single mothers in South Africa as opposed to other countries. This is because South Africa unlike other countries has a unique history of Apartheid that has particularly affected the career development of the black population. Some of these questions focused on experiences of being a single mother, experiences of discrimination in the workplace, challenges within the workplace whilst being a single mother and the type of coping mechanisms these women developed. A sample of the interview questions are presented below.

1. How do you find the experience of being a single mother (Difficult, easy)? Explain.
2. How do you find the experience of being a single mother who is working (Difficult, easy)? Explain.
3. How did you come to be in the job you are in now?
4. What are some of the challenges you have faced in being a single mother and in pursuing your career?
5. Tell me about any established support systems that you have (Family, friends or support groups)?

The rest of the interview questions are found in the interview schedule attached as Appendix A.

3.2.4 Procedure

The participants of the current study were from the cities of Durban and Pietermaritzburg in the province of KwaZulu-Natal. These areas were easily accessible to the researcher. The first three participants were located through the local churches and women's groups in the Pietermaritzburg area. These participants were informed about the study and asked if they would like to participate. They agreed and filled in an informed consent form. The other two participants from the Pietermaritzburg area were located through snowball sampling where friends and colleagues made referrals to participants that fulfilled the sampling frame. The four participants from Durban in the Umlazi area were found through snowball sampling where other participants as well as friends and colleagues referred the researcher to these participants.

All interviews were conducted, translated and transcribed by the researcher. This was done to maintain the integrity and validity of the interviews. The data for the current study was collected through the use of individual interviews. Each mother was interviewed by the researcher. Participants were mainly asked open ended questions, in line with the narrative inquiry framework. The interviews were semi-structured since specific questions were asked to gain relevant information but answers that were interesting or that needed further elaboration or clarification were followed up with unplanned questions.

All the interviews were semi-structured and in-depth. They were individual interviews that lasted between 15 minutes to 60 minutes. Interviews were tape recorded on a tape recorder in both English and the IsiZulu languages. Three of the ladies were interviewed inside the church in an empty dining area, whilst two others were interview in the researchers work office and four ladies were interviewed in their homes.

3.2.5 Data analysis

Data took the form of interview transcripts, better termed narrative summaries. These narrative summaries were analysed using the voice-centred relational approach. This approach explores individuals' relationships to others as well as to broader social, structural and cultural contexts in which they live (Edwards & Ribbens, 1998). The voice-centred relational method is appropriate when studying women's experiences not only because it is grounded in feminist theory but also because it was developed to capture the richness and complexity of women's experiences (Way, 1997). In order to interpret the experiences of women it becomes necessary to analyse the discourses that are constructed and maintained within their relationships. This is particularly so in the current study whose purpose was to understand how the participants construct their careers in the context of single parenthood. The researcher also drew from Doucet and Mauthner's (2008) approach to the voice-centred relational method. The relational method involves four readings of the narrative accounts of the research participants, with each reading focusing on different aspects of the narrative account (Doucet & Mauthner, 2008). The following sections provide a brief description of each reading.

3.2.5.1 First reading: Overall plot

The first reading is about getting a general sense of the story. It is during this reading that the researcher traces the central storyline and listens out for recurring words, themes, plot, subplots, protagonists, key characters and chronology of events (Doucet & Mauthner, 2008; Elliott, 2005; Mischler, 1987). For example a recurring word in the narratives was the word “push” which often symbolized that career development for these mothers was a struggle and they had to be strong and passionate in order for them to make progress within this arena, thus the common theme seemed to be one of financial independence and survival. As the storyteller begins to elaborate and theorize their experiences the researcher is reading for the interpersonal relationships the narrator holds with partners, their children and within the social networks in which they live and work (Edwards & Ribbens, 1998). Language is also very important to the analysis because language is a tool for constructing reality and also for constructing individual identity where the person reveals the way in which they perceive themselves and those around them (McCormack, 2000). This allows the researcher to place the narrator as well as others in the narrative, within cultural contexts as well as social structures (Edwards & Ribbens, 1998).

3.2.5.2 Second reading: Reading for the voice of the ‘I’

The second reading is about listening to how the research participants talk about themselves (Doucet & Mauthner, 2008). The researcher focuses on who is telling the story and how they are telling the story (Brown & Gilligan, 1992). From a theoretical perspective the idea of a centralized self is contrasted with the dialogical self, which opens the realm of multiple voices (Hermans, 2001). Multiple voices refer to the simultaneous existence of multiple individual voices and the voice of the group (Hermans, 2001; Wertsch, 1991). In this stage the aim is not to listen for a singular ‘I’ rather this stage attempts to listen to the respondent’s multi-layered voices, views and perspectives (Mauthner & Doucet, 1998). The researcher was listening to how the respondents understood themselves and who they believed they were (Doucet & Mauthner, 2008).

3.2.5.3 Third reading: Reading for relationships

In this reading the researcher focused on listening to how the respondents spoke about their interpersonal relationships, whether the relationship is with their children, relatives or colleagues (Mauthner & Doucet, 1998). The feminist approach critiques the conception of the self as being separate from other people or the broader social context. The self is rather understood as intrinsically relational, making this reading about how the self is understood in relation to significant others (Doucet & Mauthner, 2008). It was noted during the readings that career development was highly influenced and shaped by significant others such as parents and children. For example, in one of the extracts we find a participant named Faith explaining that she was pushed into a teaching career by her father because it was a quicker way for her to become independent and not be a burden to him. This shows that career is highly intertwined with the relationships people have with their significant others.

3.2.5.4 Fourth reading: Placing accounts within cultural contexts and social structures

The fourth reading is about listening for the dominant discourses that frame the narratives. These could be discourses that maintain power relations or discourses that reveal the dominant ideologies within the narrative accounts (Doucet & Mauthner, 2008). In this reading the researcher recognizes the influence of the cultural context on the respondents' experiences. The aim was to link individual experiences with the social processes and social structures that influenced these experiences (Doucet & Mauthner, 2008). The relationship between individual experiences and cultural meanings are neither unidirectional nor static but are negotiated and renegotiated over time (Mkhize & Frizelle, 2000). When the researcher listened to the narratives to interpret them she had to explore the issues of power, oppression, gender-bias and other issues in the way in which they were negotiated and renegotiated within the narrative account (Mkhize & Frizelle, 2000; Mkhize, 2005). The process requires actively listening to the transcript by immersing oneself in the text. In analysing the transcript the researcher must examine the narrative processes that are used by the storyteller (McCormack, 2000). This is due to the fact that as storytellers tell their stories, they begin to engage with the story through reflection and meaning making. As the researcher listens for the voice and its sense of agency he or she locates the voice in a social position (Edwards & Ribbens, 1998). Locating the storyteller in a social position explains the context or the conditions under which that experience came about and in this way gives a more accurate and

reliable account of the story. In this way the validity and reliability of the study is increased. This is explained in more detail below.

3.2.6 Validity and reliability

In qualitative research validity is not linked to objective truth 'out there', rather, the focus is on what has been termed trustworthiness (Rolfe, 2006). This means that the researcher has the responsibility to make research practices visible such that the reader is able to track and verify the research process (Rolfe, 2006). It is for this reason, amongst others, that in qualitative research, terms such as reliability and validity are not used but are replaced with dependability, transferability and credibility. Reliability is replaced with dependability because unlike quantitative research, it is not possible with qualitative research to yield the same results over time. Because human behaviour is constantly changing, the question shifts from asking if the research can yield the same results to asking whether the research findings are consistent with the data collected (Merriam, 1995).

Credibility goes further. It asks how well the methodology and research findings addressed the intended focus of the study (Polit & Hungler, 1999; Graneheim & Lundman, 2004). External validity, the extent to which the study findings can be applied or generalized to other situations or cultures, is replaced with transferability. Making population-wide generalizations is not the primary purpose in qualitative research due to the non-randomized and often purposive nature of the sampling process. Instead, transferability becomes essential (Merriam, 1995). This is because qualitative research focuses on the unique experiences and situations of each participant, therefore, shifting the emphasis from generalisations to contextualisation (Kvale, 1996). This means that participants are located within their given contexts such that the reader is able to see the influence of social conditions upon the participant's experience of the given phenomena. Transferability, dependability and credibility are discussed below.

3.2.6.1 Transferability

Transferability is the extent to which research findings can be transferred to other cultures or groups (Polit & Hungler, 1999; Graneheim & Lundman, 2004). Transferability is established when the researcher provides detailed information on the self (researcher as instrument), the context, the participants, the relationship between researcher and participant as well as the research processes to allow the reader to decide to what extent the research findings are transferable (Morrow, 2005). By providing a rich and detailed description of the context in which the research findings were situated the researcher was able to provide research findings that could be transferred by the reader.

3.2.6.2 Dependability

Dependability refers to whether or not the results of the study are consistent with the data collected (Merriam, 1995). Keeping an audit trail is vital in order to ensure dependability. An audit trail is a detailed, chronological account of the research processes, research activities, the influences on data collection and analysis, the emerging themes as well as the analytic memos (Morrow, 2005). The researcher provided a detailed account of the research processes to establish dependability.

3.2.6.3 Credibility

Credibility refers to how the researcher ensures accuracy throughout the research process as well as enabling the reader to track how the researcher has done so (Gasson, 2004; Morrow, 2005). A procedure for ensuring credibility in the study is to provide a rich and detailed description of the settings, the participants and the themes of the study (Creswell & Miller, 2000). A detailed description of the research processes was provided.

3.2.7 Ethical considerations

When discussing ethical considerations taken during the research process, four basic ethical principles have to be taken into account with all research: autonomy, non-maleficence, beneficence and justice (Beauchamp, 2003). Autonomy refers to participants' right to have

their decision making capacities respected (Beauchamp, 2003). A central component of autonomy is informed consent, a process that involves participants being given detailed information about the research so that they can make a sound decision based on relevant information (Benatar, 2002). Ethical clearance was received for the current study from the Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee of the University of KwaZulu-Natal. The researcher achieved informed consent by giving each participant a description of what the study was about, what it entailed and what would be done with the information. The reader can refer to the attached informed consent form in Appendix B. The participants were then asked whether or not they would like to participate in the study. Once verbal consent was given, each participant was then given a written summary of what the study entailed along with the consent form and contact details of both the researcher and the researcher's supervisor. The participants were informed that they were free to withdraw from the study at any given time, without incurring any negative repercussions. The study purposes as well as the methods for the dissemination of the findings were explained. The reader is referred to the informed consent form in Appendix B for the specific details.

Each participant gave verbal and written informed consent. Respect for privacy also falls under the ethical principle of informed consent and it related to the need for confidentiality as well as the secure storage of data (Commonwealth of Australia, 1999). Participants were informed that their information was confidential and that their identities would be protected in the thesis by making use of pseudonyms. This was done to fulfil the principle of respect for privacy. Confidentiality was also maximised as only the researcher and the supervisor listened to the recorded interviews. The researcher also transcribed all interviews thus, further maintaining confidentiality.

Non-maleficence relates to the idea of doing no harm to participants or minimizing harm as much as possible (Beauchamp, 2003). Talking about career challenges could possibly evoke painful experiences for the participants, hence the possibility for harm. It was for this reason that each participant was debriefed by the researcher after the interview and referred to the Prince Mshiyeni Memorial Hospital to avail their psychological services where further counselling was deemed essential. One participant was referred for psychological counselling

at Prince Mshiyeni hospital because the interview uncovered painful memories of her late son. For participants in the greater Pietermaritzburg area, participants were referred to the Child and Family Centre (CFC) in the School of Applied Human Sciences.

Beneficence relates to the way in which the research should benefit the research participants whether directly or indirectly (Orb, Eisenhauer, & Wynaden, 2000). A direct benefit of the study to the mothers was that it allowed them to reflect on their career pathways and thus gave them insight into the way they could make their careers more meaningful and successful for the future. Some mothers benefited from the study as they were able to brainstorm about ways in which they could fulfil their career aspirations. The study could be of benefit to society as a whole because it may add to the body of knowledge in psychology by informing career theory and assessment, policies formulation, and the training of students. This benefit is located in the future and may not be realized now.

Justice relates to being able to implement fairness in the research process where research participants are not exploited or abused in any way (Orb, Eisenhauer & Wynaden, 2000). This means that the aims of the research should guide and determine subject selection and each participant should be treated similarly. Participants for the current study were selected based on the aims of the study which was to explore the career experiences of Black South African single mothers. Therefore, participants who met these criteria and were available were selected. The participants who bore the risks of the research should also be in a position to enjoy the benefits of the research (Emanuel, Wendler & Grady, 2000). The current study seeks to benefit these mothers and similar populations. This benefit is located in the future.

3.3 Conclusion

In this chapter the research methods and methodology were discussed. The study made use of relational feminist ontology to inform the analysis and interpretation of the career narratives of each mother. A narrative inquiry framework was used to gather information from the participants in the form of individual interviews. This framework was able to give the

researcher rich career narratives from which to extract the meaning of career experiences to each single mother. The sampling technique and procedure of how the study was conducted was described in detail. The ethical considerations that were taken were described and explained to show that Informed Consent, Beneficence, Non-maleficence and Justice were all maximised. The researcher used Doucet and Mauthner's (2008) voice-centred relational listening guide to read and interpret the career narratives. The four readings done were described and discussed. Issues concerning the reliability and validity of the current study were discussed under the terms Transferability, Credibility and Dependability. This is because qualitative research is not focused on objective truth in isolation to the person but is interested in the subjective experiences of people such that the validity and reliability of the study then focuses on the trustworthiness of the account being presented by the researcher (Rolfe, 2006).

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The legislation for South African women's emancipation has been placed by the changing political context and transforming labour market as well as by increasing educational opportunities when it comes to their careers (Geldenhuys & De Lange, 2007). The purpose of the study was to investigate and narrate the career development trajectories of South African black single mothers. This chapter presents the findings of the current study which were based on three factors, namely, being a Black South African, being a woman, and finally being a single mother. These findings are presented and discussed under four headings which are the four aims which directed the exploration, namely, (a) the construction and meaning of career for black South African single mothers, (b) the career needs of black South African single mothers, (c) how the mothers manage the multiple roles in their lives, and (d) the single mothers' unique experiences as they pursue their careers.

The relevant interview extracts are presented to illustrate the themes. These extracts are interpreted and discussed in accordance with the feminist research framework, voice-centred relational listening guide, and relevant literature.

The participants in the current study were Alice, Brenda, Cece, Dudu, Ethel, Faith, Gugu, Hlubi and Ingrid¹. The following table is a brief description of each participant, to help the reader gain a clear perspective on the extracts and the findings presented.

Table 1: Description of Participants

Name of Participant	Description of participant
Alice	24 yr old, mother of three, was a Cleaner currently unemployed, did not complete high school. Alice was a Cleaner at a local garage but lost her job due to unfair treatment. She has three children all under the age of 8. She has one sister and a very supportive boyfriend. Her mother passed away when she was still in high school and her uncle

¹ Not their real names

	who had been supporting her passed away recently.
Brenda	35 yr old, mother of one, was a Factory Labourer currently recovering from paralysis. Brenda had worked pressing clothes at a clothing factory for many years and had to leave due to falling ill and eventually becoming paralyzed in some areas of the body for a protracted period of time. She later regained the use of her limbs but was not yet well enough to return to work. She was surviving on a disability grant which she used to support her child and herself. She had had three children; the first child is living with her, the second child she had miscarried and the third child had passed away in 2004.
Cece	42 yr old, mother of four, Domestic Worker. Cece is a live-in Domestic Worker for an elderly woman and goes home on weekends. She had four children. However one of them passed away in 2009. Her children lived alone while she was away and the older children looked after the youngest.
Dudu	51 yr old, mother of two, Domestic Worker. Dudu is a Domestic Worker and works for three days a week. She has two children, both male, who are 31 and 8 years old. She does not have any family members living close to her.
Ethel	39 yr old, mother of one, Teacher, Head of Department at the school. Ethel is a High School Teacher and has one daughter whom she lives with. She grew up as an 'orphan' even though both her parents were alive at the time. She struggled to find financial assistance to fulfil her dream career. However, through perseverance she finally managed to gain a bursary and studied teaching which she has grown to love and enjoy.
Faith	49 yr old, mother of one, Teacher. Faith is a High School Teacher. She has one daughter and one granddaughter. Her mother passed away when she was five years old which led to her being brought up

	by her father.
Gugu	26 yr old, mother of one, Dental Clerk. Gugu is a Dental Clerk and has one son. He lives with her sister while she lives close to work. She sees her son on weekends.
Hlubi	29 yr old, mother of one, Researcher. Hlubi lives with her son in a flat away from her family.
Ingrid	32 yr old, mother of one, Guest Relations Manager. Ingrid works on a cruise ship and sees her daughter every few months. Ingrid's daughter lives with her parents.

4.1 The Construction and Meaning of Career for Black South African Single Mothers

In this section the theme was to examine how black single mothers make meaning in their careers. This is because for many black South African women having a 'career' in the traditional sense is not always possible. This is based on the context of South Africa which has a high rate of unemployment and high levels of poverty. Burger & Woolard (2005) found that most black single mothers in South Africa were overrepresented in low paying jobs. This means that most of these mothers move from job to job and are less likely to experience a sense of order and stability in their working life. If this is the case what then becomes the driving force behind the career patterns of these women's lives as they move from job to job? How then do they make sense of their working life and how do they ascribe meaning to a career pattern that is not identified by traditional career theories? Below a discussion is presented on the question of the meaning of 'career' for black single mothers.

In response to the question on the meaning of career, two main themes emerged from the analysis. These are (a) career as a means for survival and as a source of financial independence, and (b) Career as a means of contributing to society. Each of these is discussed at length in the sections below.

4.1.1 Career as a means for survival and a source of financial independence

The theme of survival emerged repeatedly from the analysis in response to the question of the meaning of career. Career was seen by these mothers as a means of being able to provide the basic needs to live from day-to-day, to support themselves and their families by providing food, housing and education for their children. For five of the mothers, the need to support their families defined their careers, meaning that they placed financial security as the most important factor. Extracts from the participants' interviews aptly illustrate this theme. We shall begin with an extract from an interview with Brenda.

Extract 1

Ronelle: How did you come to be in the job that you were in at the clothing store?

Brenda: I applied there because I was working somewhere else but due to the mistreatment I left that job. Also that job was not paying well so I applied at the clothing store and I was hired there. I started working and I worked there from 2001 until I left in 2009.

Ronelle: Was the job at the clothing factory the job you had always wanted to do or was there something else you had wanted? What is the career you had always wished for?

Brenda: It's not the job I had always wished for but due to the situation I ended up working there. I had wanted to be a nurse but due to the lack of money I could not. Plus I was working to save money to continue my studies but I ended up buying this house then I ended up leaving the studying alone. I then thought to myself that I will put my hope in my child that is alive.

Brenda's career was defined by a cultural context of poverty due to the injustices of the past where black people were confined to secondary industries such as farming and consequently restricting them to low paying jobs (Mathabe & Temane, 1993). Many black families were confined to low income jobs thus leading many of the youth to taking any available job to survive and save to further their own studies. This situation is seen in Brenda's career story in which she had to put her dream of becoming a nurse on hold due to lack of finances so that

she could save enough money to study towards it. However due to growing responsibilities that put a demand on her finances she had to then displace her dream to her daughter. We see this turning point in her narrative where she says “*I ended up leaving the studying alone. I then thought to myself that I will put my hope in my child that is alive.*” As Brenda’s responsibilities grew as a parent she realised that her dream of becoming a nurse was slipping away as she noticed the quickly depleting finances that she had saved. With this realization came the need to let go and to renegotiate and reconstruct her career story by placing her career meaning on the career of her daughter. Her career experiences were thus affected by her relationship with her daughter, in which her attachment to her daughter made it easy for her to sacrifice her own career dreams for those of her daughter. Brenda’s career is thus dominated by financial barriers and her responsibilities as a mother. Similar concerns were echoed by Cece, captured in Extract 2.

Extract 2

Ronelle: This job that you are currently in, I am not sure whether it is a job you had wanted to do or is there a job that you would like to do?

Cece: I have gotten used to this job but it is not the job I had wanted to do but because of my level of education and my skills it was the job that I was able to do and not others. Yes before I used to work in a shop when I was younger but now it is not easy to get it because you have to go for computer training and I do not have the time while the little money I have I am trying to push the lives of my children.

Ronelle: Which job would you like to do outside of having the necessary skills or education, maybe which job would you wish to do?

Cece: I like to sew because it has a lot of opportunities but I haven’t had the opportunity to study for it.

Cece’s narrative is dominated by her reflection on the value of education where education was tied to the need for time and the need for money. As she grew older and her responsibilities grew she realized more and more that her lack of education was becoming an increasing barrier to job opportunities. She reflected that in her youth she could work in a

shop with no formal training yet now as she grew older that form of work could only be attained with some type of formal education. This indicates a shift in her social context in which career success was defined by hard work and later career success was defined by education levels. This shift thus resulted in Cece's reconsidering her career story: she began to value education and her own career as such became intertwined with envisaged, better career options for her own children. In this narrative it is observed that career meaning and consequently career choice arose out of the relationship the narrator had with the context and with significant others. For Cece, her career choice was embedded in her relationship with her social context where education, finances and time became a barrier for her. Her meaning thus came from her relationship with her children by ensuring that they receive the education they need to have successful careers. In this sense we see that career choice is not isolated to the intrinsic personality traits such as being sociable and empathetic but career choice is highly intertwined with the sociocultural and economic context of an individual. Traditional approaches to career often ignore or minimise the importance of sociocultural and political context of individuals; these approaches often do not take into account the fact that career choice often takes place in contexts of poverty and high levels of unemployment where any job is taken in order to survive (Mkhize, 2011). Many of the mothers' careers were shaped by lack of finances where they were forced into a career because they never had the finances to pursue their intended career. They also lacked the time to improve their skills and qualifications due to the fact that all responsibilities fell on their shoulders.

While some participants were forced into jobs purely and mainly for survival, another group of participants that ended up in careers out of necessity, and used their careers as an opportunity to live independent lives. This often emerged amongst the professional group. This possibility finds an illustration in Faith's interview extract.

Extract 3

Faith: When I think about the word career, I think of something you do so that you can survive, support yourself first, support your family. Its work and I think it's something that you must enjoy. It must be a job you get happy for, you must not be stressed when you got to work.

Ronelle: Just tell me a little about, as you were growing up, what you thought you were going to go into?

Faith: You know for us then there were only three careers you could go into; a teacher, a nurse, policeman well a clerk if you had no money to go to a college. So it was along those lines a nurse and a teacher. Unfortunately I lost my mom when I was five years so my dad had to push me to a teaching profession so that I can survive so I went to college when I was still very young at 17 or 18 when I was doing my first year of a two year course in teaching. You see at 17 or 18 you are not sure of what you are doing but along the way I enjoyed teaching so I am teaching right now.

Ronelle: So you can sort of say that it wasn't your passion to go into teaching but you were sort of forced into it?

Faith: Yes it wasn't my decision at the time but because of the situation when I grew up that was the only option for me that I should go there.

Ronelle: Maybe because it was a quicker option or because of money?

Faith: It was a quicker option for me so that I can live independently. It was a quicker option [for someone] without a mother. Yes quicker so I cannot be a burden to anybody. Yes that is it. So I started working at the early age of 20.

Faith's career development was firstly limited by Apartheid which prescribed a few options for black people in South Africa. This was enforced with laws that barred black people from studying towards certain career types at the tertiary level (Mathabe & Temane, 1993). Faith points out that during her time there were only three or so career options for black people. This shows that her career choices were limited. For Faith, her career was something that was somewhat a burden because she did not initially choose her career path but was forced into it. This is seen when she uses words such as "push". She views a career as a means to be financially independent and as a means to survive or support her family. Faith initially did not choose to go into teaching but as she engaged with her career she grew to enjoy it.

Faith, like many other South African women, went into a career based on contextual factors (Frizelle, 2002; Mkhize & Frizelle, 2000; Naidoo & May, 2006; Stead, 1996). Her career path was firstly limited by vocational laws that hindered Black people from entering certain types of careers during Apartheid (Stead & Watson, 1998). It was then further limited by the financial constraints within the family due to the fact that her father was supporting her and her brother alone because Faith's mother had passed away when she was only five years old. Faith's father, being a single parent, felt financially burdened and thus felt the need to make his children financially independent as quickly as possible. Crites (1969) argued that three conditions were necessary for career choice to occur. These were the possession of career options, the possession of the motivation to choose and the possession of the freedom to choose. For Faith, career choice was not possible because she did not possess the freedom to choose nor did she have unlimited career options due to the hindering economic and familial circumstances. This is often the case for many black South African women (Fabiano, 2010; Frizelle, 2002).

The career narratives of these single mothers were constructed in the context of limited opportunities, financial constraints and the pressing need to support their families. This is not surprising particularly in a country like South Africa where for a long time the career development of black people was influenced and dictated by Apartheid laws and regulations (Mathabe & Temane, 1993; Stead, 1996). Historically the career options of black people in South Africa were limited to the helping professions such as nursing and teaching (Mkhize et al., 1998; Nicholas, Naidoo & Pretorius). These professions were often chosen by the single mothers as realistic and economically viable options. When the single mothers were asked the meaning of 'career' to them several themes arose which indicated that career development was highly influenced by the context in which they live. These themes were the need for survival, the ability to grow within the company or career that they were in and the need to be passionate about their careers.

Many of the mothers had limited opportunities to improve their skills because home and family responsibilities fell on their shoulders. They also felt guilty about not giving their children enough time to spend with them. For most of these mothers, having a career was

necessary because it allowed them to support themselves and their families. Being single mothers the pressure was even more marked because they had no one else to seek financial assistance from. Sandfort and Hill (1996) and Ciabattari (2007) indicate that access to a fulfilling career trajectory is mitigated by the level of support a single or unmarried mother receives. Sandfort and Hill found that if single mothers received early economic support they were more likely to be self-sufficient later on because the money they received enabled them to remain stable and helped them further their education. Ciabattari (2007) found that unmarried mothers were more likely to maintain employment stability and financial self-sufficiency if they received access to support resources.

The need for financial security either became a barrier or a motivating factor for the participants' career development. It became a barrier for some in the sense that the need to earn quickly and consistently meant that studying to improve themselves was delayed or displaced to their children. Burger and Woolard (2005) found that black single mothers seem to be over-represented in the lower paying jobs indicating that many of these women took any job available due to the need to access finances immediately as found in the current study. For some mothers the need for financial security acted as a catalyst for these mothers to better their skills so that they could earn better salaries. This is illustrated in Ethel's extract below.

4.1.2 Career as a means of contributing to society

What emerged from the narratives of the single mothers is that four of the mothers viewed their careers as a means to contribute to society. For these mothers a career was a form of work that they could enjoy and value and it could also add value to the lives of others. The following extract from Ethel sheds light on this issue.

Extract 4

Ronelle: Okay now going to what you were saying now maybe if you can just, a little bit, tell me about what you think a career is? What is a career in your own definition, if you can just define what a career is and then just speak a little bit about your own career?

Ethel: I think a career must be the kind of work that you love, the kind of work that you can do, that you can commit yourself fully in it and do it passionately. You know I didn't dream of being a teacher but when I was a teacher I enjoyed it. At first I was teaching matric, my first year in teaching I was teaching matric, and I enjoyed to teach and they were, I was in the rural areas near the farm, they [the learners] were very old but I could work with them. They were eager to learn so they made me love teaching and I was so committed in such a way that I used to stay there for the first three months without coming back. Teaching, teaching during the holidays I was teaching because I was saying to myself I want these matrics to get good results. I like my career, I enjoyed it a lot and the other thing is that you really really know and really understand and you must learn more about it. I was a maths and biology teacher. I like mathematics and I love biology so I was doing something that I like. You know I feel it, biology I used to feel it in my, walking in my blood. I said to them no no no you cannot fail this subject because it is about life. We are living you know yes I think a career is going to be the kind of work that you love and that must do with all your power. You need to put all your energy in it and don't forget to ask God, God is this the career I like, please give me strength to do it, to honour it but not to worship it.

Ethel's career was defined by the relationship she had with the learners in the sense that the more value she saw being added to their lives, the more passionate she became to make a difference. When asked what a career is, she responds by saying it is something "you love, the kind of work that you can do, that you can commit yourself fully in it and do it passionately." This definition was constructed as a result of her relationship with her learners. Ethel relates that she did not dream or desire to become a teacher however the eagerness of the learners to learn nurtured the passion within her. She felt she was making a difference in their lives and thus contributing in her own way to a better society. She felt committed because the learners were eager and hungry to learn. She felt she was competent and capable because she could work with the learners. It could be argued that her strong desire to see the learners getting good results for their grade 12 exams emanated from her identity as a teacher, which had become an integral part of herself. As Ethel worked with these learners she began to enjoy her teaching career more and more. Her career began to act on her and she began to

act on her career in response. This indicates the reflexive nature of career. We see this in the way she says *“they were eager to learn so they made me love teaching and I was so committed in such a way that I used to stay there for the first three months without coming back.”* Her learners made her love her career and consequently she made her learners love learning. In this way a dialogical relationship developed between Ethel and her career (Hermans, 2001). Her career self was constituted in relation to her relationship with her learners. This shows that her career became a part of herself. Ethel feels very passionate about her career and sees it as a way of contributing to the lives of those she teaches. Her passion is so strong and can be seen in the words she uses for example she says *“I used to feel it in my, walking in my blood.”*

Ethel did not initially envision herself as a teacher. However, once she got into this career she found that she absolutely loved it. This falls in line with Mitchell, Levin and Krumboltz,s (1999) Planned Happenstance Theory which proposes that the career of an individual is often as a result of a person making good use of chance opportunities. This theory argues that the career within the current post-modern context no longer follows the linear and sequential pattern that it may have done in the past. Rather the career is in a constant state of flux due to the constant change in the description and nature of jobs (Mitchell *et al*, 1999). Ethel was able to transform the unplanned events of her life into opportunities for learning and developing her career. This form of career development is explained fully by the Planned Happenstance theory. Ethel’s career development confirms the notion that traditional models of career counselling have become outdated and postmodern theories are more relevant in addressing the evolving nature of careers.

The meaning of career elicited two dominant themes which were highly influenced by the context in which the single mother found herself. If lack of finances was pervasive within her immediate context then oftentimes the meaning of career was centred on survival. However, if financial lack was removed oftentimes the meaning of career became centred on career as a contribution to society. Career was a contribution to society in the sense that career was a form of work through which they could make their lives meaningful by making the lives of others meaningful and valuable. A career was something that would become an integral part

of their lives. In essence these single mothers' career development was intertwined with their life struggles. Many of the traditional career theories are based on the matching model which assumes that people's personality traits can be matched with factors from the working world in order for people to find their desired occupation (Kidd, 2006). However, the findings from the current study show that career development of black South African single mothers is not some individualistic process that relies solely on personality traits but career development is embedded in the society and context in which they find themselves. Whether it is the context of financial constraints or time constraints, for all these mothers the context to a great extent shaped their career choices. Frizelle (2002) wrote that the career narratives of black South African women are embedded in their socio-political context. As was seen from Faith's extract for many black South African's their career development is still influenced by the legacy of Apartheid (Stead & Watson, 1998).

4.2 The Challenges Faced by Black South African Single Mothers

In exploring what challenges black South African single mothers faced, three main themes arose from the analysis. These were: not having enough money, insufficient time to spend with their families, and the need for support. Each theme is presented with the relevant extracts illustrating the subject matter.

4.2.1 Not having enough money

The theme of always not having enough money to meet the needs of the family arose many times within the study. This issue arose both for low and middle income mothers. However, this seemed to affect low income mothers more as they seemed to often find themselves in debt. Debt was a stress they often had to live with. The following extract from Alice's interview illustrates this point.

Extract 5

Alice: Yoh it is hard and then you think how little I am earning. I don't know how we could make it be that these children become the children of married people but as they are here there is nothing that I can do. You end up having lots of problems

because you land up in debt. You find that the month is not finished and the food is finished so you have to borrow money or there is something needed at school so when you get paid all that money goes to all the people you owe.

Dudu echoed similar sentiments:

Extract 6

Dudu: It is hard because the eldest [child] is not working and I must take care of his needs and buy him clothes. I am carrying a heavy burden to the point where sometimes I go into debt.

For many of the mothers having one salary in the household meant that there was often a shortage of money to supply all the needs of the family. Many of the mothers often felt stretched every month as they tried to find creative ways to provide for the needs of their children. They often loaned money from family, friends or neighbours and this often led to financial debt. Dudu struggles to meet her monthly responsibilities and will often borrow money from her friends and family. At the end of the month she has to pay them back such that her income seems to mainly go into payments of debt than paving a way forward for herself. In these types of situations the cycle of poverty seems to be perpetuated. The need for financial security in their career development thus becomes apparent within this theme. The need for money was especially marked for the low income mothers and this led these mothers to taking any job. A Russian study done by Lokshin, Harris and Popkin (2000) maintained that single mother families were especially vulnerable to poverty due to the lack of a second provider. This confirms that single mothers are more vulnerable to contextual factors, making their career development unique to their population. The findings indicate that single mothers often have an interrupted and unstable career path and are highly affected by contextual factors such as poverty. Traditional career models are based on a linear notion of career development and a de-contextualized view of the self (Nel, 2006). These findings imply that traditional career counselling methods are inappropriate to use with this population since career choice with this population is driven by a need to survive as opposed to being driven by traits within the self.

4.2.2 Being both parents

The roles of father and mother often fell on the shoulders of these mothers since many of the fathers were absent in the lives of the children. To accommodate the needs of their children these mothers often had to play the role of both parents. The absence of the father figure often had an impact on the careers of these women as well as an impact on their children. The following extract highlights this issue.

Extract 7

Cece: It is difficult being a being a single mother because having money to support my children is not enough and there are times where a male child where you see that today he needs a father. Where sometimes as a mother it becomes difficult to guide and reason with him but by God's grace my children listen to me. However I do know that I cannot perform the duties that a father has been able to perform.

Extract 8

Dudu: ...When you are a single mother everything looks to you even a father's responsibility becomes yours. The mother's responsibility is also yours. That means your responsibilities are multiplied...

The need for a father figure became more apparent for these mothers as their children grew older. Cece makes this apparent when she says there are days when she can see that her son needs a father. In many of these narratives, the voice of the father was often silent. Many voices and perspectives were often represented in the narrative of each mother such as the family, neighbours and friends yet the voice of the children's fathers oftentimes remained silent. For the researcher, this reflected the absent father figure in the life of the children of the single mothers. Those mothers who did present the voice of the father of their children often presented a conflicted relationship with the child's father. The mothers often battled to provide the father's love that their children needed. Many of the male children often needed male mentors and the mothers could not provide this. These mothers often experienced role strain due to the need to play the role of both parents. Cece's career experiences are interconnected with her life struggles of trying to provide for her children. She mentions that

the harder she works the more she loses time to be there for her children to the point where she blames herself for the death of her son. She believes that had she been at home she would have been able to save her son. She believes that had his father been around that either her or her child's father would have been around to save her child. Cece's extract indicates clearly how her career experiences are intertwined with her relationship with her children and the absent father. The significance of this relationship in the life of the child and the mother signifies that meaning is often found in relationships (Miller, 1991). These findings confirm the notion that the career development of women is mainly focused on staying in relationship with others and themselves (Brown & Gilligan, 1992; Miller, 1991; Miller & Stiver, 1997). Once again proving that modernist career theories and assessments are irrelevant because they assume separation and assume career development is isolated from significant relationships (Brown & Gilligan, 1992).

4.2.3 Insufficient time for family

The mothers were often stretched for time. They often wished to be in two places at once. When they were at home they wished to be at work and when at work wished to be at home. Many of these mothers wished to study further and improve their education but they did not have the necessary amount of time to accomplish this. Extracts 9 and 10 from Cece and Ingrid respectively shed light on this issue.

Extract 9

Ronelle: Yes they need that male figure. How do you find being a working parent and could you please explain in detail?

Cece: To be a working parent is difficult in that you don't have enough time to look after your children to be able to spend time with them in a satisfactory manner. For example the one that passed away, he died while I was away at work because I sleep there. Now I don't have peace because sometimes I think if I had been here it would not have happened. Now that shows that I am not complete because if his father was around it would not have been the case that we both are not at home. Now there is that difficulty that while I am at work I wish to be at home but it cannot be done.

Ronelle: This job that you are currently in, I am not sure whether it is a job you had wanted to do or is there a job that you would like to do?

Cece: I have gotten used to this job but it is not the job I had wanted to do but because of my [level of] education and my skills it was the job that I was able to do and not others. Yes before I used to work in a shop when I was younger but now it is not easy to get [that kind of job] because you have to go for computer training and I do not have the time while the little money I have I am trying to push the lives of my children.

Extract 10

Ronelle: Could you describe some of your experiences, what you have found being a single mother?

Ingrid: It is hard at times because as much as you can be financially stable sometimes you can't be like in two places in one time so that is, I would say the hard part of it because you struggling to better yourself, educate yourself in order to earn more money yet you have to sacrifice. You know leaving the child with someone else, to look after the child although you getting paid well and all that but that touch is still necessary. But that is the unfortunate part. I mean this is just my opinion but you know you can study and go all around the world, you know earn a bit of money but it does have a bit of a tick that you know you not home, you [are] not there physically with the child, someone else is. I mean I am lucky I have got a good family like my mother, my sisters and everybody else but ya that is the unfortunate part about it.

Not having enough time to spend with their family, especially their children, was particularly salient to the mothers. Prioritising and compromising different responsibilities was part and parcel of their daily lives. Each of the mothers did not want to neglect their children nor their careers but there seemed to be too few hours in a day to accomplish all that they needed to. For example, Cece speaks about how she would not have the time to attend the training even if she wanted to learn a trade. This shows that these mothers need flexible hours to learn a trade as well as flexible working hours (Ciabattari, 2007; Sandfort & Hill, 1996). The need for more time was a theme that emerged for both low-income and middle-income mothers.

This shows that single mothers need flexible working conditions so that they can balance their multiple roles and responsibilities. This confirms Ciabattari's (2007) findings that single mothers have a need for flexible work schedules to allow them to handle family needs.

Ingrid for example, responded that even though she was financially stable her desire to further and educate herself often meant spending less time with her daughter which often results in a desire to be in two places at once. This indicates the role strain that single mothers often find themselves under. The desire to stay in relationship with their children requires these women to shift from a career self to the self-as-mother. This taps into Bakhtin's dialogical self, a self that has many voices that can agree or disagree with each other (McIlveen & Patton, 2007). These voices are located within different vantage points and reflect the different worlds in which the person has grown up (Mkhize 2004). Modernist views of the self assume one centralised thinker whilst the dialogical view of self argues for the existence of multiple voices of thought located within one person (Hermans, 2001). This means that single mothers have a relational view of the self and not an individualistic view of the self as is the assumption of most traditional career theories. These findings indicate that black South African single mothers need career theories and assessments that take into account the notion of the relational self.

4.2.4 Need for Support

For most of the mothers the hardest part of being a single mother was not having anyone to depend on and facing challenges alone. The following extracts illustrate this.

Extract 11

Brenda: To be a single parent is difficult. It is difficult being a single parent because a lot of things I have to do them myself. Like food, I have to attain for myself. As I am not currently working, the grant is helping me. I am also getting a pension. The grant helps my daughter with travel expenses; that means the pension money is helping me so that I am able to get food.

Extract 12

Ronelle: What has the experience of being a single mother been like for you? If you can just maybe tell me what...how did it come about, what happened and where are you at right now?

Hlubi: Well I was emotionally ready, emotionally and financially ready for a child because I was already 26 when I decided now I want a child. So I conceived at 27 and delivered at 28. Being a single mother is a bit difficult because sometimes you do need to take a rest from your new-born. Sometimes you do need to get to work with your career and you do need to make major decisions for somebody else not just you. For me my biggest challenge was that my parents are late and I only have grandparents who are not very, the generational gap between us is far too huge for them to be able to help me to bring up my son.

Ronelle: So you are sort of like alone in the process?

Hlubi: Yes I would say that because my family is not really there. I only have one biological sister who is married so I am quite alone in the process.

For Hlubi her experience of being a single mother was nothing like she had expected. Unlike most single mothers, Hlubi chose to be a single parent because she felt herself to be “ready.” She found herself struggling to balance the multiple responsibilities she now has and recognizes that the need for familial support is important in managing the multiple responsibilities single mothers find themselves having. Hlubi also points out that her grandparents do not seem to be as much help as she assumed they would be due to what she terms the “generational gap.” This was interpreted by the researcher to mean that Hlubi felt that her beliefs about parenting were very different to those of her grandparents and this may have posed a unique challenge in allowing them to help her raise her child. Hlubi’s sister seemed to provide a better source of support but this support was limited due to her sister’s own marital and familial responsibilities. In this narrative what began to emerge was that career was interlinked with motherhood and similarly motherhood intertwined with cultural beliefs. This means that career counselling that involves single mothers has to take into account the cultural context.

A constant theme that arose from the experience of being a single mother was that of being alone. Many of the mothers spoke about the difficulties of being alone and having to face the challenges and responsibilities of being a parent single-handedly. Within the narrative of each mother they showed that they needed support, emotionally, psychologically, etc. It was even more interesting to note that while Hlubi had felt ready emotionally, psychologically and financially to raise a child, there was still a huge need for extra support in the form of family and friends to help her manage her varied roles and responsibilities. Sandfort and Hill (1996) found that single mothers were more likely to have a fulfilling career trajectory if they received economic and social support. Similarly, Ciabattari (2007) found that unmarried mothers were more likely to have a stable employment and be financially independent if they received access to support resources. Once again, this indicates how the career development of black South African single mothers is interwoven with the socio-economic conditions of their environment. Career theories with this population then clearly need to be situational such that they speak into the social conditions of the people these theories seek to serve.

4.3 Balancing Multiple Roles and Responsibilities

In this section the objective was to establish whether or not women were coping, and if they were, to establish what was helping them to cope. In this way factors that enhanced this population's career development could be sourced. The themes that arose from the narratives about the way in which these mothers balance or juggle the multiple roles and responsibilities that they have was that of learning to compromise and the other was becoming resilient. Often, important relationships within many of the mother's lives played an important role in allowing them to achieve or fulfil the many roles and responsibilities they had.

4.3.1 Learning to compromise

The single mothers seemed to have many responsibilities and often spoke about having to prioritise and compromise certain responsibilities. At the core of compromise is time management. Each mother will allocate time for different responsibilities according to what she feels are the most important for her family and her life in its entirety.

Extract 13

Ronelle: So just in terms of being able to balance the two roles of being a mother and having a career? How have you been able to do that?

Gugu: It doesn't ever balance hey like now I am here and he is staying there so you basically just compromising one to just try and push the other because I don't want to lie, I can't balance. Cause even from when I was studying in varsity, he was not getting much from me. So you can't or I can't maybe other people can but I can't I sort of have to put him with my sister and then try and push my career so that by the time he needs more money, like his in high school or whatever I can support so I think that is the best plan.

Gugu has a Bachelor of Commerce degree in Accounting. In order to earn a living, she took a position as a dental clerk because it was difficult to find a job in her own field. Even so she did not allow this divergence into dental work to hinder her career development but used it as a stepping stone in her career development. Gugu continually sought to grow and improve her skills within the working environment. However, her career development has affected her personal life because it has allowed her little time to spend with her son. For Gugu and most of these mothers there never really is a sense of balance in the managing of the roles of being parent and worker; rather these mothers do what they feel is more important at that time. The roles of being a parent and worker are also highly influenced by the demand and pressure experienced at work. This has both negative and positive effects on the mothers and on their children. This is illustrated by Van Aarde and Mostert (2008) who studied the effects of job and home characteristics on the work-home interaction of employed South African women. They reported that high job pressure and work overload negatively impacted a women's home domain whilst women who experienced high levels of autonomy and support would have a positive spill over into their home domain.

The career is often associated with the role of the provider; historically this was relegated to the father figure. The pressure for these single mothers to be both parents often means that they experience role strain. This meant that Gugu feels the pressure to be a good mother and

in her mind being a good mother means two things which are spending time with your child and being able to provide for your child. We see then that the construction of motherhood which centres around the role of nurturer and provider has impacted on Gugu's career development in that she often feels that she is sacrificing her role of nurturer to become a provider and relegating the role of nurturer to her sister. This sacrifice is heard when she talks about the pressure she feels to spend more time with her son because she does not want to "neglect" him. The idea of the mother being a nurturer is reinforced in attachment theories developed by John Bowlby (1969) and Mary Ainsworth (1973). The attachment theory argues that the infant requires a warm, intimate and on-going relationship with the mother figure so that healthy psychological and emotional development can occur (Bretherton, 1992). Gugu's career experience is thus saturated with feelings of guilt in the sense that the more successful she becomes within her career, the less time spent with her son and consequently, the guiltier she feels for, as Gugu puts it, "neglecting" her son. This narrative confirms that the career experiences of black South African single mothers in highly connected to the significant relationships that these mothers have. Career experience then is not isolated from the other but is interwoven within the relationship with the other. This means that black single mothers need career theories that are able to factor in the relational aspect of career.

Extract 14

Ronelle: Thus far how have you been able to juggle the two roles of being a single mother and an employee?

Hlubi: Currently my son has had to take priority over my work. Yes so whenever I know that I have tasks that I need to finish, and here he is, he is fighting with me over a bath or something, those petty issues would take priority over the task from work that I need to finish. So I don't think I am able to balance the two at the moment. I think my son takes priority.

Each mother has her own way of compromising and in Hlubi's situation she has identified more with her role as a nurturer to dictate her career development. Hlubi's sense of meaning came from her connection with her son. Her career then became a way to maintain her

relationship with him in the sense that her career empowered her financially to be better able to care for him. In this way the career was a means for her to engage in relational activity (Schultheiss, 2007). Brown and Gilligan (1992) argue that women's development is centred on staying in relationship with others and themselves. This is confirmed in Gugu and Hlubi's career narratives. This means that career cannot be separated from significant relationships, nor can it be separated from the socio-cultural conditions of an individual because, as was illustrated in the Gugu and Hlubi's extracts, individuals are influenced by significant relationships as well as socio-cultural conditions. These findings indicate therefore that using modernist career theories, which assume that career development exists outside of socio-cultural conditions, with black South African single mothers, is inappropriate.

4.3.2 Becoming resilient

In the face of the challenges of single-parenthood, many gained strength from their faith in God as well as their relationships with others in their lives. For some these relationships were with family members or neighbours, for others the relationship was with God, but for all of them there was a strong relationship with themselves. Having a solid support system was vital in these single mothers being able to cope with the demands of being a single parent. The following extracts shed light on this issue.

Extract 15

Ronelle: How do you cope with the challenges of being a single mother?

Dudu: You need to use your brain. You need to see how you can plan things. I look to see if the situation will allow me to take a particular course of action. I need to think and say I will do a particular thing at this time or if it is something urgent I must do it immediately. The things that I was doing I will leave because I can see that there are more urgent matters to address.

Ronelle: Do you have people that you are close to that help you or are a support system to you as you are a single working mother, such as friends family ect.?

Dudu: There are the neighbours that help, for example, just this year when I would go to work I would leave my younger son with the neighbours. This is because I spoke to

my neighbours and told them that the money I was paying for someone to look after him was too much. He is able to change his clothes after school and put them away neatly and ask for food, eat and then go to play. The neighbours then told me that since he was no longer troublesome and I worked a few days a week, they would be able to look after him. So now I leave him with any neighbour that is available. Tomorrow I am going to work and they are Seventh Day Adventist believers so they will take him to church with them. My neighbours are very, are very supportive, they help me a lot.

Dudu relies on herself and her neighbours to cope with any challenges that come her way. The lack of familial support has strengthened her character and made her a self-reliant, independent woman. Her need for support was fulfilled in her relationship with herself and her relationship with her neighbours. Managing the multiple responsibilities entailed prioritizing the important issues in life. It was essential for each of the single mothers to develop a strong sense of self because it helped them feel in control. Also they often could not rely too much on others but mainly had to rely on themselves. This is made clear in Dudu's conversation with herself as she negotiates with herself which tasks are more important than others. This is embodied in Bakhtin's (1973) dialogical self. The dialogical self refers to the way in which the individual can embody multiple voices that can agree and disagree with each other (McIlveen & Patton, 2007). These voices can negotiate and communicate with each other from different vantage points, and communication can also occur between the self and others (Salgado & Hermans, 2005). We see this as Dudu negotiates with herself in determining which tasks are more pressing than others. We see that she negotiated with her neighbours as well in helping her with her son so that she could go to work. In this way it can be recognised that the self and the environment are relational to each other and that these mothers are in constant relation with the self and the social world (Hermans & Kempen, 1993). These findings confirm Schultheiss's (2005) argument that career experience is influenced by significant relationships. These findings also confirm Naidoo and May's (2006) argument that women are often concerned about how to integrate home and work commitments.

These mothers were able to cope and manage multiple responsibilities due to the support they gained from family, friends and neighbours. We see in Dudu's narrative that she gained a lot of support from her neighbours. These neighbours did not need to be coerced into looking after Dudu's son and Dudu never felt scared of leaving him with them. There was a sense of trust and interdependency that existed within the relationship between Dudu and her neighbours. This is related to the African cultural beliefs of the community within which she resides. One of these beliefs is based on the saying "umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu" which when directly translated means "a person is a person through other people". This means that each member of the community acknowledges that each person needs other people in their life to help them and to communicate with and to basically be in relation with thus creating a collective identity (Mbiti, 1970; Mkhize, 2004).

The assumption of a collective identity within African cultures expresses itself within another belief which is based on the saying "it takes a village to raise a child". This saying expresses the view that raising a child is a collective responsibility where each person in the community represents a family member to the child such that every adult should be considered by the child to be a parent (Suda, 1997). These findings confirm Eaton and Louw's (2000) findings from their study of black South African psychology students which found that black South African students identified with a collectivist culture which emphasises a contextualised and relational nature of the self. Most career theories and assessments are based on an individualistic culture where the individual is assumed to exist outside of their socio-cultural context. These theories are therefore inappropriate to use with black South African single mothers because they are not able to fully appreciate the identity of these mothers.

4.4 The Unique Experiences of Black South African Single Mothers as they pursue their Careers

In this section of the analysis the aim was to open the discussion to the mothers in order to explore in a broad sense what their unique experiences were so that the study could gain a sense of what experiences were unique to the population of black South African single mothers. Two themes emerged in response to the participants' experiences: a) single

parenthood and playing the role of both parents, and b) discrimination on the basis of race and gender.

4.4.1 Gender and racial discrimination

With regard to discrimination many of the mothers spoke of being discriminated against based on their race, and a few spoke of gender discrimination. It seems that the legacy of apartheid is still a contributing factor in the career development of black South Africans. The following extract talks to this issue.

Extract 16

Ronelle: You have already spoken about some of the challenges and discrimination that you faced as you were trying to become a nurse or health worker maybe if you can just say the discrimination that you faced now in this particular career?

Ethel: Unfortunately I did face it once but it was only...it didn't last a year. Fortunately when I was employed in 1996, 1997...by 1997 I became a subject head. By the year 2000 I was a permanent HOD [Head of Department] and I was working with older people then in 2002 they employed another HOD a male that is when I felt that discrimination. That guy didn't want to hear about a lady in position. The guy didn't like that everything they use, even my principle, even the SCM [Supply Chain Management] inspector used to come to the school and say I know Mrs X, I know you can do this thing. Okay so they usually face me because I give myself over to something when I am doing it so this guy hated it. Another thing, I was single; he is a married man you know and he was staying in Hammersdale. I didn't have a car by then and I was taking lifts to work and when he found out that I own a house here at D he wanted to see my house. He came with his wife and you know he said, you need to sell this house and buy a house in a location.... He wasn't saying congrats and he even said, you not supposed to be HOD especially maths HOD; maths HODs are supposed to be men. Then I said to him it's unfortunate even when I was young in my class men in maths were not there, they were present but they weren't on top of me. Even at the college you can ask those people that I was with them in the college so that was my thing. God gave it to me so you cannot take it away from me. Being an

HOD, a maths HOD, a female HOD is because God wanted me to be a female HOD, that's it, you cannot...the house I have, it's because God gave me that house.

When Ethel first found herself in a management position a male colleague in a similar position showed some antagonism towards her due to his own cultural beliefs about the role women should play in the workplace. Ethel's colleague seemed to show resentment at the fact that their superior respected Ethel and trusted her to get the job done. He may have felt he was more qualified than and superior to Ethel, by virtue of being male. He seemed to be appalled that Ethel owned her own house and yet she was single. This may be related to the cultural belief that men are providers and thus women cannot be successful without men providing for them (Holborn & Eddy, 2011). This point's to the social and cultural beliefs that affect women's career development in the workplace. South Africa has a history of gender discrimination within the science fields due to pre-existing social, cultural and structural stereotypes; these serve as barriers to women's entry and advancement in these fields (Naidoo & May, 2006). Women were often expected to go into the helping professions based on the cultural belief that women are meant to be nurturers and caretakers (Nel, 2006). Moorosi (2007) argues that most management positions in South Africa are influenced by gendered social practices that serve to disadvantage and hinder women's career development. Management positions often support a male culture which is embedded in extremely competitive environments; those who work at different paces are often discriminated against (Lewis-Enright, Crafford & Crous, 2009). South Africa has deeply embedded patriarchal beliefs within its communal and organisational cultures which often serve as a barrier to women's career trajectories (Mathabe & Temane, 1993).

4.4.2 Enjoying motherhood

A positive theme that arose from the narratives of these mothers was that of enjoying motherhood. The experience of watching their children grow and seeing how they developed made the mothers feel proud of their children and also of themselves. Several of the mothers saw motherhood as a positive thing and did not perceive it to be a hindrance to their career

development. They viewed motherhood in a positive light and spoke of the good that came from it. The following extracts speak to this issue.

Extract 17

Ronelle: Ok maybe you could just tell me a little bit about what motherhood means to you?

Faith: It means a lot of work, a lot of stress, balancing motherhood with work, being a single mother, to look after the home and the responsibilities; I have got a bond so I have got the home [house] to pay for, bills and to send my daughter to school, the University. Yes it is very stressful but at the same time you enjoy it. You are stretched but you know something will be difficult but nice at the same time. So it's very challenging.

Extract 18

Ronelle: Have you found it hard to be a mom and employee at the same time? How have you been able to balance those roles?

Ethel: My child was independent, doing her things on her own because when she was even in Grades 2,4,5,6 she didn't allow me to help her with her homework. She used to say "no my teacher didn't say that." So I didn't find it stressful coming from work, to do my chores and then take care of the child with the schoolwork. No, I didn't so I didn't find it difficult because it was my only child so I didn't and I love children.

Faith talks about the challenges and joys of motherhood at the same time. For her, the difficulties that come with being a mother are worth it as they outweigh the challenges. Motherhood brought a sense of meaning to the lives of these mothers. In African cultures a person finds meaning when relating with others (Mkhize, 2004). For many of the mothers their sense of meaning came from their relationship with their children and career was used as a means to enhance the relationship with their children. Career was seen as a means to an end, the end being to see their relationships with their children become stronger. Women derive meaning from being and staying in relationship throughout their lives (Jordan, 2001).

In Ethel's extract the reader notes that she hardly experienced difficulties with her child because her daughter has always been independent. Besides this independence Ethel narrates that her love for children made it easier for her to face any challenge. Having grown up as an orphan, Ethel seems to more acutely feel the connection with her daughter thus finds a deeper meaning from her relationship with her. This echoes Gilligan's (1982) argument that at the core of women's identity is the need to stay in relationship.

4.5 Summary

The many themes that emerged in the current study highlight that the career development of black South African single mothers is subject to contextual factors, amongst which are; socio-economic conditions, cultural beliefs and gender discrimination. Single mothers had particularly unique career development pathways. Single mothers ran single income families; this requires them to play the dual role of mother and father to their children and this adds to the work-home role strain. The chapter highlighted the relevance of using narrative and hermeneutic approaches in order to give voice to the career trajectories of marginalised populations such as Black African single mothers.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The aim of the study was to explore the needs, challenges and career constructions of Black South African single mothers, using a narrative, post-modern framework. The study intended to achieve four interrelated objectives which were to investigate 1) The meaning of 'career' for black African single mothers, 2) The challenges faced by single black South African mothers in pursuing their careers, 3) How these mothers balance job/family roles, and finally to see 4) How these mothers experience motherhood. The aim was also to inform career research and practice with regards to working with Black South African single mothers.

The study demonstrated that traditional career theory and practice in South Africa is inappropriate when working with black South African single mothers. Traditional theories fail to take into account the varied contextual factors that influence and impact on the career development of these mothers. It was found that the mothers' career choices were often defined by their life struggles such as survival and financial security. This went against assumptions within traditional modernist approaches which argue that career choice is defined by personality traits (Gottfredson, 2002; Holland, 1996; Parsons, 1909). This indicated a need for career theory and practice that addresses the situational accounts of individuals from communal cultures. The current study participants shared a relational view of the self. This meant that they did not perceive themselves as separate or living in isolation to family and friends but rather perceived their identity and experiences to be intertwined with their relationships with those around them. This went against the individualistic paradigm which informs much of the career theory and practice within the South African context. These findings confirm the findings in previous studies done by Frizelle (2002) and Fabiano (2010).

5.1 Recommendations for Theory

The use of traditional career theories and assessments is inappropriate when working with these mothers. The researcher recommends that career counsellors make use of post-

modernist approaches such as the Narrative and Relational Cultural Theory to undergird their work with black single mothers in the South African context. For black South African single mothers the meaning of career seems to centre on their life struggles and their significant relationships. Their life struggles are often about the need to have finances to support themselves and their children. These mothers often experienced work-home role strain between family and work responsibilities. They worked to raise income to support their children while at the same time experiencing guilt from spending so much time at work and so little with their children. The mothers had a huge need for support from family and friends, having economic support, flexible working hours, and colleague support at work. This means that the career development of these mothers is intertwined with their social conditions. Post-modernistic approaches are sensitive to contextual factors and are able to localize and situate the experiences of the client or narrator. Career theories based on post-modern assumptions are more relevant and appropriate when working with single women as they are better posed to illuminate the localized, situational, dialogical and gendered experiences of this group.

5.2 Recommendations for Policy and Practice

Access to career counselling resources are limited to the privileged because these resources are expensive and as a result a large portion of the population (Maree, Ebersohn & Molepo, 2006). For many of the mothers in the current study, poverty and lack of skills was a significant barrier to career development. These mothers need support and guidance from career counselling resources to help them find appropriate avenues to overcome these challenges where night classes and childcare are provided to benefit such women. The findings indicated that career choice of these mothers was often based on adapting to the changing context in order for them to survive. Savickas *et al.* (2009) argue that in the context of globalisation there is a need to develop the necessary skills in order to respond to the demands of an ever-changing environment. Theories such as Mitchell, Levin and Krumboltz's (1999) Planned Happenstance are better suited to the needs of marginalised populations due to their emphasis on the need to exploit opportunities as they emerge and should be utilised more.

5.3 Recommendations for Future Research

The findings from the current study indicate that current career counselling theory and career assessment instruments are outdated and irrelevant to the diverse South African population. The majority of South Africans are black Africans who hold communal and multiple notions of the self. Most current individualistic career perspectives cannot account for such views of the self (Eaton & Louw, 2000). New and appropriate career assessments are needed within the South African context to work with the black population. The current study focused on black South African single mothers and thus is not necessarily generalizable to the black population at large within the South African context. The current study was based in KwaZulu-Natal due to the purposive and convenience sampling which was employed. Future research could therefore be conducted in other or all provinces of South Africa. It is recommended therefore that more qualitative research be done with black male and female participants to inform new career assessments. Qualitative research is able to give a thick description of career experiences and thus would be able to give us greater insight into the issues faced by this population. This information would thus be fed back into the design of the relevant career assessment instruments (Mkhize *et al.*, 1998).

5.4 Limitations of the Study

The current study was conducted within the province of KwaZulu-Natal and thus did not sample women within the different provinces of South Africa who may have faced other issues not recognised by women in KwaZulu-Natal. The sample size was also small where 9 women were interviewed making it difficult to generalize these findings. Future Research could therefore focus on a larger sample size, using mixed methods research that combines quantitative and qualitative approaches. The study focused on black South African single mothers; this means it does not account for the experiences of single mothers of other population groups who were also victims of Apartheid. Further studies are needed to elucidate the lived career narratives of these groups. Despite the reflexivity that was built into the study, qualitative research is largely subjective. Thus the current study findings to a certain extent reflect the socio-cultural positionality of the researcher; they cannot be made sense of independently of her gender, race and cultural background (Rolfe, 2006).

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APPENDIX A
THE INTERVIEW GUIDE

Opening Question:

Can you please tell me a story about your career?

Probing Questions:

The following questions were anticipated depending on how the narrative progressed:

1. How do you find the experience of being a single mother (Difficult, easy)? Explain why?
2. How do you find the experience of being a single mother who is working (Difficult, easy)? Explain why?
3. How did you come to be in the job you are in now?
4. What are some of the challenges you have faced in being a single mother and in pursuing your career?
5. How have you coped with these challenges?
6. Is the job you have now the one you have always dreamt of having?
7. As a single parent have you ever experienced any form of discrimination within the work environment? Give examples?
8. How do you find being a mother and a worker at the same time?
9. How are you able to balance these roles?
10. Do you have any established support systems (Family, friends or support groups)?
11. How have you been able to ensure the successful outcome of a career you have pursued?
12. Where do you locate yourself within the roles of being a mother and being an employee?
13. How do you think others perceive you (successful, failure)?
14. How important is having and maintaining a career to you?

APPENDIX B

THE CONSENT FORM

The following study aims to explore the narratives of Black South African single mothers between the ages of 23 and 40 years. These mothers will be mothers who bear children outside of marriage because this particular sample of single mothers face challenges that divorced or married mothers do not face. The aim will be to explore the meanings, constructions and challenges that these women face in designing their careers. Particularly focusing on the way in which these women define career and the way in which they formulate successful career stories. The participants will be interviewed by the researcher in their homes by using a semi-structured interview.

The nature of these questions might be sensitive to such an extent that they could create emotional distress thus participants are invited to visit the local hospital to have a meeting with the psychologist on duty. The current study will be a social benefit in that it will inform future career theories and hopefully inform government policies. Participants will gain from the current study in that it allows them to think reflectively and critically about their career stories.

Participation in the current study is entirely voluntary and if the participant feels that the study is affecting them negatively in any way they are free to drop out of the study. All information that is gathered from the participants is confidential and anonymity is assured. If the participant decides to withdraw and does not want their data used in the study, that data will be destroyed. The people who will have access to the data will be the researcher (Ronelle Msomi) as well as the Supervisor (Nhlanhla Mkhize). Should any questions, problems or other queries arise the participant can contact Ronelle Msomi phone no.-0734470197 or 206507092@ukzn.ac.za or N.Mkhize phone no.031-2602006 or email MkhizeN@ukzn.ac.za.

This is to say that I _____ agree to participate in the current study and to allow the information gathered from the interview to be used for research and dissertation purposes.

Signed by researcher:

Signed by participant:

Date:

Date: