UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU- NATAL FACULTY OF HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

An explorative study of the construction of fatherhood in South Africa: The case of unmarried black African parents in Ethekwini Municipality, KZN

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ABSTRACT

South Africa has a high number of absent fathers especially among unmarried black African parents who live apart. A number of factors have been found to have contributed to this phenomenon including apartheid policies such as the migrant labour and pass laws. These policies have without any doubt impacted on family structure as it is known. In addition, legislation which did not give any unmarried fathers automatic responsibilities and rights in respect of their children may have contributed towards the rate of absentee fathers. Although with the introduction of the new Children's Act which now provides for automatic responsibilities and rights for unmarried fathers who meet certain criteria, the White paper on families which further encourages father involvement into the life of the child, there is still a lot that needs to be done to address the phenomenon of father absence. These policies have the potential to significantly influence father-child relationships. However, it is crucial that further research is devoted to conceptions of fatherhood and causes of father absence, in order to further understand the dynamics of the phenomenon from different contexts.

This study focuses on exploring factors contributing to absentee fathers among unmarried black African parents living apart who reside within the Ethekwini Municipality in KwaZulu Natal (South Africa). A qualitative interpretive approach was used. Thirty (30) participants who reside in Ward 1 and Ward 6 under Ethekwini municipality were be selected using purposive sampling technique. In addition, 4 key informants including traditional authorities and elderly were also selected from both wards. Semi-structured interviews and focus group interviews were both used to collect data from the sample and the analysis was done using thematic analysis.

Findings indicate that most fathers in the study have interest of being involved in the upbringing of their children, however they are denied that right due to economic factors as the definition of a father is closely associated with financial provision. It became clear that most parents still define or understand the role of a father as that of providing for the child. This is further complicated by the understanding of fatherhood as closely linked to masculinity which is found in the community. For most participants, child rearing is closely associated with femininity and engaging in such activities does not make one a "real men" in the eyes of the community. Amongst other factors that contributes to absent fatherhood, the study found that the payment of intlawulo to the maternal family still also plays a role in how much access the father has to the child. This cultural practice makes the maternal family the primary custodians of the child and gives them the power to make decision about things pertaining to the child without involving the father. The study also found that the construction of fatherhood is also linked to the parent's experience of fatherhood with their own father during childhood. Having a father who was absent while growing up, a father who only played the role of a financial provider or a father who was involved, for most participants, influenced their understanding of fatherhood.

Based on the findings, the researcher recommends that more community awareness are to be done in the communities as most fathers are unaware of their rights and the fact that they have the right to access their children. Section 21 of the children's Act makes such provisions. Secondly, the development of community based programmes that address the issues of masculinity versus femininity as well as fatherhood.

Keywords: fatherhood, absentee father, parent, unmarried parent, child, child care, meaningful parenting and masculinity

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DEDICATIONS

I dedicate this research to my mother Sibongile Mavis Khanyile for inspiring me to achieve greatness in this world and allowing me to be my own self.
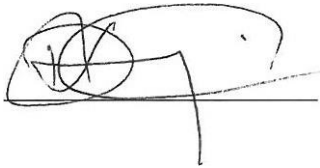
A special dedication to all the fathers who are involved in the upbringing of their children.

DECLARATION OF ORIGINALITY

I, Wiseman Mlondolozi Khanyile declare that this dissertation is my original work and all sources and/or authors have been correctly referenced using the American Psychology Association (APA) style. I have to the best of my abilities properly acknowledged other sources and a bibliography has been attached as a form of reference.

Wiseman Mlondolozi Khanyile (218078276)

Jan 2019

Signed: Date: 30/01/2019

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

This introduction chapter of this dissertation discusses the background and context of the study, problem statement and the rationale of the study. The researcher also describes the aim and objectives of the study, research questions and assumptions underlying the study. The concepts used are clarified for better understanding within the context and the outline of the structure of the dissertation.

1.1 Background and context of the study

The family has been acknowledged as playing an important role in the psycho-social development of a child as they serve as the main source of emotional, social and material support. However, absent fatherhood is still affecting many children and families globally. "South Africa has an exceptionally high number of absent fathers with approximately half of the children in the country living without daily contact with their fathers" (Mavungu, Hayley & Mphaka, 2013 p.2). The phenomenon of absent of fathers is a global phenomenon that still needs to be researched and understood within many different contexts as there are many dynamics and factors that contributes to it. Mavungu et al. (2013) further points out to the fact that while this state of affairs has continually been an area of concern and often acknowledged as one of the key contributory factors to a number of societal ills that we experience as a country, minimal research has thus far been devoted to understanding the reasons and social dynamics surrounding the disengagement of fathers.

In many black African communities in South Africa, parenting is framed as a predominantly feminine role, with fatherhood restricted to financial provision rather than nurturing and emotional connectedness with children (Mavungu, 2013). This ideology that mothers are biologically engineered to be primary caregivers to children has led to the dominant assumption that the father-child relationship has little influence on a child's

psycho-social development. A number of studies conducted in South Africa and internationally suggest that father involvement is crucial for optimal development in both girl and boy child and is associated with positive psychosocial and health wellbeing (Richter, Chikovore, & Makusha 2010; Richter 2006; Levtov, Van der Gaag, Greene, Kaufman, & Barker 2015). Although there is evident benefits that points to gender equality, men's greater participation in childcare and development has been found to be of great importance for the wellbeing of children (Levtov et al. 2015)

According to a report by Statistics South Africa (2017), in 2015 there was a higher proportion among black South African children (39.4%) who lived with their mothers only as compared to black South African children who lived with their fathers (3.3%). In another study, Holborn and Eddy (2011) also found that about 55% of African rural children under the age of 15 had absent living fathers as compared to 43% of African children in urban areas. This shows that there is a higher prevalence of absent fathers especially in the rural areas as compared to urban areas. In addition, the proportion of absent living fathers among black South African families shows an increase from a percentage of 45.5% in 1996 to 50.6% in 2010 (Holborn & Eddy 2011). Data from the National Income Dynamic study conducted in 2010 (as cited in Mavunga 2013) also highlighted the fact that in about 82% of black South African fathers who were alive at the time of the survey, only 41% of them supported their children.

The Children's Act of 2005 was passed by parliament in 2010 with a new provision on section 21 on the rights and responsibilities of unmarried fathers (Children's Act No.38 of 2005). In 2013, the minister of the Department of Social Development introduced the White Paper on Families. The main objective of the White Paper is to view the family as the key development imperative and also seeking to mainstream family issues into Government-wide,

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policy making initiatives in order to foster positive family well-being and overall socio-economic development of the country (Department of Social Development (DSD), 2013). Strategic priority one of the White Paper focuses on promoting healthy family life by encouraging co-parenting by both parents and the importance of father's involvement in the children's upbringing. Both pieces of legislature are aimed at encouraging father involvement in the upbringing of their children and also to decrease the phenomenon of absent fathers.

There are many causes and factors that contribute to the issue of absent fathers in South Africa. Research studies conducted in South Africa have revealed the following: decline in marriages, delayed marriages due to *ilobolo*, cultural norms and gender roles related to child rearing, poverty, unemployment, migration, domestic violence, masculinity ideologies (Budlender & Lund 2011; Mavungu et al., 2013; Makusha 2010; Holborn &Eddy 2011; Posel & Rudwick 2014; Sikweyiya et al. ,2017). Richter et al. (2012) points out to the fact that in as much as a lot has been learnt about the nature, extent and benefits of father involvement in the upbringing of their children in South Africa, there is still need for further research that is informed by local social, economic and cultural dynamics.

1.2 Statement of the problem

Physical presence and payment of child support maintenance is still seen by some fathers as sufficient and to some denotes the notion of being a good father. Is father's physical presence alone necessarily for a positive outcome in the upbringing of their children? Mavungu et al. (2013 p.12) found that "responsible and engaged fathers, who do their share of parenting work, are beneficial to the development of children and to building families and societies that better reflect gender equity and protect child rights". This further shows that the presence of a father in their child's life does not necessarily results to positive outcomes, however emotional presence and engagement is also of paramount importance for optimal development.

A number of research studies globally have indicated that father absence, both physically and emotionally, is highly correlated with negative outcomes for both children and women. McLanahan, Tach and Schneider (2013) found strong evidence pointing to the fact that father absence has a potential negative effects on children's social-emotional development, mostly by increasing externalizing behaviour. This may include poor educational performance and school dropout, teen pregnancy, and drug and alcohol abuse (Peacock, Redpath, Weston, Evans, Daub & Grieg 2008). In contrast, Peacock et al. (2008 p.33) further argue that "the engagement or presence of a father or father figure in the life of a child positively affects the child's life prospects, academic achievement, physical and emotional health and linguistic, literary and cognitive development"

According to Morrell and Richter (2006, p.18) fatherhood refers to the "social role that men undertake to care for their children". This implies being more involved emotionally and physically in the upbringing of a child. To the contrary, a number of studies conducted in South Africa reveals that most men see the construction of fatherhood as restricted to providing financially for their families (Patel & Mavungu 2016; Mavungu et al. 2013; Richter et al. 2012; Makusha 2013). The way men behave in South Africa is strongly influenced by dominant ideals of masculinity, including norms related to binge drinking and being strong and tough, which often interpreted as being unemotional and insensitive (Makusha 2013). The conceptualisation of fatherhood and the role of fathers as just providers in the upbringing of their children has been mentioned as one of the factors contributing to the high number of black South African children growing up without the care, connection and support from their fathers (Mavungu, Heyley & Mphaka 2013; Swart, Bhana, Richter & Versfeld 2013; Sikweyiya et al. 2017).

1.3 Rationale and significance of the study

Absentee fatherhood is and still remain one of the issues that need to be understood and addressed in South Africa as it is perceived to contribute to a number of social ills within communities. There is a strong policy-based perception that family life is under pressure and the dominant view is that fathers are not playing their role (Ratele, Shefer & Clowes 2012). Firstly, the main of the study is to explore factors that contribute to absentee fatherhood among black unmarried South African fathers in Durban. Secondly, the researcher wants to explore how fatherhood is socially constructed among this population i.e. the role of men in the upbringing of their children. How does this conceptualisation come into being? What are the factors that contributes to this conceptualisation?

While there is a great body of international knowledge on fatherhood, particularly, the role and involvement of fathers/men in the upbringing of children, there is still a gap in information about men's involvement in children's lives in sub-Saharan Africa (Hosegood & Madhavan, 2010). In this light, one cannot make broadly generalised statements about issues around fatherhood and absentee fathers based on Eurocentric data as they may reflect data based on totally different contexts. This study aims to expand on the body of knowledge within a South African context. There is a great need in literature to hear the voices of both mother's and father's voices on conception of fatherhood and the factors contributing to absent fatherhood as most literature focuses on the voices of men.

Mavungu et al. (2013) points out to the fact that it is crucial that further research is devoted to conceptions of fatherhood and causes of father absence, in order to further understand the dynamics of the phenomenon of absent fathers from the perspective of mothers and children. The researcher hopes that the data collected from the study will provide different perceptions on fatherhood and absent fathers in KwaZulu Natal. The significance of the study lies primarily in researching fatherhood in a context which has been

under researched. Although the findings are based on an explorative study, the researcher hopes that they will however raise vital questions about improving care and support policies and programmes in private and public sectors. This will further assist in meeting the dual challenges of support and gender equality in the Southern African context within Social Work practice. Finally, the findings will provide Social Workers with the bases for evidence-based practice when working families.

1.4 Aims and objectives

The aim of the study is to explore the construct of fatherhood and the factors contributing to absentee fatherhood among unmarried black African parents living apart**.** It will contribute to an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon of absent fathers among unmarried black African families in South Africa, particularly the construction of fatherhood and the contributing factors to disengagement of fathers as well as related social dynamics.

The objectives of the study are as follows:

1. Examine social constructions of fatherhood among Black African unmarried parents living apart

2. Identify factors contributing to absentee fatherhood

3. Examine the nature and extent of unmarried black African fathers' involvement in parenting

4. Identify challenges and barriers to the meaningful involvement of unmarried fathers in parenting

5. Identify the social support needs of unmarried Black African parents living apart.

1.5 Research questions

1. What are black African unmarried parents' understanding of fatherhood?

2. To what extent does the social construction of fatherhood contribute to absent father among black unmarried parents?

3. What is the nature and extent of the father's involvement in the lives of their children and factors contributing to absent fathers?

4. What are the views of black African unmarried parents on fostering meaningful involvement of fathers in parenting?

5. What are the needs and available support structures for unmarried Black African parents living apart in their community?

1.6 Main assumptions

The following assumptions underlie this study:

- Conceptualization and understanding of fatherhood and what it means to be a father has a great effect on the role that man/fathers play in the upbringing of their children. Thus contributing to absent fathers who are there physically but absent emotionally due to poor understanding of their role as fathers.

- Women and mothers have a role that they play in perpetuating absent fathers as they also foster conceptualization of fathers as just providers.

- The relationship between the mother and the father of a child not living together also plays a role on the quality of father-child involvement as the mother is often the gatekeeper.

- Cultural influences on the conception of fatherhood and the role of fathers also contributes in limiting the level of involvement of unmarried fathers in the upbringing of their children.

1.7 Clarification of concepts

The following are some of the concepts that forms part of the study:

Father. Accoding to Makusha (2013, p.11) the term 'father' comes from the Latin word '*pater*' which means a male parent, or a person who takes responsibility for protecting, caring, and rearing a child. Acknowledging that a father in most African communities can refer to any male figure that takes responsibility of the child, however, for this study, this term is used to refer to the biological father or adoptive father.

Fatherhood. Although there is no clear definition of fatherhood as it is a socially constructed concept, Morrell and Richter (2006, p.18) Defines it as "the social role that men undertake to care for their children". This involves father involvement and being fully present at both physical and emotional level in the upbringing of child (ren).

Absent father. Father absence has two meanings. The first meaning has to do with only physical absence caused by factors such as 'situations of divorce, domestic instability, work, and social dislocations, including wars' while the second meaning refers to a father's emotional disengagement from his child's life regardless of whether he is either physically present or distant (Morrell & Richter 2006 p.18). However, the focus of the study is on emotional disengagement of fathers that are not residing with their children.

Parent. According to the Children's Act 38 of 2005, a parent in relation to the child includes the biological mother and father of the child. This definition further includes the adoptive parents of the child. A parent is generally seen as any man or women who is involved in raising the child - biological mother or father, step mother or father, as well as the extended member of the family (Mavungu et al. 2013), however, the focus of this study is on biological parents and adoptive parents.

Unmarried parents. This refers to the biological mother and biological father of a child who are not regarded as married according to the South African law. Due to a number of reasons and circumstances, many parents get children before or even without ever getting married. These parents may choose either to cohabit as if married or to continue their separate lives (Department of social development 2013)

Meaningful parenting. "Parenting practices around the world share three major goals: ensuring children's health and safety, preparing children for life as productive adults and transmitting cultural values. A high-quality parent-child relationship is critical for healthy development" (VandenBos 2007 p.89).

Child. According to the South African Children's Act 38 of 2005, a child is any person under the age of 18 years

Child care. According to section 1 of the Children's Act 38 of 2005 care is defined as providing a suitable place for the child to live; promoting the child's well-being and upbringing; securing the child's education; maintaining sound relationships with the child and accommodating the special needs of the child.

Masculinity. According to Ratele, Shefer and Clowes (2012) masculinity is a certain character and quality that is portrayed by men as society places expectations on men to show their physical strength, robustness and authority over women

*Social construction. "*A concept or perception of something based on the collective views developed and maintained within a society or social group; a social phenomenon or convention originating within and cultivated by society or a particular social group, as opposed to existing inherently or naturally" (Kawulich 2012 p.9)

1.8 Structure of the dissertation

Chapter 1: In chapter one of this study, Background and the context, the problem statement, the research aim and objectives and the research questions and assumptions underlying the study are provided. In addition, the concepts used are clarified for better understanding within the context of the study.

Chapter 2: This is the literature review chapter covering the following major sections: social welfare history of the problem, policies and legislation related to the problem and the review of literature related to the research question.

Chapter 3: In this chapter, the researcher critically reviews two theoretical frameworks that are used in understanding the phenomenon under study.

Chapter 4: This is the methodology chapter which includes the research design; population and sampling procedure; data collection and analysis; data verification; ethical considerations; study limitations; reflexivity and time frame.

Chapter 5: This chapter of the dissertation presents the research findings based on collected data

Chapter 6: This chapter focusses on discussing the research findings and also relating it to literature

Chapter 7: This chapter focuses on the conclusions based on the findings of the study as well as recommendations made by the researcher based on the study**.**

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

Mavungu et al., (2013) points out to the fact that little is known about how men, particularly African men, relate to their role as fathers and how they make sense of the phenomenon of absent fatherhood. In an attempt address this statement, the first section of this literature review focuses on social welfare history of absent fathers in South Africa and how the Apartheid era specifically contributed to the outgrow of the phenomenon amongst black African families. The second section focuses on policies and legislation in South Africa that relates to the phenomenon of parenting, particularly fatherhood. The last section of the review focuses on unpacking factors that are related to the fatherhood and absent fatherhood within the South African context.

2.1. Social welfare responses to the problem of absent fathers in South Africa

The increase of father absence is a global phenomenon. A number of studies conducted in South Africa and internationally suggest that father involvement is crucial for optimal development in both girl and boy child, however, these studies have found that the phenomenon of father absence is increasing (Richter, Chikovore, & Makusha 2010; Richter 2006; Levtov, Van der Gaag, Greene, Kaufman, & Barker 2015). This increasing trend of father absence has generated a huge concern among policy makers due to evidence that associates children who grow up without fathers to poorer developmental outcomes. Therefore, interventions that contributes to greater gender equality within parents have proven to be a crucial aspect in policy and programme development.

In response to the phenomenon of father absence in South Africa, a number of policies and programmes have been developed and amended in order to address the phenomenon of father absence. The Children's Act of 2005 was passed in 2010 with a new provision on section 21 on the rights and responsibilities of unmarried fathers (Children's Act

No.38 of 2005). In 2013, the minister of the Department of Social Development introduced the White Paper on Families. The main objective of the White Paper is to view the family as the key development imperative and also seeking to mainstream family issues into Government-wide, policy making initiatives in order to foster positive family well-being and overall socio-economic development of the country (Department of Social Development, 2013). Strategic priority one of the White Paper focuses on promoting healthy family life by encouraging co-parenting by both parents and the importance of father's involvement in the children's upbringing. Both pieces of legislature are aimed at encouraging father involvement in the upbringing of their children and also to decrease the phenomenon of absent fathers. *(See section 2.3 for a comprehensive discussion)*

Due to the growing interest in the role of men in the family, in May 2013, the Department of Social Development launched the "fatherhood strategy" that sought out to provide strategies for all government departments and stakeholders in developing programmes aimed at encouraging father involvement. The purpose of this strategy is "to capacitate service providers at grassroots to address the issue of fatherhood within families, and to empower fathers to take responsibility in the lives of their children" (Department of Social Development, 2013, p.25). This strategy further provides a platform for service providers to craft specific programmes targeted at various contexts of fatherhood and to introduce services to men within the DSD service points.

Also in 2013, the *Mencare+* programme was launched in South Africa. MenCare is a global fatherhood campaign that is active in more than 45 countries on five continents. In South Africa, MenCare is multi-pronged initiative and global campaign, run in partnership by Sonke gender justice and Promundo. The mission of the campaign is "to promote men's involvement as equitable, nonviolent fathers and caregivers in order to achieve family well-being, gender equality, and better health for mothers, fathers, and children" (Sonke gender

Justice accessed on 29 May 2018). The main aim is for men to be allies in supporting women's social and economic equality, in part by taking on more responsibility for childcare and domestic work. MenCare partners also advocate at the local and national level for policies that create more opportunities for men's involvement in caregiving, women's economic empowerment, maternal health, and children's wellbeing. Such measures include paid parental leave, flexible workplace policies, legislation that supports men's presence at prenatal health visits and in the delivery room, social assistance and education policies, and legislative bans on corporal punishment (Sonke gender Justice accessed on 29 May 2018).

2.2. The social construction of fatherhood in South Africa: A historical overview

At the beginning of the apartheid era, which strengthened the economic and political power of the ruling white minority and enforced racial segregation through oppressive laws, the constructions of fatherhood shifted (Mathews, Jewkes, & Abrahams, 2011).

Historical and context enriched critical perspective are vital in any attempt to understand parenting and particularly fatherhood within the South African context. Fatherhood in South Africa has been shaped by the country's complex social, historical, political and economic processes, including the socially disorganizing and discriminating effects of *Apartheid* (Hosegood & Madhavan, 2010). Apartheid was a form of racial segregation system enforced through policies and legislation from 1948 to 1994 by the National party that ruled South Africa at the time. Migration labour law, restriction of movement through pass laws and group areas Act of 1951 and imprisonment of family members in the revolution, are some of the pieces of legislature during the apartheid era that disrupted the family system.

Apartheid legislation and policies separated fathers from children and fathers from their families in different ways (Posel & Devey, 2006). Migration labour system, forced men

to leave their families and children behind to work in the mines (Richter & Norris, 2014). As means of providing financial support to their families and children, men had to find work in mines that were situated far away from their homes. Richter et al. (2006) talks about how this labour migration system disrupted all aspect of family life as women were lead to focus on mothering the children for eleven months of the year. These men left their wives and children at home, only to return during Christmas holidays or when their contracts expired (Townsend, Madhavan, & Garey 2006). This further created disruption on the father-child relationship and most importantly, the father-child interaction in families. This separation of men from their families gave rise to the role of the father being seen as that of a provider and that of women as child nurturers.

Policies of racial separation restricted African people to "Bantustans" or "Homelands" – which were remote, rural and impoverished (Mathews et al., 2011). This disempowerment led to men, who were only allowed to migrate from their Bantustans for the sake of labour, to leave their homes to work on annual labour contracts in mines, factories and commercial farms. The situation was further worsened by the introduction of pass laws which restricted the movement of black people. According Richter et al. (2006), this pass laws restricted the movement of black families, forcing them to settle in underdeveloped areas which led to a segregated population and migrant labourers. This separation and restriction in movement, made it difficult for families to stay connected and black African fathers to fulfil their role of being fathers in the lives of their children. Lockhat and Niekerk (2000) talks about how these restrictions also prohibited the children from visiting their fathers who worked in the mines since African children did not have permits allowing them to be in "whites only" areas.

In 1958, well before the banning of the ANC and PAC, the first large group of ANC members, some 4-500 from the Dinokana area in Zeerust, went into exile in the then colony of Bechuanaland (Ndlovu 2002). This further added a strain on most black African families

as they had been separated from their loved ones, which mostly were males. For most freedom fighters at the time, there was always a risk of being imprisoned by the apartheid government or settling in exile. "Needless to say, parting with loved ones was always a painful experience for the freedom fighters and others who went to settle in exile in order to build and fortify the ANC's external mission" (Ndlovu, 2002 p.489). In most cases this often led to families breaking up and children having to grow up without their fathers.

As a result of these policies and legislations during the apartheid era, the privilege of having a present father in the household for most African children was shuttered. Furthermore, as men were forced to look for jobs far away from their homes to support their families, the role of a father as that of a providing material support in black African children became norm. Holborn and Eddy (2011 p.3) have all points out to the fact that "households and families were harassed and torn apart by restrictions on people's movement and poverty". This resulted in many young African children growing up in fragmented conditions due to lack of their father's emotional support (Hosegood & Madhavan, 2012). The apartheid laws threatened the very existing structure of African families that we still see today even long after apartheid was abolished in South Africa.

Although in 1994 South Africa earned its independence and most of the apartheid laws were banned, however, the effects of these laws played and is still playing a role in shaping South African families and most importantly the construction of fatherhood amongst black African men. Townsend et al. (2006) argue that although the Pass Laws, which were introduced by the *Apartheid* regime to control the location and movement of Black South Africans, were eradicated in 1986 and independence in 1994 removed the last vestiges of formal legal segregation, the separation of opportunities for earning an income from the sites of family life has remained a prominent and distinguishing feature of life for many South Africans. Most men even till this day, are forced by the duty to provide for their families to

look for jobs in big cities like Durban, Johannesburg and Cape Town, leaving their families and children behind in rural areas and townships.

Although with the new democratic South Africa there are pieces of legislature and policies that encourage positive parenting and father's involvement in parenting, but the scenario might still be difficult for some black African especially within low socio-economic status as they have to search for work far away from their homes and families. There is still a large number of children in low socio-economic contexts that do not co-reside nor receive financial support from their fathers, because their fathers have moved to look for work, take employment somewhere, and for a variety of other reasons (Madhavan, Gross, Richter, Norris, & Hosegood, 2012).

2.3 Relevant policies and legislation

In the section of the literature, the researcher opens a discussion on the children's Act No. 38 of 2005 with specific attention to parental rights and responsibilities and parental responsibilities and rights of unmarried fathers. Secondly, South African Maintenance Act 99 of 1998 (as amended in Act 9 of 2015). Finally the White Paper on families is discussed with respects to strategic priorities that encourage father's involvement in the upbringing of children in promoting healthy family life.

2.3.1 Children's Act No.38 of 2008

When the apartheid era came to an end in 1994, and there was an establishment of a new democratic dispensation, the post-apartheid Government introduced various policy and legislative restructurings aimed at, among other things, the realigning of the country's institutions, in order to transform the South African society. The Children's Act No. 38 of 2005 came into force in South Africa in 2010 with the aim to fill gaps and make changes on the child care Act No. 74 of 1983 and the Natural Fathers of Children Born out of Wedlock

Act 86 of 1997. According to the Natural Fathers of Children Born out of Wedlock Act 86 of 1997, unmarried fathers did not have automatic parental rights to their children.

According to Section 19 of the Children's Act No. 38 of 2005, the biological mother of a child, whether married or unmarried, has full parental responsibilities and rights in respect of the child. In addition, section 20 of the Act states that the biological father of a child has full parental responsibilities and rights in respect of the child if he is married to the child's mother. Therefore, according to the Children's Act, for the father to have automatic full responsibility and rights to their child, they need to be married to the mother of the child.

In terms of Section 21 (1) (a), biological unmarried fathers may automatically acquire full parental responsibilities and rights in respect of a child if they were living with the mother in a permanent life-partnership at the time of the child's birth. In addition, an unmarried father – regardless whether he has lived or is living with the mother of the child - who has: (i) consented to be identified or successfully applies in terms of Section 26 to be identified as the child's father or pays damages in terms of the customary law, (ii) contributes or has attempted to contribute in the child's upbringing and lastly, (iii) contributes or has attempted to contribute towards expenses in the maintenance of the child, can automatically acquire parental responsibilities and rights (Section 21 (b)). This means that unmarried fathers, according to the new Children's Act can acquire full parental rights and responsibilities to their child even if they are not married to the mother of the child as long as they meet the criteria discussed above. This is different from the Natural Fathers of Children Born out of Wedlock Act 86 of 1997 which did not support unmarried fathers' automatic parental rights to custody, access and guardianship of their children.

The Act further states that the child maintenance has to be paid, whether the biological unmarried father has or has not been granted full parental responsibilities and

rights (Section 21 (2)). This means that the father of the child has the duty to support his child even if they have not acquired the full responsibility and rights in terms of this section. In the event of a dispute between a biological mother and the father regard to the fulfillment of these requirements by the father, the case must be referred for mediation to a family advocate, social worker or other suitably qualified person, and any party may have the outcome of the mediation reviewed by court (Section 21 (3)).

In terms of Section 22, an unmarried father who does not have automatic parental responsibilities and rights can enter into an agreement with whoever has parental responsibilities and rights with regard to a child. This agreement must be in the best interests of the child. The agreement must be registered with the family advocate or made an order of the high court or children's court to have legal effect (Section 22 (4)). A father who does not have automatic parental responsibilities and rights and who did not enter into agreement with the mother can apply to court (Section 23 and 24). In terms of Section 23, a father can apply to the high court or children's court for parental responsibility and rights in relation to care and contact. However, regarding guardianship he can only apply to the high court (Section 24).

The introduction of the new Children's Act No. 38 of 2005 did not only ensure that unmarried fathers can acquire parental rights to their children, but it also ensured that children have access to both parents whether married or unmarried. It cannot be argued at this stage that it is in the best interest of the child to have access to both parents and for both parents to exercise their parental responsibilities and rights. In terms of section 7 of the Act, it is in the best interest of the child taking into consideration the capacity of the parents, or any specific parent to provide for the needs of the child, including emotional and intellectual needs (section 7(1)).

2.3.2 The Maintenance Act 99 of 1998

The South African Maintenance Act 99 of 1998 (as amended in Act 9 of 2015) stipulates that if any parent (including unmarried fathers) does not voluntarily financially contribute to the upbringing of the child, the other parent has the right to take action against the father through a court to demand child maintenance (Section 6(1) & Gallinet, 2006). The court will conduct an investigation into the financial well-being of the father or the mother of the child (Section 7(1) & Skelton, 2009). After all necessary investigations into the party, if necessary, the court will lodge a child maintenance order (Maintenance Act 99 of 1998 Section 8, as amended in Maintenance Act 9 of 2015). The maintenance order means the order of payment, including the periodical payment of sums of money towards the maintenance of the child (Maintenance Act 9 of 2015 chapter 1). The payment of child maintenance stops when the child becomes able to provide for himself/herself (Gallinetti, 2006).

In the amended Maintenance Act 9 of 2015, when there is a complaint that the father is failing to pay child maintenance, he will be included in the Credit Bureau to be blacklisted (Jamieson, Du toit & Jobson, 2015). Furthermore, the court will now decide whether to convert criminal proceedings if a father is prosecuted for failure to pay court-ordered child maintenance (Maintenance Act 9 of 2015; Jamieson et al. 2015). Consequently, since the amendments to the Act has come into force in the Government Gazette (Jamieson et al., 2015), parents face an additional challenge of criminal records if failing to pay child maintenance.

Sections 2, 11 and 13*(b)* of the Amendment Act provide, amongst others, that parents who default on child maintenance will have their personal information submitted to credit bureaus, and face being blacklisted. This will prevent maintenance defaulters from continuing to receive credit while owing maintenance. Section 2 of the Amendment Act amends section 7 of the Maintenance Act which deals with the investigation of maintenance complaints. If a

parent responsible for maintenance cannot be traced, the court may now issue an order to an electronic communication service provider, e.g. Vodacom, MTN, Cell C or Telkom, to provide the court with their contact information, if any of those service providers have the contact information being sought. This order may only be granted if the court is satisfied that all reasonable efforts to locate the defaulter in question have failed.

According to Morrell (2006), the South African government implemented this policy to increase father-child support. However Section 15(1) talks about the "duty of parents to support their children" and the following is stated:

> Without derogating from the law relating to the liability of persons to support children who are unable to support themselves, a maintenance order for the maintenance of a child is directed at the enforcement of the common law duty of the child's parents to support that child, as the duty in question exists at the time of the issue of the maintenance order and is expected to continue (p. 55)

Although this Act is mostly misread by many people as aiming at getting father's to support their children, however, the aim is to get both parents to support the child. Based on the researcher's view, the Act have contributed greatly to getting father's to support their children financially however, the Act still does not contribute in dealing with the major problem of father-absence. Some fathers pay the maintenance with ever spending time with their children. Therefore the researcher feels that father's should further be compelled to engage in the lives of their children.

2.3.3 White Paper on Families

Like many families throughout the world, South African families face many challenges on the day to day basis. The Department of Social Development (DSD) released a draft of the 'White Paper of Families in South Africa' in 2012 which was approved by the parliament in 2013 and officially launched in October 2014 (Rabe, 2016). The main objective of the White

Paper is to view the family as the key development imperative and also seeking to mainstream family issues into Government-wide, policy making initiatives in order to foster positive family well-being and overall socio-economic development of the country (Department of Social Development 2013). The White Paper on Families highlights the need to help families with challenges they come across and most importantly builds on many Government interventions aimed at strengthening the capacity of families (Dlamini, DSD 2013). This is one of the ways in which the Government seeks to strengthen the capacity of families is through parenting and family strengthening programmes and promoting positive fatherhood initiatives.

The White Paper on Families is guided by three key strategic priorities: promotion of healthy family life, family strengthening and family preservation (DSD, 2013). Strategic priority one: promotion of family healthy life focuses on efforts to prevent the family breakdown of family life by promoting positive attitudes and values about the importance of strong families and communities that support families. According to Wilkins (2012 pg. v), "family breakdown disables future generations". The White Paper on Families further provides recommended strategies and envisaged actions guiding all Government department and non-government organisation working with families in promoting functional families. In promoting healthy family life, one of the key points in strategy encourages father's involvement in children's upbringing. Within this key strategic point, the White Paper encourages government departments and non-governmental organisations to:

> (i) Elaborate or revise current laws and social policies that restrict fathers from being involved in their children's lives and replace them with those that create an environment where fathers have the opportunity to care for, engage with, and support their children. (ii) Consider the introduction of paternity leave in the work place. (iii) Use the formal education system and informal information sources such as the media to construct and maintain social norms and positive attitudes regarding the roles of fathers in the lives

of children. (iv) Ensure more effective enforcement of maintenance payments by absent fathers. (v) Ensure that fathers are treated equally by the courts in custody decisions (which the law provides for but which anecdotal evidence suggest does not always happen). (vi) To the extent that unemployment is likely to be playing a major role in the absence of fathers from families—either because they have migrated to other areas in search of jobs, or because a lack of income puts men off taking responsibility for the children they father—intensify the creation of employment opportunities (DSD, 2013).

The White Paper also makes an effort to addresses the issue of absent fathers in South Africa as it highlights the importance of father-involvement in the upbringing of children. It challenges the government to change and revise laws and social policies that plays a role in restricting fathers in being present and further enforces absent fatherhood directly or indirectly. It takes into account the fact that there is a lot in terms of education and awareness that needs to be done in order to encourage positive and meaningful fatherhood. Furthermore, equal treatment between mothers and fathers is also encouraged in cases of custody hearings in court as in most cases preference in always given to mothers even in cases where fathers are capable and responsible fathers.

The White Paper is intended to give direction to a family policy in South Africa. Rabe (2016) argues that aspects of the document are encouraging, such as the stated commitment to family diversity and an awareness that any family policy has to be in sync with various other national policies run by different government departments. However, the scenario, might still be difficult for some black African especially within low socio-economic status. Rabe (2016) further argues that although the White Paper may focus on families living in poverty, however the attainment of this radical change for most South African families is a fable as the country continues to face the battle of unemployment. This continue to dismantle

most families living under the belt of poverty as most fathers are under the pressure to find work to provide for their families.

Makusha (2013) also elaborates on the fact that the introduction of policies and programs promoting involved fatherhood has led to some African men embracing what is referred to as "new fatherhood". These fathers now practice direct child care work, spend more quality time with their children, attend their children's school functions and provide financially for their children and families. However, while this scenario might be taking place in middle-class African families, it has not been possible for most poor African fathers and children because the spatial separation of employment and family has remained a fact of life for many South Africans (Madhavan et al., 2008).

2.4 Constructions of fatherhood and masculinity

As mentioned in chapter 1, there is no clear definition of fatherhood as it is a socially constructed concept. Morrell and Richter (2006 p.18) defines it as "the social role that men undertake to care for their children". This involves father involvement and being fully present at both physical and emotional level in the upbringing of child (ren). Madhaven, Townsend and Garey (2008), further indicates that access to a child, interaction with a child and taking responsibility for a child's well-being are considered to be relevant indicators of father involvement whether they are co-resident or not. However, it needs to be clear at this point that fatherhood is socially constructed and predominant conceptions of paternal involvement change over time (Mavungu et al. 2013).

In support of this argument, Lamb (2000) shows how, over the course of the American social history, dominant father roles have shifted from being the moral teacher and guide, to having responsibility for bread-winning, to being a role model for especially sons, and finally to being a nurturing and active father. These changes have been influenced by

processes such as industrialisation, economic disruption and dislocation, labour market changes and demands for gender equality (Lamb 2000). It is also clear from the existing literature that various socio-economic factors and contextual parameters can either encourage or discourage father involvement (Richter & Naicker 2013). It is important to note that even in South Africa, fatherhood to some extent has been shaped by the country's complex social, historical, political and economic processes, including the socially disorganizing and discriminating effects of Apartheid as discussed in section 2.1 of this dissertation (Hosegood & Madhavan, 2010).

Findings from research studies in South Africa reveals that for most black African fathers, the definition of fatherhood is limited to that of just being a materialistic provider (Mavungu et al. 2013; Swart et al. 2013; Sikweyiya et al. 2017 & Makusha 2013). The importance of being able to provide financially for children and families has become the defining point of fatherhood within most families in South Africa. In the study conducted by Rabe (2006) on the conceptualization of fatherhood among mineworkers, the men, who lived in bare and demeaning single sex hostels, all saw economic support for children as being core to what it meant to be a good father, and stated that they only undertook dangerous work underground so they could support their children. "Caught up in difficult economic circumstances, many fathers said that they fail to live up to provider expectations" (Patel et al. 2016 p.27). This is one of the factors that contributes greatly to absent fathers. Many fathers in the study by Patel et al. (2016) voiced the perception that female partners and their families often only related to them as 'ATMs' (Automatic Teller Machines). This notion disregards the functions that fathers can play in their child's life, practically and emotionally.

Studies in South Africa have found that many men from low socio-economic status are continually finding it difficult to fulfill the "provider role" and this has consequences on their masculinity (Hunter 2010). Richter et al. (2006) argues that there is a relationship

between a father, fatherhood and masculinity. For some men, inability to provide financially for children makes fathers feel that they are less of fathers. According to Ratele, Shefer and Clowes (2012) masculinity is a certain character and quality that is portrayed by men as society places expectations on men to show their physical strength, robustness and authority over women. The first notion of this definition is that in a contextual background where both masculinity and fatherhood are strongly correlated with that of being a provider, fathers may end up feeling like failures because of their inability to provide material or financial support (Patel et al. 2016). Employed fathers who provide financially for their families are held in high regard because men came to be judged only on their ability to provide (Lesejane, 2006). Because of challenges in fitting into the definitions of fatherhood as being a provider, many fathers withdraw from the lives of their children (Mavungu 2013).

The second notion is that of associating the role of caring for children as a role that is solely for women as it is seen as feminine. In many black communities in South Africa, parenting is predominantly seen as a feminine role. Research has demonstrated that parenting that is nurturing and engaged in children's daily activities is considered to be a feminine gender role (Richter & Morrell 2006). This means that in contrast to femininity, there is no room for childcare, nurturing and being warm and caring in the well-known definitions of masculinity. Skweyiya et al. (2017 p.132) further argues that "the hegemonic masculinity in any given setting shapes and sets the context and ways in which men can engage in childcare and often this is rather limited". In my experience as a black African man, being a caring and nurturing father in the township is highly associated to being under the spell of a women (*idliso*), being *iyoyo* or being gay. This then makes it difficult for men who subscribe to the definition of masculinity to be involved in caring for their children.

Finally, the construction fatherhood is also influenced by the relationship that one has or had with their biological fathers. Most of what we know and model as being good fathers,

is based on our own past experiences with our fathers. Makusha (2013: p.24) argues that "retrospective understanding of fatherhood is defined as adult's reflections on their relationships with their fathers when they were growing up". This view is underpinned by the modelling hypothesis which holds that men who experienced involved fathers when they were growing up tend to see involvement in their children's lives as important and natural, and that men who had less involved fathers usually have less favourable attitudes towards fatherhood (Forste, Bartkowski, & Jackson, 2009). This hypothesis is based on social learning theory of learning and modelled behaviours of significant people in an individual's life. Therefore, the notion of fatherhood and masculinity is in some cases entrenched in past experiences with our own fathers. Having an absent father while growing up, for some men normalizes father absence and in turn forms part of defining masculinity.

2.5 Socio-cultural practices and absent fatherhood

In most South African black ethnic groups such as amaZulu, amaXhosa to name a few, culture dictates that when a young man impregnates a girl, there are a number of cultural practices that he is required to perform (Lesejane, 2006). This would include paying intlawulo or damages to the maternal family as a way of cleansing the maternal family name for impregnating their daughter before marriage. Furthermore, to that, most African social practices have customarily preconditioned access to the child and the activity of fatherhood on a number of payments such as *"ilobolo"* and *"intlawulo"* (Patel et al. 2016). This means that the maternal family has power of giving or withholding access to the child depending on whether the father has paid the damages or ilobolo. The acknowledgment of this cultural practice is also reflected in Section 21 of the children's Act No. 38 of 2005, as discussed in section 2.2.1 above. It is one of the factors used to decide whether an unmarried father has automatic parental responsibilities and rights.

'Intlawulo' is an isi-Xhosa word for the payment of damages or 'fines' to the woman's family for fathering a child out of wedlock (Patel et al. 2016). This practice requires that the father of the child buys a certain number of cows as requested by the family or make a payment in monetary value equivalent to the number of cows requested by the family. This practice, although it is customary, however it places a burden to fathers who are unemployed and therefore unable to pay damages to the family. The amount of money that is paid for intlawulo is determined during the negotiation process between the maternal and the paternal family. This cultural practice or procedure is a must for most African cultures as it determines the right to access a father will have on a child born out of wedlock.

In a country like South Africa, where unemployment rate in very high, this makes it difficult for fathers to pay damages and thereby restricting their access to their children as the maternal family is the gatekeeper. This also supported by Richter et al., (2010); Posel et al., (2011) where they found that high levels of poverty and unemployment in South Africa mean that some men are unable to afford to pay *intlawulo or lobola*. In some cases, the inability to pay intlawulo for the child born out of wedlock results in the father being excluded from being involved in the upbringing of the child (Patel et al. 2016). A father who neglects to recognize paternity and pay the required amount of money for the damages may be rejected by the mother's family as irresponsible and inadequate (Nduna and Jewkes 2012). In this respect, "some men say when they anticipate negative responses from their parents, and an inability to pay 'intlawulo' and child support to the woman's family, [this] results in a sense of 'self-embarrassment' and contributes to fatherhood denial" (Nduna and Jewkes 2012 p.315). Similarly, Swart et al. (2013) found that African men who impregnate girls may deny paternity due to their inability to pay pregnancy compensation. Note how this inability to pay damages also affect masculinity.

Without any doubt, the inability of fathers to pay intlawulo, especially for financial reasons, plays an added role in the phenomenon of father absence in a country like South Africa. In the study by Mavungu et al. (2013 p.26), the following words were captured from a participant in a study conducted in Johannesburg: *"Culture sometimes messes up with us and makes us to run away from our kids. I am a Zulu and I have a child that I raised from when she was still young, I supported her but as time went on I had to pay damages in order to be able to see her. Even now, I am unable to see her because I don't have money and because I don't have money for the child".*

2.6 The influence of father-mother relationship on father's parental involvement

The nature of the relationship between the biological mother of the child and the father, especially when they are unmarried, does have an impact on how much access the father gets to their child. In their study, Patel et al. (2016) also found that there is a strong relationship between father absence and the nature of the relationship between the father and the mother of the child, more especially following the divorce or ending of a relationship between two unmarried parents. In my experience as a Social Worker, one deals with a high number of cases of custody where the mother is denying the father access due to the fact that they are no longer in a romantic relationship. Some mothers use this as a way to punish the father of the child for the broken relationship. This is consistent with the findings by Tach, Mincy and Edin (2010, p. 181) where they found that "Fatherhood has traditionally been viewed as part of a package deal in which a father's relationship with his child is contingent on his relationship with the mother".

Another study by Mavungu et al. (2013) discovered that contention ridden connections, want for retaliation following the end of a romantic relationship, disdain, and absence of appropriate communication, frequently result in fathers' limited access to their

child or complete rejection. This further shows that the relationship between the mother and the father plays a critical role in father-child relationship and interaction. In most relationships, mothers are the gatekeepers of the father-child relationship. Madhaven et al. (2014) found that some fathers may be denied the access to their children due to parental conflict and those who visit are the ones who support their children and have an input in decision making. This further puts the father who wishes to spend time with his child however is in a position where he is unemployed at a disadvantage.

Father-child involvement also seems to be influenced by mother's perceptions of fatherhood depending on whether or not the father is co-resident and has a good relationship with the child's mother (Fagan & Barnett, 2003; Maurer, Pleck, & Rane, 2001). For most mothers, a father who is able to pay maintenance for the child especially after they have broken up, is a good father and one who is unable to support the child financially is a bad father. This perception that mothers have about what makes a good father or bad father further influences how much access the father would have on his child. Duncan, (as cited in Patel 2016) highlights the idea that the great number of maintenance defaulters could also suggest widespread communication breakdown and conflicts among former partners. This in itself further indicates the widespread of father disengagement from their children.

Another factor that affect the father-child contact when the father re-partnered and that person had her own children (Madhaven et al. 2014). Makusha (2013) argues that changes in father-mother relationships are significant turning points in the involvement of men in their families. While fathers may appear to withdraw support to their children when they are not getting along with the mothers, mothers may also restrict father-child involvement because of the anger they might feel towards the father (Braver and Griffin, 2000; Fagan and Barnett, 2003; Hawkins, Amato, and King, 2007). This is very much pertinent in cases where the mother of the child is still in love with the father of the child, or

is still angry at how their relationship might have come to an end. In addition, Patel et al. (2016) also found that "In cases where the new partner or step-father accepts the responsibility of caring for the child from a previous relationship after a divorce or separation, the biological father's access to this child may become conditional on the approval of the step-father".

2.7 Socio-economic status and fatherhood

Fathers are expected to provide, support and be actively involved irrespective of their limited resources to perform these roles (Richter et al. 2006). The results of the Quarterly Labour Force Survey (QLFS) for the third quarter of 2017 released by Statistics South Africa today, indicate that employment grew by 92 000 in Q3:2017, however this was offset by an additional 33 000 job-seekers during the same period, resulting in a stable unemployment rate of 27,7% (StatsSA, 2017). The youth (aged 15-34) remain vulnerable in the labour market. Youth (15-34 years) unemployment rate was 38, 6% which is 10, 9 percentage points above the national average (StatsSA, 2017). The unemployment rate for black African men was at 27, 1% in Q4 of 2017. For Black fathers in South Africa, unemployment affects their ability to interact with their children in several ways.

The overwhelming pressure on men to provide economically places a significant stress on young men, who also describes low self-confidence due to being jobless, and their inability to give their children money when they asked for it (Sikweyiya et al. 2017). In their study, "A number of participants reported that the mother of the child would refuse men access to the child, particularly men who have not paid intlawulo (damages paid to the family of the pregnant woman by the man responsible for the pregnancy), or where men were unable to provide financially for the child" (Sikweyiya et al. 2017: pg.142). Data from the study also suggest that maternal gatekeeping foreclosed opportunities for financially struggling men

to contribute in childcare in other non-financial way (ibid). In a context like South Africa where most people are unemployed or have low-paying jobs, this contributes to men's inability to pay for intlawulo. In turn, this means that a man who is unable to pay intlawulo forfeits his rights to the child, including giving the child his surname and having unlimited access to the child, until he pays it (Skweyiya et al. 2017; Madhaven et al. 2014).

In the context like South Africa where fatherhood or being a "good father" is highly associated with being a provider (see discussion on section 2.3 above), most men struggle to achieve the ideal of a "good father" through providing financially for their children (Sikweyiya et al. 2017). A number of studies reveal that many young men share the frustration about being unemployed, meaning they could not consistently provide financially for their children (Mavungu et al. 2013; Madhaven et al. 2014; Skweyiya et al. 2017). This inability for men to provide for a child further contribute to many fathers feeling powerless and thus incapable to fully undertake the role of a "good father" as defined by society. This in turn affect their self-esteem and contribute greatly to fathers who would rather be not present in the upbringing of their children.

2.8 Conclusion

The question still remains: "how much do we really know about fathers in South Africa?"
Furthermore, to what extent does the family's perception of fatherhood, masculinity and
paternal roles contributes to the phenomenon of absent fathers? Despite the fact that a lot of
literature has been conducted on fatherhood and absent fathers, we still do not fully
understand why so many fathers in South Africa are absent and from the lives of their child
(ren). The review emphasized the importance of understanding the context as well as
historical background in an attempt to understand the phenomenon of fatherhood and father
absent. The role of policies and legislature in encouraging father involvement were discussed
in detail. Our constructions of what a good father and men's relationships with their fathers
seems to influence the way men understand the concept of fatherhood. The review also
emphasizes that in South Africa, despite challenges faced by men such as poverty and
unemployment, many men desire to be good fathers but fall short because of a lack of access
to resources to support their children.

CHAPTER 3: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Theoretical frameworks are essential in research when one is attempting to understand a phenomenon that is under investigation as it provides the researcher a structure that can support a theory of the research study. It further describes the theory that explains why the research problem exist. In this chapter, the researcher explores the two theoretical frameworks namely Social constructionism and Bronfenbrenner's ecological model in an attempt to describe and have a better understanding and construction of numerous dimensions of fatherhood and contextual factors that influence fatherhood and absentee fathers in South Africa, and more particularly KwaZulu Natal.

3.1. Social constructionism

Social constructionism as a theory explores how individuals create knowledge, make sense of the world around them and construct reality and a view of themselves (Berger and Luckman, 1966 and Teater, 2010). "It is a process whereby 'natural', [and] instinctive forms of behaviour become mediated by social processes and in this way become socially constructed" (Bilton, Jones, Skinner, Stansworth & Webster 1996 p.200). According to this theory, one's experiences, perceptions and emotions are influenced by the environment that one finds themselves in. Teater (2010 p.83) suggests that social constructionism "values each person's reality as uniquely shaped by his/her environment, culture, society, history and developmental processes and cognitions". This process of constructing ones' reality is described as an on-going process whereby individuals learn to conform to society's prevailing norms and values (Bilton et al. 1996).

Burr (2003) described two aspects of social constructionism – micro and macro constructionism:

> In micro social constructionism the focus is on the individual who is seen to build his/her own accounts of events through language, which develops the meaning they give to these events. In macro social constructionism the constructive power of language is acknowledged, but it is seen as related to social structures, social relations and institutionalised practices, and the concept of power is seen as central to this type of theory (p.112).

This framework emphasises social interpretation of events, and the influence of language, family and culture. The main focus is on "how people interact with each other to construct, modify and maintain what their society holds to be true, real and meaningful" (Friedman and Coombs, 1996:27). Therefore, when in interaction with another person or persons, an individual can offer, accept, claim or resist any particular subject position, moment by moment if necessary, and according to social constructionists, these "define us as persons" (Burr, 2003 pg.114). Furthermore, this theoretical framework anticipates that a great deal of life exists due to social and interpersonal influences (Burr, 1995). Therefore, people develop subjective meanings of their own experiences giving way to a host of meanings, which are socially constructed realities. Thus, what one perceives as the truth, is not based on an objective reality of the world, but on social processes, that is daily interactions of people based on their history and culture (Burr, 1995).

Burr (1995 p.13) further argued that, every person is born into a world where "frameworks and categories of culture already exist, and [are] reproduced" everyday by everyone sharing the same language and culture. One cannot ignore that historical background and culture (as discussed in chapter 2 of this dissertation) have played a major role in how black African parents construct the shared meaning of fatherhood. Through the

interaction with the environment fathers construct and re-construct what it means to be a 'good father'. Therefore, unmarried black African parent's perceptions of fatherhood are influenced by their standpoint and observation of the world around them and that standpoint and observation are historically and culturally specific. In her book, *reconstructing gender*, Disch (2009 pg.114) argues that "in social interaction throughout their lives, people learn what is expected, see what is expected, act and react in expected ways, and thus simultaneously construct and maintain the gender order". Language is thus a straight forward communication of thoughts and therefore language is a form of social action, focusing on interactions and social practices (Burr, 1995).

Burr (2003 pg.106) argues that the concept of identity that are "socially bestowed rather than essences of the person ....and that are constructed out of discourses that are culturally available to us". Through this theoretical framework, the researcher sees fatherhood as a phenomenon that most black African parents construct through their own experiences and what is socially bestowed upon them by their cultures and the society as a whole. In this way, parent's socialisation is influenced by the attitudes and behaviours of their fathers, highlighting that when male children are older, they use their experiences with their fathers as a 'mental model' to influence their own attitudes towards parenting (Nicholson, Howard, & Borkowski, 2008). This also acts as a pattern for how fathers form their relationships with their children and how mothers expect father's to form relationships with their children. Consistent with the modelling hypothesis, this further indicates how father-child involvement impacts the parenting practices of the next generation. Social constructionism further suggests that the knowledge we attain from our history and culture is "sustained by social processes" (Burr, 1995 p.2).

However, Burr (1995) criticised the theory on that the positions mentioned above do not explain the emotional investments people have to their positions, the individual

differences that people occupying the same position may have, and why individuals may occupy disadvantageous positions. Nor in fact does the concept of positioning explain the subjectivity and beliefs, values, motivations – the "self" of the individual. How do parents who grew up in societies that hold similar societal values and cultures hold different views on parenting and particularly the construct of fatherhood?

Burr (2003) describes Berger and Luckman's suggestion that three aspects – externalisation; objectivation and internalisation occur, when firstly we attach meanings to external symbols, which we then use or describe as objects in other places and at other times, and finally these meanings are internalised and therefore can be passed on to future generations through socialisation. Burr (2003) also describes Sampson's suggestion that the unit of analysis is not either the individual or society, but that it is the ecosystem that includes both the individual and society. Based on these two views, the researcher believes that it is important to focus on the recursive relationship between both the individual and the society in any attempt to understand the construction of fatherhood and factors contributing to absentee fathers among black African parents. However, not to overlook the great influence that society has on construction of fatherhood.

3.2 Bronfenbrenner's ecological model

Bronfenbrenner's ecological model is a theory that views development as something that can be understood by considering the developing person and their surrounding together (Sudbery 2010). Bronfenbrenner (1979) argues that child development always occurs in a specific eco-culture, defined in part by geography, cultural history and social and cultural systems. The ecological model of child development focuses on the ways in which individuals interact with their environment to affect development (Bronfenbrenner, 2005). (See figure 3.1 below)
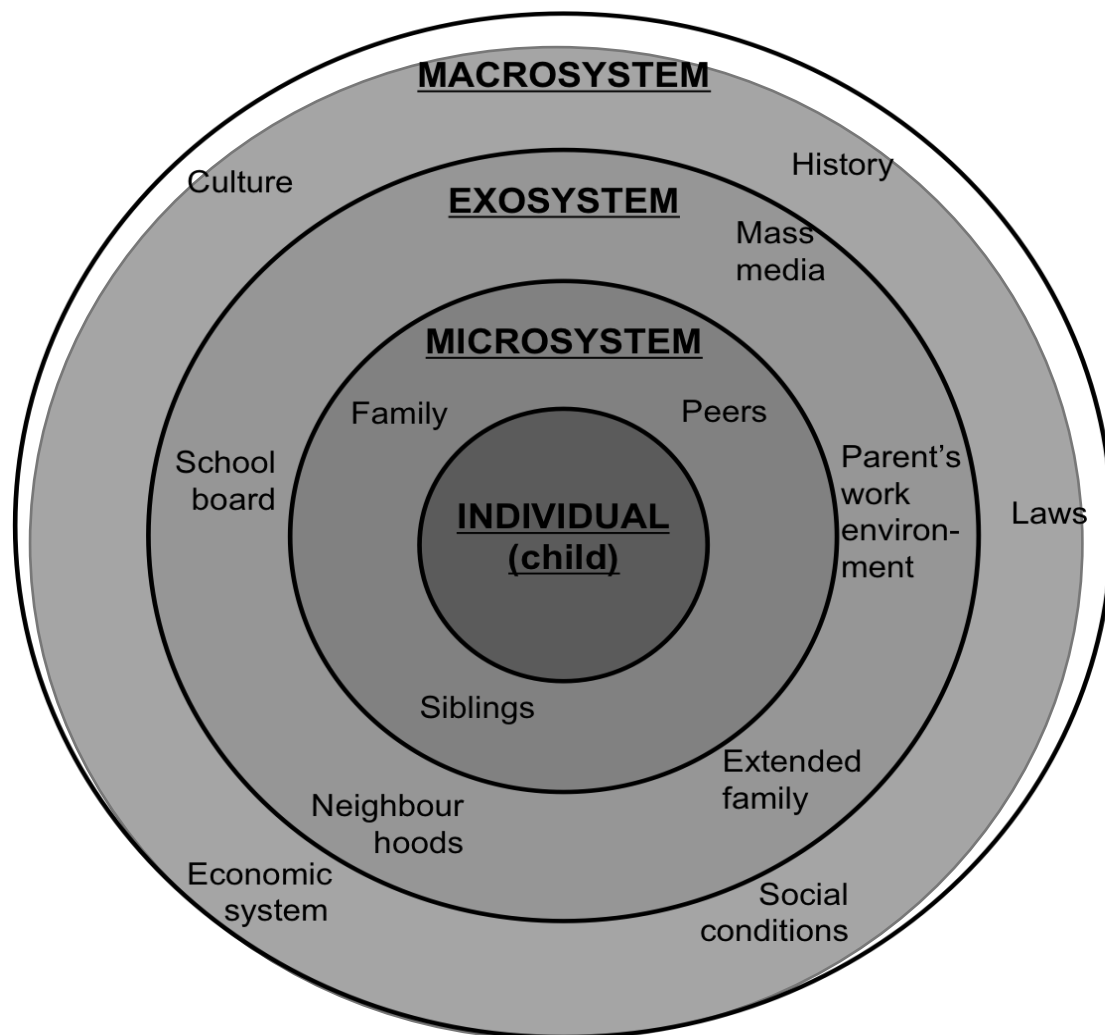
Figure 3.1. Bronfenbrenner's ecological model, showing all levels of the social world that affect the daily functioning of an individual. Adapted from Crooke (2015)

Bronfenbrenner (1979) placed the individual (or child) at the centre, with four concentric rings radiating outwards, each representing levels of the social world which influence their behaviour or development. While the individual is placed at the centre, the first ring - "microsystem"- represents the influence of intrapersonal relationships with specific players (i.e. families, friends, peer groups) in child development/behaviour. The second ring – "exosystem" represents factors that influences child development/behaviour that one might not have direct interaction with (i.e. parent's work environment, neighbourhoods, mass media etc.) The outer ring- "macrosystem"- represents social forces such as culture and social norms, but also include patterns at national and international levels shaped by economics, policy and philosophy that affects child development/behaviour.

This study utilizes the ecological model of child development to examine various family, child and contextual factors that influence men's involvement in parenting their children and factors that contribute to absent fathers. The researcher believes that this ecological theory is crucial in understanding the dynamic relationships between fathers and their children, father-mother relationships and how other micro- and macro-systems influence fatherhood and absent fatherhood in South Africa. Furthermore, the theory takes into consideration the characteristics of the father – his personality, background, nature of relationship with the mother, beliefs and attitude towards supporting children, characteristics of the child such as age and gender and the context in which fathering takes place (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Makusha 2013). Finally, the model takes into consideration the influence of history (apartheid laws), economic conditions (unemployed fathers who are unable to pay *intlawulo* or support their children), culture (payment of *ilobolo* or *intlawulo*), on meaningful parenting and father-child involvement.

These connections between father, family and the broader community, and child outcomes resulting from these interactions, are reinforced, repeated and realized over the life

course as a child grows into adulthood (Ball & Moselle, 2007). "The ecological model of child development should not be seen to be portraying a set of linear and deterministic influences on fatherhood but depicting a dynamic set of processes operating through proximal influences such as individual, family, and distal influences such as cultural, social and economic processes" (Makusha 2013 p.29). Both parents and children do not live in a vacuum, however, they are actively shaped by the social world that they live in. A parent's behaviour or attitude towards parenting are not solely attributes of an isolated individual nor imposed by the environment upon them, however they are located in the interactions between the person and the network of social relationships to which they belong to.

One of the strengths of this model is that it pays equal attention to the range of influences on child's development including those in which the child has no part (Sudbery 2010). It focuses on the interaction between the individual and their environment which Sudbery (2010 p.303) sees as "closely in tune with the classical concerns of Social Work – a concern with the individual in their situation; not just the individual and not just the environment. The model recognises the two way influences between the individual and the environment.

3.3 Conclusion

Both theories discussed in this chapter explore the influences of contextual factors in understanding the phenomenon of fatherhood and absent father. They both provide a framework that the researcher attempts to understand the phenomenon under investigation.

CHAPTER 4: METHODOLOGY

The main focus of this chapter is on the research methodology design as well as the processes that the researcher followed in addressing the research question outlined at the onset of the study. It covers the research paradigm, research design, location of the study, sampling procedures, data collection and data analysis. The last section of this chapter focuses on data verification, ethical considerations, potential limitations of the study and reflexivity.

4.1 Research paradigm

Methods of enquiry are based on assumptions, these includes assumptions about the nature of reality being investigated (ontology), assumptions about what makes up the knowledge about this reality (epistemology) and assumptions about which methods will be appropriate in building the knowledge about this reality (methodology) (Punch, 2014). These three assumptions constitute what is meant by the term paradigm as they reflect the way the researcher in this study looks at the world and how the reality of fatherhood and absent fathers is constructed and experienced. Punch (2014) also elaborated that "paradigm means a set of assumptions about the world, and about what constitutes proper topics and techniques for inquiring into that world" (p.14). In addition, this worldview gives a justification to the exploration and submits the researcher to specific techniques for information gathering, perception and understanding (Terre Blanche, Durrheim & Painter, 2006).

In this study, the researcher made use of social construction as the research paradigm of the study. According to Kawulich (2012) social constructivism posits that "human interests are important for research purposes and knowledge is constructed through social interaction" (p.10). Constructivists argue that reality is a subjective creation. The main focus is on "how people interact with each other to construct, modify and maintain what their

society holds to be true, real and meaningful" (Friedman & Coombs, 1996, p.27). The three assumptions of the paradigm are discussed below.

The first assumption relates to *ontology.* On the question of what is reality, this paradigm views it as a phenomenon that is socially constructed (Mertens, 2009) and that there are as many realities as there are people constructing them. Reality is thus understood to be mind dependent and a personal or social construct. In some communities, child rearing is associated with femininity while some communities have come to accept that fathers have a role to play in child rearing (Townsend, Madhavan, & Garey 2006; Richter et al. 2006). This reality of fatherhood and what it entails is therefore according to Kawulich (2012), limited to context, space, time and individuals or group in a given situation and cannot be generalized into one common reality. The assumptions legitimize conceptions of realities from all cultures. The researcher in this study believes that fatherhood is a phenomenon that is socially constructed through interaction with the environment.

In terms of *epistemology,* social constructivists are of the view that knowledge is subjective, because it is socially constructed and mind dependent (Kawulich 2012; Teater 2010). Truth about the reality of an individual lies within human experiences and the context from which they occur. Statements on what is true or false about these human experiences, therefore according to Kawulich (2012), "culture bound, historically and context dependent, although some may be universal" (P.10). Within this context, communities' stories, belief systems and claims of what fatherhood means find space as legitimate knowledge about the phenomenon.

The last assumption relates to *methodology.* The purpose of constructivist research is to understand and describe human nature. One of the basic ternate of this paradigm is that the study should take place in a natural setting where the participants make their living (Creswell

2009; Kumar 2014; Kawulich 2012 & Terre Blanche et al., 2005). The purpose of the study expresses the assumptions of the interpretativist researcher in attempting to understand human experiences. The methodology is discussed in detail in the section below.

4.2 Research design

Kumar (2014 p.122), defines the research design as "a road map that a researcher decides to follow during the research journey to find answers to the research question posed at the onset of the study". In addition, Punch (2014) refers to the research design as all the issues involved in planning and executing a research project, from identifying the problem through to reporting and publishing the results.

In this study, a qualitative research design was used by the researcher in conducting an exploration of the construction of fatherhood and the factors contributing to absentee fatherhood among unmarried black African parents living apart. Creswell (2009 p.4) defines qualitative research as "a means for exploring and understanding the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem". Rubin and Babbie (2013) sees qualitative research methods as more useful when the researcher wishes to tap into the deeper meanings that people attach to their experiences, and they generate theoretically richer observations. Kumar (2014) and Maree (2010) also concur that qualitative design is mainly about the interpretation of subjective meanings that people attach to their experiences within the context where they occur.

A qualitative research design seeks to gain an empathetic understanding of people's experiences and the deeper meanings and reasons for their behaviours. (Rubin & Babbie, 2013). Qualitative researchers also seek out to observe individual's lives and their stories and behaviour, organisation and their functioning, role of relationships and intercommunication, or culture and their conduct, interactions and social movement (Alpaslan, 2010). Rubin and

Babbie (2013 p.56) further state that "…interpretive researchers believe that the best way to learn about people is to be flexible and subjective in one's approach so that the subject's world can be 'seen' through the subject's own eyes". This subjectivity is believed to allow the researcher the opportunity to generate deeper understandings of the meanings that people attach to their experiences within the context where these experiences emerges.

The primary focus of qualitative research is to gain an understanding, explore, discover, and clarify situations, feelings, perceptions, attitudes, values, beliefs and experiences of individuals (Kumar, 2014). Qualitative research is by nature, explorative and descriptive (Ritchie & Lewis 2005) and the researcher used explorative and descriptive design in conducting this study. In addition, the researcher also made use of contextual research design as the aim is to explore the problem being studied within a specific context and also describe against the context in which it manifests.

The explorative design. This is a mode of inquiry, according to Rubin et al. (2013 p.50) this nature of research design is "typical when the researcher is examining a new interest, when the subject of study is new and understudied, or when the researcher seeks to test the feasibility of undertaking a more careful study". This is significant in this study as the research wanted to explore/discover the construct of fatherhood and the factors contributing to absentee fatherhood among unmarried black African parents living apart.

The descriptive design. This design is aimed at giving the specific details of the phenomenon being studied. According to Rubin et al. (2013 p.50), "…tends to be more concerned with conveying a sense of what it's like to walk in the shoes of the people being described – providing rich details about their environments, interactions, meanings and everyday lives". This assisted the researcher in giving an accurate profile and description of

fatherhood construction as well as factors contributing to absentee fatherhood among unmarried black African parents living apart as experienced by the participants.

Contextual research design. Ritchie and Lewis (2005 p.28), define this design as "concerned with identifying what exists in the social world the way it manifests itself". This basically means that the researcher had to explore and describe the construction of fatherhood as well as the factors contributing to absentee fatherhood among unmarried black African parents living apart within the context where it manifests. This is important in maximizing the authenticity of the information that will be collected during the data gathering phase.

The main aim of this study is to explore the construct of fatherhood and the factors contributing to absentee fatherhood among unmarried black African parents living apart. The researcher believes that this method (qualitative) is useful when gathering the lived experiences of black African parents in order to have a deeper understanding of the phenomenon of fatherhood and factors contributing to absent fathers. This method further allowed the researcher to examine these experiences from the vantage point of the participants and to gain an empathetic understanding of these experiences. In this way, the researcher was able to give the voice to participants and allow himself to walk in their shoes. Qualitative methods are very useful when one is interested in in studying values, beliefs, understandings, perceptions and meanings as they provide immense flexibility (Kumar, 2014). The researcher believes that the use of these designs gave him the opportunity to unpack issues related to fatherhood and absent fathers, to see what they are about and to explore and describe how they are understood by those connected with them within a specific context.

4.2.1 Study sites

This study was conducted in Ethekwini Municipality in KwaZulu Natal, South Africa. The Municipality has an estimated population of 3 702 231 with 74% black African, 18% Indians/Asians, 6% Whites and 2% coloureds (StatSA, 2016). The municipality has a total of 103 Wards and the study is located in 2 Wards, which are Ward 1 (KwaXimba Tribal location) and Ward 6 (Mpumalanga Township). The maps and demographics of the two ward are show below in figure 4.1 to 4.4.
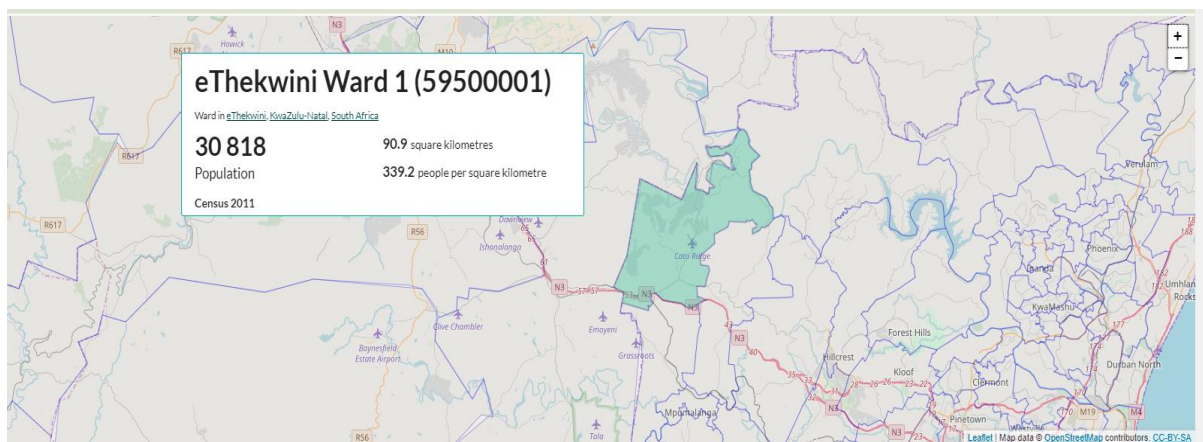
Figure 4.1 Map of ward 1 in KwaXimba (highlighted in green).
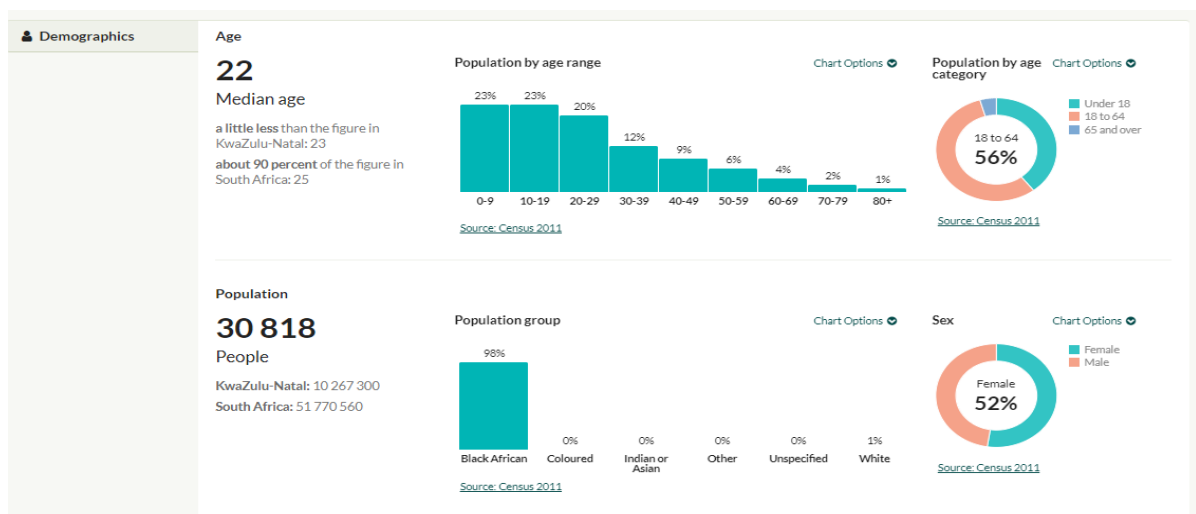
Figure 4.2: demographics of the population in ward 1
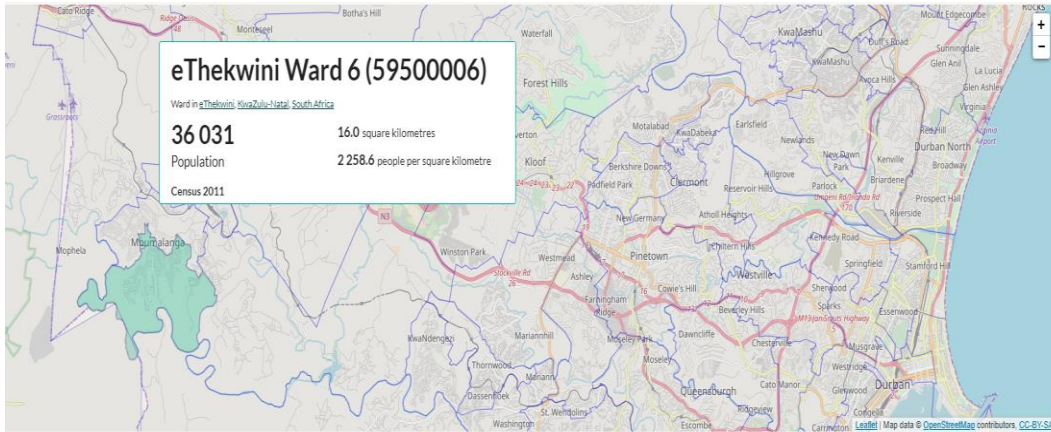
Figure 4.3: Map of Ward 6 in Mpumalanga Township (highlighted in green)

Figure 4.4: demographics of the population in ward 6

The first location is known as KwaXimba (Cato Ridge) and it is a rural area with both

tribal leadership and Ward councilor under the Ethekwini Municipality. The area has an

estimated population of 30 818 people, which about 98% are black African and 1% are

Whites (StatsSA, 2011). The ward has an unemployment rate of 74.5% and about 4940

people are employed (StatsSA, 2011). The second location is known as Mpumalanga

Township unit 2 and is a township that is under the leadership of a ward councilor. The

location has an estimated population of 36 031 people and all of them are black Africans

(StatsSA, 2011). The ward has an unemployment rate of 67.2% and about only about 7838

people are employed (StatsSA, 2011). Both wards have high rate of unemployment and high

level of poverty.

4.2.2 Population and sampling

In conducting a research study, it is essential to have a clear definition of your research population in order to ensure that the sample that will be selected represents the population. A population can be defined as an entire target group of individuals or objects that the researcher aims to study. The population for this study included all unmarried black African parents living apart between the ages of 18 and 65 in Ward 1 and 6 in Ethekwini municipality in KwaZulu Natal, South Africa. As shown in figures 4.2 and 4.4, both Wards have a high population of black Africans. In addition, the research process also included key informants from the population that consisted of traditional leaders and elderly people in both communities.

The sample for this study was drawn from the population using a sampling process which is defined by Kumar (2014 p.228) as "a process of selecting a few individuals from the bigger group to become the basis for estimating or predicting the prevalence of an unknown piece of information, situation, or outcome regarding the bigger group". In this study, the researcher made use of non-probability techniques to select a sample of twenty (30) unmarried black African parents and 4 key informants from both communities of Ward1 and Ward 6 under the Ethekwini municipality using purposive sampling techniques.

Purposive sampling technique. This is a technique that is used in special situations where the sampling is done with a specific purpose in mind (Maree 2010). Here, the researcher selects a sample that can be judged to represent the actual population that is under study. Alpaslan (2010) also points out that when using this sampling technique, the researcher uses his/her own judgement and handpicks participants from a target population for inclusion in the study based on the criteria for inclusion. For the purposes of this study, the researcher used this technique to purposively seek out participants who are information rich and who possess

first-hand experience regarding the research question of the study. The purposive criteria of inclusion for the study includes:

- Unmarried black African parents between the ages of 18 and 65.

- The participants must have one or more children with a father or a mother that they are not married to.

- The participants must be living apart

- They must be residing in Ward 1 (KwaXimba) and Ward 6 (Mpumalanga Township) under Ethekwini Municipality in KwaZulu Natal.

Prior to data collection process, a community-entry process in which traditional and political leaders, faith based organisations and a non-government organisation (NGO) working with families were approached and informed of the study with the aim to ensure buy-in from community members and collect basic information regarding community boundaries and characteristics. Traditional leaders and faith based organisations were used to identify key informants. While the NGO working with families (FAMSA-Durban) was used as the main source for 30 participants in this study. The organisation was preselected as the main source as they deal mostly with cases of family disputes, child disputes and parental rights and responsibilities and it operates in both the wards that have been selected for this study.

Permission was requested from the NGO for the researcher to utilise their existing records to access participants who meets the criteria of inclusion in the study (see appendix b for letter of approval from the organisation). According to the information from this NGO, these are the two wards within their area of operation that receives most cases of child disputes due to denial of accessibility to the child by one parent. This is how the 2 Wards (ward 1 and ward 6) were pre-selected as the site of the study (see section 4.3.1 above).

Participants were selected from the Social Worker's existing case load. Participants were then contacted by the researcher and informed about the study and that their participation will be voluntary if they decide to participate in the study.

4.2.3 Data collection approach

Since this is a qualitative study, the researcher wanted to give voice to the participants and allow them to share their views and opinions on their understanding of fatherhood as well as factors contributing to absentee fatherhood among unmarried black African parents. The research made use of In-depth interviews to collect data for this study. In-depth Interviews are a useful in gathering this kind of information. The researcher also used data triangulation that included (i) conducting semi structured interviews with participants and (ii) a focus group interview. Terre Blanche et al. (2006) defines data triangulation as a process that entails collecting data in as many different ways from as many diverse sources as possible. "This can help researchers to 'home in' on a better understanding of a phenomenon by approaching it from several different angles" (Terre Blanche 2006, p.287). The researcher believed that the use of data triangulation will assist in developing a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon to further test the validity through the convergence of information from different sources.

Semi-structured interviews. The researcher started by conducting semi-structured interviews with twenty (20) participants that were selected from the caseload from the NGO. According to Rubin et al. (2013) semi structured interviews uses interview guides that lists in outline form the topics and issues the interview should be asking about, but at the same time allowing the researcher to be flexible, informal, and conversational and to adapt the style of the interview and the sequencing and wording of questions to each particular interview. This also allowed the interviewer to dig for more detail and pursue specific topics raised by the

interviewee (Rubin et al. 2013). Interviews with the key informants were conducted

simultaneously with the interviews with 20 participants. Once data was collected through

semi-structured interviews, the researcher then conducted the focus group discussions. All six

question on the schedule are geared at exploring the participant's understanding of

fatherhood, how it is constructed by them, father's involvement in the upbringing of their

children, their views on fostering meaningful parenting as well as available resources in the

communities. (See appendix C for draft of semi structured interviews guide)

Focus group discussions (FGD). This is a term that is used when the researcher is

interviewing several people simultaneously rather than interviewing individual participant. In

a focus group, the researcher explores the experiences and perceptions of a group of people

who share similar experiences with regard to the phenomenon that is under investigation

(Kumar, 2014). Two homogenous groups with the total of 10 participants were selected that

included 5 females in the first group and 5 males in the second group.

The main aim for using focus group interviews is to explore the experiences and

opinions of unmarried black African parents on the phenomenon of fatherhood. One of the

benefits of conducting focus group discussions is that it stimulates a discussion that might

bring out parts of the topic that researchers may not have expected and that may not have

arose in individual interviews (Rubin et al. 2013). The researcher played the role of a

facilitator during the focus group discussions. Broad areas of discussion were formulated by

the researcher in order to provide a broad frame for discussion in the group. This also allowed

members of the group to express their opinions while discussing the issues raised. (See

appendix for draft of FGD guide)

Semi structured interviews and focus group interview guides have both been

developed in English. As the study was located in a rural area and a township, taking into

account the educational level within the context, both data collection tools were translated into isiZulu using the back-translation design. In back-translation designs, the original measure is first translated into the target language (IsiZulu), and then back-translated into the original language (English) by a different translator (Foxcroft & Roodt, 2013). The researcher translated the tools from English into IsiZulu and then gave the translated version to another bilingual translator to translate it back to English. According to Foxcroft and Roodt (2013, p.86) "equivalence is usually assessed by having source language judges check for errors between the originals and the back-translated versions of the measure".

Prior to conducting the semi-structured interviews and focus group interviews, the researcher also prepared the participants by paying them a visit and giving them necessary information about the research study and to obtain consent from them to participate in the study. This also included planning for logistics such as the place of where the interviews were to be conducted, duration of the interview and to allow participants to make a choice. Furthermore, this also allowed the researcher to build a rapport and trust with the participants as they are expected to freely participate in the study with the correct information as to what is it that they are part of. The researcher also requested for the permission from the participants to use audio tape during the interviews and focus group interviews in order not to lose the important information that they will be sharing.

4.2.4 Data management and analysis

Qualitative research in social sciences focuses on the study of human behavior and of social life in natural setting (Punch 2014). Qualitative data analysis is defined as a process and procedures whereby researchers extract some form of explanation, understanding or interpretation from the qualitative data collected of the people and situations that they are investigating (Maree 2010). For the purpose of analysing data from both individual

interviews and focus group interviews, the researcher made use of thematic analysis. Braun and Clarke (2006) define thematic analysis as aiming to describe data in rich detail in relation to the research topic. Thematic analysis allowed the researcher to interpret data through identifying, analysing and reporting patterns (themes) within the data.

To assist the researcher, the step-wise format (with 8 steps) for qualitative data analysis as provided by Tesch (in Creswell, 2009, p.186) were used and they are as follows:

1. "The researcher wrote down, word for word, the interviews that will be audio-taped. The researcher will then read them all to get a sense of the whole and noted the ideas as they came to mind"

2. "The researcher selected one document (one interview) – the most interesting / the shortest / the one on top of the pile. And go through it, ask some questions as what is this about? Think about the underlying meaning and write down my thoughts on the margin"

3. "After completing this task for several informants, the researcher made a list of the topics, putting similar topics together and list those topics as major topics".

4. "The researcher allocated abbreviations for each of the identified topics"

5. "The researcher found the most descriptive topics and turned them into themes or categories"

6. "The researcher made a final decision on the abbreviation for each theme or category and alphabetizes those codes".

7. "The researcher then used the cut-paste method, assemble the data material belonging to each theme or category in one place and do a preliminary analysis".

8. "The researcher began presenting the research findings and confirming with appropriate literature".

4.3 Data verification and trustworthiness

In qualitative research, trustworthiness is assessed using the concepts of credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability.

Credibility. According to Babbie and Mouton (2001), credibility refers the value of the research findings being trusted and believed. Bryman (2012: 49) also states that credibility is about "how believable are the findings". It also looks at the relationship between the constructed realities of the participants and those that are attributed to them. Informed consent forms were given, read in the language of choice and signed by participants to create an opportunity for them to participate willingly in the research study. Interviews were recorded using a digital voice recorder to document the findings. Interview notes were taken for the participants who did not consent to being audio taped. The interviews transcripts are to be reviewed by the supervisor and other peers in order to get critical feedback. Shenton (2004, p. 64), states that, "this fresh perspective and feedback by peers, members and supervisors allows them to challenge assumptions made by the researcher that can lead to biasness''. Furthermore, the researcher gave feedback to the participants at two stages, after data analysis and after report writing. Giving feedback after data analysis assisted the researcher to ensure that everything has been captured and the themes are a true reflection of their experiences.

Transferability. Refers to the degree to which the findings can be generalized or transferred to other contexts or with other respondents (Babbie and Mouton, 2001). This is done by providing thick descriptions of the research findings which enables other researchers who want to replicate the study to be able to do so (Creswell, 2009). The researcher believes that by providing thick descriptions of factors contributing to constructions of fatherhood and absentee fatherhood among unmarried black African parents, other researchers will be able to transfer and replicate the findings of the study with people within the same context.

Dependability. Refers to the stability of data over time, in other words will the research findings remain the same, if it were to be repeated with the same or similar respondents (Babbie and Mouton, 2001). This is concerned with whether the findings can be applicable in a different time if the study were to be repeated. The research methodology process has been explained in detail in the research report to allow the reader to assess the degree to which proper research practices were followed (see chapter 4). The population, sampling procedures followed, data collection tools as well as the analysis process has been clearly outlined and explained in order to allow the reader to asses proper research practice and the ability to repeat the study in a different time.

Confirmability. Babbie and Mouton (2001) define confirmability as the extent to which the findings are the result of the focus of the inquiry and not of the biases of the researcher. In simple terms, confirmability is concerned with the researcher's honesty in reporting the data that was collected during the research study. Terreblanche et al. (2006) suggests that confirmability can be achieved by providing an audit trail which involves documenting in detail every step of data gathering and analysis process meticulously. The authors also recommend providing an appendix of the raw material such as the interview transcripts, in order to give the reader an opportunity to evaluate at least some of the material in the raw state. To ensure confirmability, the researcher have kept all the original raw data, including the interview schedule, interview notes, recordings and transcripts of the data and findings to be reviewed and confirmed by a third party, should the need arise.

4.4 Ethical considerations

In conducting this research study, the researcher had to consider issues that are ethically binding to ensure that the study is ethical. Ethics basically refers to a code of conduct that the researcher needs to adhere to when conducting research. Strydom (in De Vos et al 2005:57) describes ethics as "a set of moral principles suggested by an individual or group, and which

is subsequently widely accepted, and which offers rules and behavior expectations about the most correct (and appropriate) conduct towards experimental subjects and respondents/participants, employers, sponsors, other researchers, assistants and students".
The essential purpose of ethical research planning is to protect the welfare and the rights of research participants, although there are many additional ethical considerations that should be addressed in planning and implementing research work (Ngcobo, 2011),

During the study, the following ethical issues were carefully considered:

Respect for human dignity. Participants were treated with outmost respect during the entire study. The researcher ensured that participants' responses are treated with respect and their time to participate in the study is appreciated. As the researcher is a Social worker by profession and is well equipped with counselling skills, brief counselling was provided to participants who required it during the interview and after the interview has been completed.

Human participant's protection. Furthermore, the researcher also ensured the following:

- Ethical clearance from the University of KwaZulu Natal Ethics committee is obtained before collecting or engaging with the participants (see appendix A)
- Permission to collect data in the community is obtained from respective authorities (see appendix B)

Informed consent. The researcher wrote letters to the participants highlighting what the research is and how it will be conducted, the venues, time and the estimated duration. It was also made clear to the participants that they are not obliged to participate in the study as it is voluntary. The researcher also ensured that the consent form is written and explained in the language that the participants are comfortable in. Once the participants had agreed to

participate, they were then requested to sign the informed consent form. Furthermore, the researcher requested permission from the participants to tape record all the interviews.

Confidentiality and Anonymity. Babbie (in Alpaslan 2010:31) confidentiality implies that "only the researcher and possibly a few other relevant people (such as the researcher's supervisor, promoter) should be aware of the identity of the participants and that these relevant people should also make a commitment of keeping the identifying details of participants confidential". In a research context, confidentiality means (i) not discussing information provided by an individual with others unless permission has been given by the participants to do so and (ii) presenting findings in ways that ensure individuals cannot be identified through anonymization of their personal details.

Anonymity is defined as a researcher undertaking not to publicity link a specific response or behavior with a particular research participant by withholding their names. In this research, the researcher did not use the participant's real names and provided each with a code name e.g. participant A. According to Rubin et al. (2011) a respondent has anonymity when the researcher cannot identify a given response with a given respondent. The researcher explained to the participants that all information that might identify them personally will not be included from the report so that no one could be able to link them to any of the information that will be shared during interviews. Only the key informants gave the researcher the permission to use their real names in the study.

To manage information in a way that ensured anonymity and confidentiality, the researcher employed suggestions by Holloway and Wheeler (as cited by Alpaslan 2010 pg.32). They are as follows:

- Important tools such as tapes, notes and transcripts of the qualitative researcher were locked away in a cabinet to which only the researcher has access.

- To ensure anonymity, names of the participants were not written on tapes, notes and transcripts, and pseudonyms or numbers were allocated to participants to hide their identities.

- If other people such as supervisors, typists or an independent coder have access to the information, however limited this might be, names were not disclosed. Participant's identities were disguised at all times.

- The data will then be destroyed after 5 years. The recordings obtained from the interviews will be deleted from the recording device.

In order to ensure anonymity of the responses, participants were assigned codes. Alphabetical codes A to T was used for the 20 participants who were part of the semi-structured interviews, while numerical codes 1A to 1E and 2A to 2E were used for the participants who were part of the focus group discussions.

Voluntary participation. The researcher was open and transparent to the identified participants about the voluntary nature of participation in the study. Participants were informed that their participation in the study is voluntary. No incentives were used by the researcher in order to coerce participants to take part in the study nor were they threatened if they refused to participate. Furthermore, participants were informed that should they agree to participates, they are allowed to withdraw during the course of the study if they feel uncomfortable to continue.

Privacy. For research participants, this is a notion in research ethics which states that a person in a research study has a right to privacy when participating in the study (Thomas & Hodges 2010). Protecting research participants' right to privacy requires respect for their autonomy, their right to self-determination, as well as their general welfare. Protecting the

privacy of your participants means giving them control over the information that they share with you.

In this study, this ethical consideration was achieved by firstly getting permission and consent from involved parties (participants and stakeholders) to be part of the study. The researcher further ensured that participants are aware that they have the right to refuse to participate or answer any question during the interview that they find objectionable. Secondly, the researcher ensured that the interviews with the participants were conducted in a private space. Thirdly, the researcher ensured that anonymity and confidentiality is maintained by protecting the identities and personal information of the research participants. In the case of focus group interviews, participants were urged not to publicly discuss any information shared by members of the group without their permission. Finally, in protecting the privacy of participants, the researcher also ensured that the data collected is stored safely.

Risks and benefits. In conducting a research study, it is important to ensure that the research study does not cause any harm or injury to the participants regardless of whether they consented to it or not. According to Punch (2014 p.49), "research is commonly expected to minimise the risk of causing harm (non-maleficence), to carry out worthwhile and potentially beneficial work (beneficence) and to distribute any benefits and risks non-discriminatorily throughout a research project and beyond (fairness)". There are many different types of harm that the participants may be exposed to during the study and according to Hammersley and Traianou (2012) includes physical, psychological, social and reputational harm.

Although there was minimal foreseeable risk that was expected in this study, however, during the interviews, the participants may be exposed to emotional risk when narrating their stories. Some participants may be still emotionally unease about the fathers of

their children being absent or being unable to be present in the life of their children for whatsoever reason. Should this happen, the researcher was willing to first terminate the interview with the participant, provide immediate counselling and then refer the participant to the NGO for further counselling. Furthermore, follow-up was done with the participants after the referral had been done to ensure that they receive necessary assistance.

A research study is a process that takes time and effort, and it is crucial to be remain aware as a researcher that some of that time and effort belongs to the participants regardless of who they are (Punch, 2014). So it is important that the research study or the outcome thereof should also benefit the research participants. Hammersley and Traianou (2012) argues that the most important benefit of research, is the creation of valuable knowledge. The researcher hopes that the study will be beneficial in the following ways:

- Advancement and corroboration of knowledge in understanding the construction of fatherhood and absentee fathers within the South African context.
- The findings of the study will provide social services practitioners within the Government and non-government sector with evidence based practice when working with different families and children.
- Development of policies and programmes dealing with the phenomenon.
- Learning for some participants about the effects of absentee fathers and support as well as the therapeutic effects of the study

4.5 Limitations of the study

As the study was located in a rural area and a township, taking into account the educational level within the context, the researcher had to conduct some interviews in isiZulu. The interview guide was therefore translated into isiZulu using back-design to ensure equivalency of the tool (see discussion on 4.3.3). Furthermore, translating the interviews from isiZulu to

English might be subject to translation errors. To minimise this limitation, the researcher requested assistance from a professional translator to ensure that meaning is maintained and reflects the opinions of the research participants.

In addition to semi-structured interviews, the researcher also conducted focus group discussions with the participants. In view of social desirability, some participants may feel the need to share what they think the researcher wants to hear or what they perceive as 'social desirable' in the eyes of other group members instead of sharing their own true opinion on the matter being discussed. However, the researcher tried to minimise this limitation by encouraging members maintain confidentiality on issues discussed in the group with the hope that it will make group members feel comfortable to share their opinions freely.

4.6 Reflexivity

Reflexivity is important especially in the qualitative paradigm as the researcher's subjective feelings have the potential to impact on the process and ultimately the research outcomes. According to De Vos (2005 p.363), "reflexivity is achieved through detachment, internal dialogue and constant scrutiny of the researcher and conscious through the process through which social constructs and questions can be interpreted of the field experiences". I am very passionate about father involvement in the upbringing of a child and in my line of work I also deal with cases of absent fathers. I became aware that some people may not feel the same way that I do about meaningful parenting and father involvement. Therefore, I ensured that I approach the participants from an objective and an unbiased point of view without imposing my views on the issue. As a professional social worker I was also tempted in some cases to intervene on some of the stories that I listened to, however I ensured that I adhere to my role of being a researcher.

CHAPTER 5: PRESENTATION OF RESULTS

5.1 introduction

This chapter presents the result as aligned with the five research objectives set at the onset of the research study. The researcher begins by providing a biographical profile of all the participants in the study and then present the findings under each theme and subtheme that emerged during the data analysis phase. The framework of analysis for this research project was based on the step-wise format (with 8 steps) for qualitative data analysis as provided by Tesch (in Creswell, 2009 pg.186) as discussed in chapter 4. The themes were developed using the main research questions of the research study and the data that that was collected during the interviews with the participants. In addition, subthemes were also identified under each theme in order to explore the context and the meaning that participants attach to their own experiences. Quote from the semi-structured interviews and Focus group discussion are used to substantiate the research findings.

5.2 Socio-demographic profile of participants

The researcher made use data triangulation collect information from participants and that included (i) conducting semi structured interviews with participants and (ii) a focus group interview. As shown on table 5.1 below, 30 participants who were all unmarried black African parents were selected from the two populations. In addition, 4 key informants were also selected from the 2 population with the aim to have a better understanding of the communities and their respective cultures. Twenty participants were interviewed as part of semi-structured interview guide and 10 participants took part in the Focus group discussion.

Table 5.1: interview dynamics

Type of interview	Number of participants
Individual semi-structured interviews	20 parents from both wards
Focus group discussions	2 FGD with 10 parents FGD 1: Mothers X5 FGD 2: fathers X5
Interviews with informants	4 informants

Table 5.2 presents the characteristics of the 20 participants who took part in the semi-structured interviews. Ten participants were males and 10 were females between the ages of 19 and 51 residing in ward 1 and ward 6. While table 3 presents the characteristics of 10 participants who were part of the FGD. All the participants are no longer in a romantic relationship with the other parent whom they have a chid/ren with. The number of children depicted on the table are the children that they have with the old partner or different old partners that they are no longer in a relationship with. Some of the participants reported to be now divorced, married to new partner or engaged to a new partner or in a relationship with a new partner or just single.

Table 5.2: Socio-demographic profile of in-depth interview participants

Participant	Gender	Age	Number of children	Relationship status	Ward	Type of settlement
A.	Female	38	02	Single	01	Rural
B.	Male	36	02	relationship with a new partner	06	Township
C.	Male	28	02	Single	01	Rural
D.	Male	29	01	Engaged	01	Rural
E.	Male	27	01	Engaged	01	Rural
F.	Female	27	02	relationship with a new partner	06	Township
G.	Female	22	01	relationship with a new partner	06	Township

H.	Female	27	01	Single	01	Rural
I.	Female	19	01	Single	06	Township
J.	Male	38	02	relationship with a new partner	01	Rural
K.	Male	46	07	Engaged	06	Township
L.	Male	39	02	Single	06	Township
M.	Female	43	03	relationship with a new partner	01	Rural
N.	Female	47	04	relationship with a new partner	06	Township
O.	Female	33	04	Single	06	Township
P.	Male	51	03	Married	06	Township
Q.	Male	39	01	Single	06	Township
R.	Male	42	03	Single	01	Rural
S.	Female	34	02	Single	01	Rural
T.	Female	48	03	Divorced	01	Rural

Table 5.3: Socio-demographic profile of FGD participants

Participant	Gender	Age	Number of children	Relationship status	Ward	Type of settlement
1A.	Female	32	03	Single	01	Rural
1B.	Female	24	02	Single	01	Rural
1C.	Female	38	03	Married	06	Township
1D.	Female	30	02	Single	06	Township
1E.	Female	26	01	Single	06	Township
2A.	Male	37	02	Married	01	Rural
2B.	Male	28	01	relationship with a new partner	06	Township
2C.	Male	24	03	relationship with a new partner	06	Township
2D.	Male	40	04	Single	06	Township
2E.	Male	32	02	Single	01	Rural

Table 4 below represents the 4 key informants that were also part of the study. The key informants included people who have been in the community for a long time and are knowledgeable about the communities and the cultures as well as trends in the community.

Table 5.4: Socio-demographic profile of key informants

Gender	Age	Relationship status	Standing in the community	No. of years in the community
Female	36	Married	Social Worker from NGO	22 years
Male	59	Married	Traditional leader	59 years
Male	47	Married	Reverend at a local church	20 years
Female	62	Married	Elderly in the community	62 years

Table 5.5: Primary residence for children

Primary residence	Number of children
Mother	27
Father	02
Maternal family	01
Total	30

Table 5.5 above shows the primary residence of children while table 5.6 below shows the frequency at which the non-resident parent saw their child/ren.

Table 5.6: frequency at which non-resident parents saw their children

2018	Everyday	Numerous times a week	Numerous times a month	Once a month	Never
Mother	0	01	0	0	01
Father	0	06	06	08	08

5.3 Results of the study

In this section the result of the study are presented based on the themes and subthemes that emerged during data collection.

5.3.1 Meaning of fatherhood amongst unmarried black African parents.

From the interviews conducted it became clear that unmarried black African parents who participated in the study have different perception and meanings of what it means for them to be a father. A range of responses referred to fatherhood as (1) limited to financial provision to ensure that the needs of the child are met on a daily basis, (2) being present in the upbringing of the child and also being able to provide financially, care, love and support to your children (3) presence in the upbringing of the child, providing care and support of the child and the mother irrespective of whether the father is able to provide financially for the family.

Fatherhood as limited to financial provision for the child

About one third of the parents including both mothers and fathers reported that for them fatherhood or rather being a "good father" is determined by the father's ability to provide financially for their child/ren. For these participants, inability to provide financially automatically means that one is not a good father as raising a child requires money and it the father's job to ensure that there is money/food for the family. For these participants, being present emotionally and physically to support the child is just not enough to define a good father as well as the role that the father should play in the child's upbringing.

This is supported by the following except from the interviews:

> For me the most important thing about being a father is the ability
> to take care of your family. In isiZulu we say "ubuhle bendoda
> bubonakala ngezinkomo zayo". So you need to be a person who

> is able to provide financially for your children otherwise you are
> less of a man "awuyindoda yalutho (Participant H- mother)

This definition is not only limited to mothers as one of the fathers also reported that:

> It means being able to support financially and protect your
> children and your family. As men we have a role in our families
> that we play just as women have their role they play as mothers.
> That's how we were raised (participant K- father)

This further shows that for some of these parents, this role of a father as being a provider is something that is socially constructed, acceptable and is a reality for them. This further suggest that being caring for a child is a women's job as for men is to provide and protect. What makes it even more interesting is that this socially constructed view is also endorsed by women.

During the FGD one of the mothers responded by saying:

> I also agree with 1A, children are expensive to raise and for a
> father it is important for amen to be able to support them. Not
> that I disagree with 1B but again I think financial provision is
> very important.in fact I think it's what defines a good father. It is
> their duty as men to provide and we as women we raise the
> children (Participants 1E, mother)

For these participants, being unable to provide financially does not only make you a "bad father" but also makes you less of a man. For these participants it is also clear that fatherhood was linked to socially constructed norms of masculinity that emphasised male patriarchal power and framed provision for children as one key element of this masculinity and thus fatherhood. For them this excluded normal day to day caring of the child as these was seen as a women's job.

One of the key informants who is a social worker from a local NGO also reported the following:

> Most clients that I work with, both mothers and fathers still see fatherhood or being a good father as linked to financial provision because this is how it has been for the longest of time for them. And for them that is all that is important for a father. As you also know, we are coming from a background where man went out to find work in order to support their families while women took care of children. Even though times have changed but this ideology still remains for most people.

Once again, this statement further highlights the impact of historical background on the understanding and construction of fatherhood.

Being present in the upbringing of the child and also being able to provide financially, care, love and support to your children

Another one third of the parents during the interviews reported that for them fatherhood or being a father means a lot of things, from being present physically and emotionally for your children, showing love and also being able to provide for them financially. For these parents, being present alone is not sufficient if the father is still unable to provide financially for his children. Although financial provision was seen as an important element to being a good father, but for them being a good father went beyond financial provision for children to making time to play, cook, help with homework etc. One of the participants related to this as follows:

> Being a father means being able provide and to take care of your family and their needs. Also means being there and present in the lives of your children and giving them guidance as they grow up and showing them love and support (participant N- Mother)

This was also evident during a focus group discussion with mothers, the following except attest to this:

> **Participants: 1D:** for me being a father means being able to take care of your children, love them and protect them

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Participant 1B: I also agree with 1D but also wants to add that it is important to be a good mentor

Participant 1A: guys I hear what you are saying but for being able to provide for your children is very important, love and everything comes after. If you can't provide financially for your children how do you suppose they will survive.

Participant 1C: I also think that in as much as it is important for fathers to care and love their children, it is important that they are also able to provide for their children. That's how things have always been. I agree with 1A, it's our culture"

In the above except, you can clearly see for participant 1A and 1C that even though presence and support is important, however financial support is of paramount importance in defining fatherhood and being a good father. One of the key informants who is an elderly mother in the community also supported this view as seen on the following excerpt:

A good father is someone who is able to care for his children, support the mother in raising them and also be able to provide for the children.

Involvement in the upbringing of the child, irrespective of whether the father is able or not to provide financially for the family.

For the majority of the parents that were interviewed fatherhood means the presence of a father in the upbringing of the child, providing care and support of the child and the mother irrespective of whether the father is able to provide financially for the family. These parents felt that physical presence, emotional support and care that fathers is important for the development of the child/ren even if the father is not working and is unable to provide financially for the child/ren. Therefore, it is the defining element of fatherhood. To attest to this statement, the following are some of the extracts from the interviews with the parents:

Being a parent and a father, means being able to care and support your children. The ability to be present in the upbringing of your children's lives throughout the way. Although financial provision is important especially in the world that we live in, however it is

not the defining element of being a great father to your children (participant T- mother)

Another participant reported that:

> For me it means making time and being available to your children and giving them support in every way that you can as a father. By support, most importantly you need to be able to spend time with your children and allow them to know you as a father and be able to give them guidance that is suited to your values as they grow up. Secondly you need to be able to support them financially if your means allow in order for them to grow up well and according to your means (participant B- father)

Also during a focus group discussion, the following conversation unfolded between 2 fathers:

> **Researcher:** As a parent, what does it mean to be a father?
>
> **Participants 2A:** for me being a father means being able to play a role in their upbringing. It means to be there for them emotionally and physical. A father by virtue is a protector. So that means you need to be able to protect your children and be a good role model to them irrespective of whether one is able to provide financially or not
>
> **Participant 2B:** I also agree with 2A but also wants to add you need to be able to take care of your child. Teach them what it means to be a man as children learn from us how to be a good man especially boys.

For these and some of the participants it is clear that participation in the upbringing of the child/dren is important for a father and financial provision is of little or no importance. These ideas of fatherhood and its meaning are expressed by both mothers and fathers.

5.3.2 Construction of fatherhood

In this theme, the researcher wanted to explore the factors that influenced the construction of fatherhood for unmarried black African parents who were part of the study. One of the things that became apparent during the interviews is that most parents never really

put much thoughts into what fatherhood is and factors that shapes and influence the way they understood it.

Through probing during the interviews, 2 subthemes emerged with the first being "one's own experiences of fatherhood during childhood" and "the social construction of fatherhood" or as some participants would term it "it's our culture"

Own experiences of fatherhood during childhood

For the majority of the participants, fatherhood was found to be linked to ones one experiences with their own fathers when they were growing up. They reported that they learned what it means to be a father by simply just mirroring they own fathers and the relationship they had with them. One of the mothers spoke about her experience and her understanding of fatherhood as follows:

> **Participant:** I had a very good relationship with my father and I believe that is what shaped me to be the strong women that I am today. My father was always available and present for me and my siblings when we were growing up. He showed us love even at the time when he divorced my mother but we never felt his absence in our lives. He supported me in everything that I do and gave me guidance where a need arose
> **Researcher:** Do you think that your relationship with own father has had an impact on what you think fatherhood means?
> **Participant:** absolutely and that the kind of father-child relationship I expect from the father of my children (Participant F-mother)

Another parent shared her own experience and how it shaped her understanding of fatherhood:

> **Participant:** my father is a great man. Although we are not that close as he spent most of his time away from home as he worked as a truck driver but I respect him as my father because he made sure that our basic needs were met on a daily basis. We never went a day without food in our household. He has had his mistakes like any other men but his ability to care and provide for me and my siblings makes him the great father and yes I can say we had a great relationship.

> **Researcher:** Do you think that relationship with own father has had an impact on what you think fatherhood means?

> **Participant:** yes, it does, as I expect my partner or the father of my child to play the same role to our children as well. Protect, provide and show love (Participant M-mother)

It is clear from the above passages that some parents would develop their own understanding of fatherhood and the role that a father should play in a child's life based on their own experiences with their own fathers. Participant F had a supportive, loving and a very present and engaged father in her upbringing and that is something she expects from the father of her children as for her that's what fatherhood means. On the other hand, participant M had a physically absent father whom however according to her was a great father as he provided for the family. For this participant, that's how she developed her understanding of a father as a provider and a protector and that is what she expects from the father of her children as well.

What was also interesting during the interviews is that for some of the participants, their childhood experience of fatherhood had an adverse effect on how they understand fatherhood. For them fatherhood meant the total opposite of what they experienced with their own fathers. To support this, some of the participants reported the following:

> **Participant:** unfortunately, I was raised by a single mother and therefore never got the opportunity to have a relationship with my father. I watched my mother raise me and my 3 siblings all by herself. That is why I strongly believe that as a father I need to be there for my family, provide for them and protect them as well. I don't want my children to go through the same thing that I went through as a child
> **Researcher:** Do you think that not having a relationship with own father has had an impact on what you think fatherhood means?
> **Participant:** yes, to some extent it does hey because when I think of how my mother struggled in raising us, it makes me want to be a better father to my children, which is something that my father wasn't. So I think he's absence has had an adverse effect on me (Participant P -father)

During a focus group discussion some of the participants spoke about how their relationship with their fathers had an adverse effect on their understanding of fatherhood:

> **Participants 2D:** I would say his absence had a significant effect because it taught me the importance of being there for my children that way my father couldn't in order to avoid having them going through the same hardship that I went through as a child. And furthermore, to avoid having any regrets later on in life. His absence made me realise that being present as a father is important
>
> **Participant 2E:** I also think that I also aspire to be a better person to my children while I'm still alive. Although I was never awarded the opportunity to have a relationship with him and learn what it means to be a father, but I know how it's like to be a father and I don't want that for my children"
>
> **Participant 2A:** I also think my understanding of fatherhood was also influenced by my father, the importance of supporting and providing for your family at all times

The above quotes from the interviews with the parents also clearly shows that for some parents, the construction of fatherhood is based on their urge to change their own personal experiences with their fathers based on how they felt about it. These parents are aware that the father-child relationship or the absence of it had a negative effect on them and therefore are inspired by it to be better fathers than their fathers were to them.

However, some of the participants felt that for them not having a father had a negative effect on their understanding of fatherhood as they never had anyone to look up to and really understand what fatherhood means as well as the role of being a father. During the interviews it was even clear that for them it was really hard to explain what fatherhood means or even to talk about their experiences with their own fathers. One participant reported the following:

> I grew up without a father and I was told that he left us when we were still very young. So I never had that fatherly love relationship and guidance from him.
>
> ……..I needed guidance from a male figure such as the father. Although one would get support from relatives like uncles

however it wasn't the same as one would have wanted from the father. The father's involvement is based on a certain purpose, as a father you would want your children to grow up in a certain way and learn your family values. However, this guidance from uncles is just a "by the way" process but not a purposive one. When other children are talking about their fathers, you end up wondering what to say because you do not relate to such. So I would say that has a negative impact especially not having someone who can be proud of you when you have done something good, so you end up having no one to impress. Even though the mother is there, but it's not the same cause sometimes you have that thing of wanting to impress your father. Especially if you are a male child. So based on my experience his absence had a negative effect on how I understand being a father (Participant B-father)

The participant hear expresses how he wished his father was around so that he could get guidance from him on how to be a father. He further mentions how this had a bad influence as he had to learn on his own how to be a father to his own children which is something he never learned anywhere. Another interest element is how for him the role of a social father (uncles) still felt insufficient as he felt it was a "by the way thing"

Two of the key informants from the community also reported the following:

Children learn more from their families and this forms the basis of understanding their role and other people's roles during the course of life. So surely growing up with an absent father, the child learns that being present is not necessary and the circle goes on (Female social worker from NGO)

In church we always stress the issue of being good role models as man to our children as they learn to be a good man from what they see us do. (Male reverend from a local church)

Social constructions of fatherhood and ideals of masculinity

While fatherhood was found to be linked to one's experiences with their own fathers when they were growing up for the majority of the participants, some participant's understanding of fatherhood was based on socialization. For these participant's gender roles

or what they referred to "what a father is supposed to do" is what shaped their own understanding of fatherhood and the role that a father is supposed to play in the upbringing of their children. What was also interesting is that 90% of these parents were from ward 1, which is a rural area where culture shapes the ideologies of a normal or perfect family and what roles each member of the family is supposed to play. This is evidence in the following quote:

> We are a very traditional family and roles around child rearing are very much defined. Men provides, women nurture the child. That's how I was raised, it's our culture, and that's what I believe in. I know we live in a time where our government says it should be 50/50 but that is not realistic. Even in the bible, Eve was sent to earth to be the helper to Adam, bare children look after them while Adam went hunting for food. (Participant K- father)

Another participant who is a mother also reported the following:

> Our roles as parents are different, just as much as my role is to care and raise the children, the role of the father is to ensure that your children never go hungry, protect them as you know a house without a men becomes the playground of everyone in the community. And also to teach the children family values (Participant M- Mother)

As seen on the two quotes above, for these parents' fatherhood and motherhood roles seems to suggest a strong correlation between patriarchy and matriarchy respectively. For both mothers and fathers, fatherhood is closely linked to the ideals of masculinity or what is termed a "real mem". For these parents, most of the roles of raising a child is linked to femininity and therefore a father who is a "real men" is not supposed to be involved in such activities just as much as providing is for the family is linked to masculinity. The following quote shows how a participant links fatherhood to masculinity:

It is a must as a men that you provide and protect your family. For as long as I provide for my family financially, which I do, I believe that makes me a good father. …….because honestly when you are unable to provide, it really shutters you as a men. That is why sometimes when a man loses his job they turn to alcohol. (Participant P-father)

This was also evident during the FDG with mothers:

Participant 1E: ………But also it's the way we are socialized, men have different roles to those of women and the most important thing as a father is to be able to provide for your family. Women shouldn't have to struggle all alone just because men are irresponsible

Participant 1A: for me as well, my understanding of fatherhood is influenced by my relationship with my father. I believe that he was a good father as he was able to provide for his children. Therefore, a good father is one who is able to take care of his family. That's just my opinion

Participant 1C: men are meant to be providers, its nature. It's how we were created. It's just how things have been for the longest of time. We as mothers also don't expect them to change nappies and bath our children as well. We all know a man can't do that because they were not created to do so, it's in our nature

This also shows that for these participants caring for a child is something that is linked to femininity and a men was never created to be able to do so, it's a women's job by nature.

One of the key informants who is a male traditional leader in the community also supported this view as seen below:

You need to understand that there are certain things that are meant for women and certain things that are meant for men. One cannot expect a man to be changing nappies just like I can't expect a woman to fix pipes. It's just the order of life.

This clearly shows how the ideals of masculinity have influenced the way both parents think and understand fatherhood.

5.3.3 Parental Care and contact with the child

In this theme the researcher aims at understanding the pattern of parental care and contact of non-resident parents as reported by the participants. For the purpose of this study, "contact" refers to the frequency at which the non-resident parent saw the child while "care" refers to being involved in the upbringing of the child and provision of financial support to the child.

Majority of the children were reported to be in the primary care of their mothers, 2 were in the primary care of their father and the remain 1of the children were in the primary care of the maternal family.

Only 2 mother were reported not to be staying with their child and 1 saw the child a numerous times a week as the child was staying with the maternal family because she got married and is now staying with her partner who is not the father of the child. The other mother is reported by the father to have not seen the child in 2018 as the child is staying with the father. During the interview, the father reported the following:

> *"It happens when the mother asks for the child, however this has not happened in a long time as the last time he visited or seen her was in September 2017. Prior to that, the child would visit during school holidays as per her request". (Participant D)*

On the other hand, only six fathers were reported to see their children at least twice a week, six fathers saw their children at least numerous times a week, eight fathers saw their children at least once a month while another eight were reported to have not seen the child. (NB. The results reflects the frequency of contact for the year 2018 when the study took place).

Table 5.7: Relationship between providing and involved fathers

	2018
Provides and involved	10
Provides but not involved	09
Involved but don't provide	04
Not involved and not providing	07

Table 5.7 above shows the nature and extent of involvement of fathers as reported by the participants. Only 10 of the participants reported to be involved and also provides financially for their children, 09 provides financially but are not involved in the upbringing of the child, 04 are involved however they do not provide for the child for a number of reasons, while 07 of fathers are not involved at all nor do they provide for their children. This also suggest that less than half of the fathers are involved in their child's upbringing while more than half of the fathers are not involved at all. A number of factors affected the father child relationship and they are discussed in the next theme.

5.3.4 Factors affecting father-child involvement

From the interviews conducted it became clear that both mothers and fathers experience a number of challenges that affect father-child involvement.

A range of these challenges and factors that emerged included the following: Pressure of providing financially for the child, denied access due to inability to pay intlawulo for the child, Mothers not trusting fathers with a girl child, Father's new relationship with another partner, Obligation free lifestyle and remote control fathers and Poor mentorship on fatherhood during father's upbringing.

Pressure of providing financially for the child

Due to the understanding of fatherhood as a phenomenon that is associated with provision, many of the participants including both mothers and fathers reported that this pressure to provide irrespective of whether the father is working or not may sometimes hamper the relationship between the father and the child. Some of the fathers the fathers reported that as a result of being unable to provide, they end up feeling less of a father to their children and this affect their self-esteem, leading to them distancing themselves away from their families/child.

One father reported the following during the interview:

> Yes, they do especial if the father is unable to provide financially. They may feel the pressure and end up distancing themselves from their children. I know this because it once happened to me when I was retrenched from work and couldn't support my children financially. It first had a strain on the relationship with their mothers and that further made it difficult for me to show up and see them empty handed (Participant R-father)

Another father explained his experience as follows:

> eyy… my brother, as I've explained my situation, I want to be there for my children as much as I can however the fact that I am not working and therefore unable to provide financially for them has made really difficult for me to be the supportive father that I want to be. I've been humiliated a lot by the mother of my children, calling me useless and less of a man just because I am unable to provide financially for my children (Participant L-father)

This further shows that in some cases, fathers become absent as a result of feeling guilty for being unable to provide as for them it makes them feel like they are not good father, while on the other hand, some fathers become absent as a result of ridicule that they

get from the mothers of their children. This was not only expressed by fathers as mothers also had the same experience with the fathers of the children.

One mother explains during a FGD how she thinks sometimes women are the ones who push their men away by having too much expectation without taking into account the current circumstances:

> **Participant 1D:** thank you for raising that Mr Khanyile because I was actually thinking of the same thing as well. I think that sometimes by placing too much pressure on men with these expectations to provide, to pay intlawulo and to pay amalobolo, we are chasing them away. Because as I have said early on, if a father is not working but wants to be actively involved in their child's life, are we saying they are not good fathers? I think we as women sometimes are the ones who push our men away by expecting too much and not looking at the circumstances and doing what is right for our children

> **Participant 1A:** so are you saying that men shouldn't pay intlawulo?"

> **Participant 1D:** that's not what I am saying, but my point is if a man is not working and is unable to pay the money, he should not be denied success to the child because at the end of the day we are the ones who end up complaining about having absent fathers. We need to consider the circumstances

Furthermore, many of the mothers also expressed how they will not allow the father of their children near the child especially if they are not working and unable to provide for the children. These were mostly the mothers who understands fatherhood as associated with financial provision.

One of the mothers reported the following:

> Right now I am not allowing him to come anywhere close to my child because he doesn't pay a cent towards maintaining the child. He tells me he is not working and doesn't have money, but every weekend he is out drinking with his friends and sleeping around. He needs to men up and go look for a job (participant O-mother)

This was further expressed by two mothers during a FGD:

> **Participant 1E:** I still maintain that if they are useless and they have nothing to contribute, they rather stay as far away as they can

> **Participant 1A:** I'm with 1E on this one, what purpose are they then serving? They might as well just be absent.

Another fathers describes his experience of how he is denied access to the child simply because he is unable to provide financially for the child:

> The pressure of having to provide financially for the child over spending time with them. You find that when you are unable to provide financially your rights as a father are withdrawn and you are denied access (participant 2E-father)

This clearly shows that some of the fathers are denied access to their children as a result of their inability to provide financially for their children. For most of the parents, fatherhood was associated with financial provision and thus employment.

One of the key informants who is a social worker from a local NGO also reported the following:

> The sad thing is that some fathers want to be in the lives of their children however, the pressure they get to provide even when they are not working becomes a stumbling block. In my experience as a social worker in this community I have had a lot of cases where the father is unable to have access to the child simply because he is not working. In some cases, fathers are the ones who would distance themselves just because they feel less of a father due to being unable to provide

This clearly shows that an unemployed father who is unable to provide for his children is denied access to them or tends to feel emasculated and unable to fully assume the role of a father because of pressure they are subjected to.

Denied access due to inability to pay intlawulo for the child.

Many of the fathers reported how they are denied access to the child as a result of being unable to pay intlawulo for the child. In some of the cases this was due to maternal influences where the maternal family does not allow the father to see the child because they have not paid the intlawulo to cleanse the family name. Most of the participants in the study described the payment of intlawulo as an important cultural practice that is necessary and also determines how much access the father or the paternal family would have on the child.

In the following except, a father expresses the power and role that payment of intlawulo has on how much access a father has on the child:

> Before I paid intlawulo for the child, the family did not want me to be part of the child's life. It was very hard for me to have access to the child. However now that I have paid for the child and I have cleansed their house, they recognize me as the father of the child and they fully support our relationship (Participant Q-father)

From the above statement, it is clear that the payment of intlawulo is very important for the father to be able to have access to the child. The following passages shows some of the experiences shared by fathers on how they are being denied access due to inability to pay intlawulo:

> Another thing that makes it worse is when you haven't paid the intlawulo for the child, this is always brought up in the conversation and they feel they have all the powers over the child. This further makes it hard for us as fathers to be available (participant J-father)

> "As I've said even with his family, the fact that I haven't paid intlawulo for the children makes it difficult for me to access the children. My family is also poor and they cannot afford to help me pay for the damages. It's hard. Some days I choose not to go see them just to avoid being ridiculed, I know it's not fair for them as they are children but I really feel emasculated by the way their mother and her family treats me" (Participant L-father)

For these participants and many other participants in the study, having contact or even being involved in the child's life was denied due to the fact that they have not paid or are unable to pay the Intlawulo for the child. This further shows how maternal gatekeeping plays a role in how much involved the fathers are with their children irrespective of whether they do or do not have means to make the necessary payments. Some of these fathers are unemployed and as a result they are unable to raise such funds.

One the participants shared how much he was expected to pay even though the maternal family knew that he was unemployed:

> With me the issue is the intlawulo money that I haven't paid. As a result, I'm not allowed to have a say on what goes on with my child. I am not working my brother and currently unable to pay for a cow and a goat which costs almost R15 000 together. I struggle to put food on my table, so where am I going to raise this amount of money? As a result, I'm unable to see my child as when and whenever I want to, it's even worse when I want the child to come over for a visit (participant 2B-father)

This father is a father who wants to be more involved in the upbringing of his child, however unable to do so due to unemployment which means he cannot afford to pay the required amount of R15 000.

One of the mothers expressed how she will not allow the child to visit the father or the paternal family due to their inability to pay for Intlawulo:

> No I'm not letting my child go there, they haven't paid intlawulo for the child so what would he be going there for? It's our culture and they know they have to come cleanse my house and pay for the child before they can have him (participant O-mother)

One participant expressed how her family is not pleased at the fact that she allows the child to see the father even though the father has not paid intlawulo to the family:

"My family does not support that I allow my daughter to visit his father for a weekend even though the intlawulo has not been paid by the father. In fact we have even fought with my father about it. The father of the child knows that he is not welcome home, but I let him have the child because I can see that the child loves his father and she sometimes asks about him. He has promised me numerous times to organize money to pay intlawulo but that still has not happened" (Participant M-mother)

Another mother also expressed the same sentiments:

My mother is not happy that I allow my daughter to over to his father for a weekend even though the intlawulo has not been paid by the father. (Participant H-mother)

This clearly shows that some of the mothers do want their children to have a relationship with their fathers, however the maternal families also play a role in influencing mothers to deny the father access to the child especially in cases where the mother is still staying home with the maternally family.

One of the key informants who is a male traditional leader in the community spoke about this cultural practice and how it being misunderstood by most people:

Paying of intlawulo is a cultural practice as the father needs to cleanse the family for entering into their kraal without permission (having sex with the mother). If this process has not been done yet, the child belongs to the maternal family and cannot bare the surname of the paternal family. Where it goes wrong is when a father is being denied access to see the child just because he has not paid intlawulo to the family. Culture does not dictate that.

Father's new relationship with another partner

Another challenge that was reported by parents to have an impact on the father-child relationship is when a father gets into a new relationship with another person. A majority of fathers reported to have experienced problems with access to their children following the

commencement of a new relationship. They further report that mothers use their children to punish them for getting into a new relationship.

During the interview one of the fathers reported the following:

> I recently paid lobola for another girl in May 2018. This is what made me seek help from social workers because now the mother of my child is not allowing me to see my son because she says I stay with another women and she fears that this new woman is going to mistreat my son. It's very hard for me my brother… (Pause) what she is doing now is to punish me with the child just because I have found someone new that I'm prepared to marry. This one time I went to see my son at the mother's house, he ran away into the house and this shows clearly that she is further speaking bad things about me to the child so she can cripple my relationship with him (participant E-father)

Another father also shared a similar experience as he was making preparations to get married with another woman:

> At first everything was fine until she found out that I was preparing to get married to another woman. From then she started making excuses when I wanted to see my children and eventually she told me that she is not comfortable with her children being around the new women. This one time, my eldest daughter told me that her mother was saying mean things about me to them (Participant P-father)

One mother also expressed how she will not allow the father to see the child because of the new women in his life:

> right now I am not allowing him to come anywhere close to my child because he has proposed to this other woman and I fear that when he takes my child to visit, the woman is going to abuse my son. I will not allow that to happen. I will allow him to see his child provided the other women is not going to be with them. (pause)… that women have abused me in many ways and has cursed me when I call the father about the child needing things.so as a result I don't trust her and my child is not going to visit them (Participant G-mother)

The participant on the above quote feels that her child will not be safe in the presence of the new lover that the father of the child has found and in her attempt to protect her child from the women whom she feels have abused her, denies the father access to the child especially when the other women is around.

During the FGD, the majority of fathers also reported to having the similar challenge which is affecting their access and most ultimately their relationship with their children:

> **Participant 2E:** ……A jealous baby mama who denies you contact with the child just because you have found a new lover.
>
> **Participant 2A:** if I may also talk from experience, I'm having trouble seeing my child just because I have met a new woman in my life. Before I used to be allowed to see my child more often and I could take him to visit me over weekends but recently that is not happening just because I have decided to move on with life. You know the worse thing is that I pay maintenance for my child via court however I am not allowed to see my child as much as I want. We then end up being painted as absent fathers when it's the women who makes our lives difficult by cutting us out of our children's lives
>
> **Participant 2D:** I also agree with what other members are saying, women would use just use children to try and get back with you and if you don't, they deny you access to the child

This clearly shows that for some fathers, having a new relationship with another woman can pose a threat to the current relationship with their children. As also seen above that some of the mothers also expresses it fully that they will not allow the father to have access to the child when the new woman is around even in cases where the father is supporting the child.

Trust issues with a girl child

Another interesting argument that came up during the Focus group discussion with fathers is how they are sometimes denied or given very limited access to their child based on

gender of the child. These fathers felt that if you have a girl child you receive little or no access to the child than you would with the boy child.

> **Participant 2E:** I think I have mentioned some of them earlier on (1) if you have a girl child, mothers are not comfortable with us as fathers spending much time with them as they would with a boy child….even though she has not expressed it verbally but I can see she is comfortable leaving me alone with my little girl

> **Participant 2D:** I also agree with 2E on the issue of a girl child. I have 2 children, one girl and one boy. I have also noticed that it's easy for me to get the boy child to come visit me then it is for the girl. I know there have been a number of rape cases by fathers and this is generally affecting how much mothers trust us with our own daughters. Even in the communities that we live in, people start being cautious when a father is very close to his young daughter

As seen on the above statements, two fathers felt that their access to their children was further limited due to gender and the fact that we live in a society where fathers rape their own children which in turn makes some mothers a little more careful with their children.

Obligation free lifestyle and remote control fathers

During the interviews, a majority of the female participants and some male participants felt one of the factors that contributes to that some fathers do not want to take responsibility of their children and therefore its either they deny paternity of their children or they just run away. These participants reported that some fathers just don't want to make time for children and they believe that it's the women's responsibility to do so.

One of the participants reported the following:

> Every man should know their role and start taking responsibility. I'm not the reason that they run away from raising their own children (participant H-mother).

During a group discussion with mothers, the following supporting statements also transpired

> **Participant 1A:** they are just cowards who are scared of responsibilities. But also I think it has to do with how one was brought up in their own family

> **Participant 1E:** that's true, otherwise how do you really explain it. Men just want to have fun and live a responsible free lifestyle and raising a child is just cramping their style. There are only a few lucky women who gets a man who sticks around and help raise a child. The father of my child always hide behind the fact that he is unemployed, however he is seen drunk every weekend. That is why I have decided to cut him out of my life

This clearly show that some mothers perceive that fathers are absent because they want live a lifestyle that is free of any responsibilities like taking care of a child. What also became interesting is that some of the fathers during the FGD also acknowledged the fact that there are fathers who are run away from their families simply because they do not want to take care of their children. The following transpired during the interview:

> **Participant 2D:** I also agree with what other members are saying, women would use just use children to try and get back with you and if you don't, they deny you access to the child. However, at the same time I think there are some fathers who just don't care about their children, we can't blame it all on women

> **Participant 2E:** I agree with you 2D, some men are irresponsible

Some of the participants also felt that the level of involvement by fathers also has to do with the father's upbringing and teachings from their families.

One parent mentioned the following:

> It depends on how one was raised in his household. If a man is raised properly surely they should know what is expected of

them as a father and these expectations are universal in our culture. Personally I don't see how having these expectation as mother could or should make a men be absent in the lives of his children. It's just that men nower days are lazy and they expect us women to do all the work, raise, feed, protect and provide for our children while they do nothing (Participant M-mother)

This further suggest the influence of culture and masculinity on the expectations of a father. A group of fathers also spoke about the role of family upbringing:

Participant 1A: they are just cowards who are scared of responsibilities. But also I think it has to do with how one was brought up in their own family

Participant 1C:…….. Somebody mentioned this early that it has to do with their upbringing. If they were raised right, they will know that it is important to be there for their children

Participant 1A: I agree with you guys on that point

Another participant spoke about the issue of "remote control fathers who pay subscription". She referred to this as those fathers who believe that their role is to just provide financially for their children while playing little or no supportive role in their upbringing. For this participant, these are the fathers who believes that paying maintenance for the child is enough to make them good fathers to their children. This is evidence in the following quote:

Irrespective of what I expect, being a remote control father who pays his subscription is good enough for him. That's how he understands being a good father and that has nothing to do with me, it's his own upbringing (Participant T-mother)

Another participant talks about how maintaining his children financially makes him a good father to his seven children:

For as long as I provide for my family financially, which I do, I believe that makes me a good father. And I also do love my children and supporting them financially is one of the way I show them that I love them. Cause with I have 7 children from

different mother and I pay maintenance for all 7 (participant K-father)

All the quotes above suggest that some fathers run away from taking responsibility of their children simply because they feel that having a child is too much responsibility while others believe that financial provision does not make them absent fathers and that being supportive and involved in the child's upbringing is more of a women's job.

5.3.5 Perceived effects of absent fatherhood on children and the family

From the interviews conducted, the participants raised a number of issues that were perceived by them as some of the effects of absent fathers on children and the family. These subthemes include burden of raining a child as single parent without support, emotional damage on children, lack of identity and lack of guidance form a father figure.

Burden of raising the child as a single parent without support

From the interviews conducted, it became clear during a FGD with mothers that one of the effect of absent fatherhood is the burden that mothers have to carry of being a mother and a father to a child without any support from the father of the child. Some participant related to this as a painful and emotionally draining experience. This is evident in the following quotes from the FDG:

> **Participant 1A:** I think personally it puts a lot of strain on us as women as we are left having to do everything that pertains to raising a child while the men continue with their lives like nothing ever happened. And it's painful when you see them living their lives, posting on social media and having new girlfriends while you struggle all by yourself to raise a child that you both brought into this world

> **Participant 1E:** and it is really difficult and emotionally draining having to be a mother and a father to a child while the father walks away freely

> **Participants 1A:** and the worst thing is that for them, its normal, and its ok to just go on for months without even checking on the child or how you as a mother are doing

Other parents also added how this experience can also result in them having an emotionally unstable personality due to frustration:

> **Participant 1D**: that lack of support from them makes us as single mothers angry and always frustrated.

> **Participant 1C:** ……. it makes us seem like we are crazy and we have lost touch with the world and we end up being spiteful and denying them access to their children. But if you think about it, it all stems from the frustration of having to raise a child all by yourself without any help from men

Two single mothers also explain how this emotional instability and pressure can sometimes be taken out on children:

> **Participant 1E:** …… Another danger of it is that we end up becoming bitter generally speak and we take out our frustration on anything and everybody around us including the child at times

> **Participant 1D:** I think it's true in some cases but not all the time. I am saying this because some women would do that because they are still in love with the father of the child and they are using the child to fight their own battles as parents

From the above quotes it is clear that single mothers can be subjected to a series of stressful conditions as a result of having to care for their children as a single parent. What also makes it even worse is that the child further becomes the victim of this frustration and emotional baggage that the mother is carrying due to absent fathers.

Emotional damage on children

All the participants were in agreement that absent fatherhood has a potential to damage the child emotionally. All the participants felt that children who grow up with an absent father may sometimes grow up angry and hating the father for being absent as they would constantly ask about the other parent while never getting to fully understand the reasons for their absence. Participants further recognised how sometimes this emotional damage on the child and lack of guidance from the father may also affect the child's performance on other areas of life such as academic performance, being rebellious and use of drugs.

This was evident during the FGD with mothers and the FGD with fathers as seen below respectively:

> **Participant 1D:** it actually breaks them as children as well because you can see the disappointment in their eyes and sometimes they would come home making remarks like "mom where is my father, why is my father not taking me to the park" although it might not seem like it, but it breaks them emotionally.
>
> **Participant 1C:** I think that's the hardest question to deal with as a single parent especially when you have a completely absent father. It's hard for us as mothers, I can only imagine how hard it is for a child.
>
> **Participant 1E:** trust me I know the hardship of growing up without a father. You grow up with a lot of hatred as you never understand why your own father is not around. This also affects your performance in other avenues of life like school performance.

And:

> **Participant 2E**: I also think they grow up very angry as they think that their father did not love them and this affect them in many ways like the use of drugs and poor performance at school as they are growing with this pain or void of a father figure in their lives.
>
> **Participant 2B**: that is so true. They are children and they don't really understand what circumstances led to the father being absent. The only version of the story they have is from their mothers.

From both discussions, the data suggest that both mothers and father are aware of the potential dangers of children growing up without fathers and the importance of father involvement in the child's life.

Lack of identity

During the interviews most fathers felt that it is important that the child knows his or her family of origin so they can have a strong sense of belonging. This also includes the cultural rituals like Imbeleko, where the child gets introduced to the ancestors. It is believed that if the ritual is not performed, the child will have misfortune in his or her life. For some fathers it was also very important that the child bares their surname however, maternal gatekeeping made this hard to achieve as it is a necessity that intlawulo is paid to the maternal family.

The following quote attest to this:

> **Participant 2D:** we are Zulu's and it is important that the child knows his father and his other siblings so there won't be incest later on in life (other man laughing). But also its important for the child to know their origins

> **Participant 2C:** yes that is true, a child needs to grow up knowing exactly where he comes from and also use the fathers surname as this will affect him later on in life as the child has not been introduced to the ancestors. And again as a father you need to do imbeleko for the child in order to ensure that the ancestors bring light into the child's life

While the fathers who participated in the study felt this was important, none of the mothers mentioned it.

Lack of guidance from a father figure

In relation to discussion about the effect of absent fathers on the child, both groups of participants raised the issue of children lacking guidance from a father figure especially relating to issues around upbringing of a boy child. Mothers felt that there are certain things that might be harder for them to talk to a boy child about than it is with a girl child. This is expressed in the following discussion during a FGD with mothers:

> **Participant 1D:** "that is so true. But also for the children, especially if you have boys, sometimes they need that guidance from a father figure"

> **Participant 1E:** "true, it's not easy to talk to a boy child about wet dreams and sex especially if you are a woman"

> **Participant 1B:** "that's correct. There are certain things that might be harder to talk to boys about when you're a woman. And also disciplining a boy is harder than it is to discipline a girl child. And we are expected to be supermen and do it all as women. Men are unfair"

In another FGD with fathers, the following sentiments were shared:

> **Participant 2A:** They get to learn a lot from the father and how to be strong and to deal with the world. I also think it is important that the child receive love and support from both parent. This absence makes children to grow up to be weak

> **Participant 2A:** Yes, that's correct, as fathers, we are the one who plays an important role in teaching them about things and the world we live in. we teach them how to be strong and how to defend themselves, however if we are not there, there is no one to be a role model to them

> **Participant 2A:** Plus, as a father, you also want to pass down your family values to them. It's very hard having to see your child being raised by another man with even different values than the one you hold as the biological father. All households have different rules

From the above quotes, it is also clear both parents recognise that a father has an important role of modelling for his children and that father absenteeism has a negative effect on this as children grow up without a good role model. Furthermore, fathers felt it is

important to teach their children about family values instead of them growing up without them or learning them from another man who is not their biological father.

5.3.6 Fostering meaningful paternal involvement in parenting and available support structures

Most of the participants felt that getting fathers to be more involved in the upbringing of their children in a meaningful way is a process that involves not only the fathers, but also the mother of the child and both maternal and paternal families. They described the phenomenon of absent fathers as being enforced by everyone and therefore getting fathers to be more involved will require that all the parties to work together to achieve it. Furthermore, they spoke about available resources in their communities and their effectiveness.

Opinion on fostering meaningful father-involvement

- Both parents

From the interviews conducted, most of the participants felt that in order to achieve father involvement in the upbringing of the child, both parents need to find a way to work together to achieve what is in the best interest of the child.

One parent reported the following:

> I think it is important that one understand that the role of both parents is important in the upbringing of the children, no matter what has happened to their relationship, the children have nothing to do with that. Both parents need to try by all means to ensure that the children are not affected by what might be happening in their relationship because for me I would say that is where the problem start where one parent have hard feeling and they start saying bad things about the other parent to the children. Children learn from what they see and parent who is staying with the children is the one that is most likely to influence them more about the father or the other parent. (Participants D-father)

Another parent shared the following opinion:

> "Women need to stop feeling entitled to the children, feeling like they are the sole guardians to the children. They need to allow fathers to also play their role especially when they are separated because that's when most problems start. They want you to maintain the children while denying of access to them. I think they need to start putting the needs of the children first. Allow us to be fathers" (Participant P-father)

The above quotes both suggest that it is important for parent to take into account what is in the best interest of the child and steer away from making judgement that are clouded by emotions of their past relationship as both parents are important in the upbringing of the child.

Although most participants were in consensus about the importance of a father in the child's life, but some participants felt that there should be conditions to that the father should meet in order for him to have access to the child. These included the payment of intlawulo, financial provision and protection of the child from step-mothers. The following excerpts from the transcripts attest to this:

> I think it's important to allow the child to see the father but also as a mother you must protect your children from evil step mothers (Participant G-mother)

> As a mother I don't mind having the father of my child being involved as long as he honors our culture by paying intlawulo and be able to provide for his child (Participant M-mother)

> As a mother I don't mind having the father of my child being involved as long as he pays for the damages because we are Zulu's and we need to respect our culture and secondly he needs to make sure that he supports his children financially. If he did all this, I would allow him to be more involved in the child's life (Participants H-mother)

The above excerpts show very clearly that some of the parents especially mothers, strongly believe that they are the gatekeepers to the child and the father needs to meet certain conditions in order for him to have any access to the child.

One of the participants felt that there is nothing one can do to get fathers involved as she strongly believes that men do not want to take responsibility of their children. This is confirmed by the following utterances made by the participant during the interview:

> There is nothing much we can do, if the father does not want to participate, you can't force them. That is why we suffer as women because there is nothing we can do about it except to file for maintenance with court just to ensure that the child is supported financially at least. Unfortunately, men nower days are trash, they really are. I think men need to take responsibility of their offspring and start to be more supportive instead of expecting us women to do it all on our own (Participant I-mother)

- Both families (maternal and paternal)

From the interviews conducted, most participants felt that both the maternal and the paternal families should play a supportive role and guide the young parents. This is supported by the following quote:

> I would say for them it's mostly to advise the young parents accordingly but whilst ensuring that they do not overstep the boundaries of their relationship issues. They must support them more on parenting and even with that, they must not be biased. They need to say things that will build rather than destroy the relationship between the father and the mother as this will always affect the children as well (Participant B-father)

Some participants also felt that over and above providing support to the new parents, the maternal family should allow the father to be involved in the child's life even if they have not paid intlawulo especially in cases where the father is unemployed or cannot afford such payments

> They should be good examples to their children and advise them to do the right thing than making things worse than they are between the parents of the children. Furthermore, I think fathers should be allowed to father their children irrespective of whether intawulo has been paid or not. Some men really want to be part of their children's lives but really can't afford to pay for

the damages. So one ends up being denied to see their child just because they cannot afford to make the necessary payments. (Participant Q-father)

Some parents however were in disagreement with the above as they felt that culture is important and it needs to be observed at all times no matter what. They were adamant to say that the paternal family needs to ensure that the culture is maintained. This is supported by the following excerpt from the transcript:

They need to ensure that they push their son's to men up and be good fathers to their children by ensuring that their sons pay intlawulo to the other family and support their children. They need to teach their children about our culture and what it means to be a men and a good father (Participant M-mother)

Another small portion of parents reported that the paternal and the maternal family should just stay out of this as it is a matter that should be between the mother and the father of the child.

Two participants reported the following:

They must not interfere with the mother, the father and the children's relationship unless it is in good faith (Participant T-mother)

They need to stay away from the matters of two people because this has nothing to do with them (Participant C-father)

Even though most participants felt that both families should support unmarried black parents in ensuring meaning co-parenting, however some participants felt that the families must not get themselves involved.

- Community

Some of the participants felt that it's not just the parents and the families that's should play a role in encouraging father involvement, but the community also has a role to play. Two participants spoke passionately about the involvement of community:

> I think awareness is still needed at the community level in terms of how fathers should be more involved in their child's life as father's role in our communities has been minimalized and normalized. So therefore if the father is absent, the community don't see anything wrong with it, it's normal. Man needs to teach and influence one another on being involved fathers. In this way the community will influence good behavior on father's being more involved (Participant A-mother)

> We are Africans and we believe that it takes the village to raise a child. Positive support is vital especially to the fathers. Fathers need also to be able to advise one another accordingly when it comes to parenting, if my neighbor is not being responsible as father I need to find a subtle way of addressing the issue with him instead of looking the other way. There are also people who are role models in our communities that we look up to as fathers, so they must also be mostly involved in shaping the way we understand fatherhood and the role of father because some of us grow up in broken homes or with absent fathers where there was no father and therefore we were not awarded the opportunity to observe what fatherhood looks like and the only picture of it we have is the broken one (Participant D-father)

Teachings, positive role models in the communities and socialization of meaningfully involved fatherhood practices, these are some of the things participants felt should be done at a community level to try and get fathers to be more involved.

Available support structures in the community and their effectiveness

Most participants seemed to be aware of available resources and support structures in their respective communities. This is evident in the following excerpt from one of the participants:

There are churches that plays a role in supporting single mothers or single parents. Secondly there are government and non-government organization that can assist like DOJ, DSD and FAMSA (Participant F-mother)

Even though services from these structures were found to be helpful by some participants, however, most father reported a number of challenges that they come across in accessing these services as well as the general public knowledge about services rendered in these structures.

Two fathers reported the following about the effectiveness of services:

But again I think the problem we have is that for us as men it is very difficult to go out and seek help when having family problems, we just give up and let things be. Furthermore, I also feel that there should be more men equipped with such skills because I feel that sometimes women become more lenient with other women and they always rule in their favour. Lastly follow up on cases should be stressed out after having being dealt with to ensure that the best interest of the child is maintained at all cost. (Participant J-father)

So I think men should also be encouraged to seek help in the midst of problems. Most people think these places are only for women (Participant C-father)

The above quotes suggest that most of the fathers find it hard to make use of these service providers as they are mostly seen as places where women go to seek help and may generally be seen as a sign of weakness for men. In addition, the participants are worried about the officials being more lenient to women as most officials in these institutions are women.

This was also mentioned by a father during the FDG:

Participant 2C: however, I also think that government officials such as social workers also need to be sensetised on this issue as they always favour the women. I don't know whether it's the South African law that needs to be changed to allow more rights for the children or the officials are the ones that needs to be trained. And I think that's one of the reasons why men don't

really seek help from these institutions as they know that the
mother will always win the case.

Participant 2E: that is so true

This father feels that one of the contributing factors why fathers don't make use of

these services is because the services are biased as most officials are women.

CHAPTER 6: DISCUSSION

6.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the findings of the study as presented on chapter 5. This discussion will be based on the findings of the themes and literature is also used to substantiate these findings. It will also a conclusion based on the goals and objectives of the study. Finally, recommendations will be made which will provide strategic guidelines for interventions and programmes directed at families and meaningful parenting in general for South African unmarried black parents.

6.2 Discussion of findings

The findings of the study show that even though a large number of fathers (53%) are not involved in the upbringing of their children as opposed to the (46%) that are involved, this is due to the understanding of fatherhood as a concept as well as many other factors in the environment that contribute to the presented figures. Another finding was also that a majority of fathers in the study aspire to be more involved in their children's upbringing however a number of factors are at play that affect this aspiration. We start by looking at how fatherhood is understood by participants in the study.

The study found that for a majority of the participants (40%) fatherhood or being a "good" father involves being present and being able to support the child' psycho-emotional development by fully participating in their development. This is consistent with the definition by Morrell and Richter (2006 p.18) where they define it as "the social role that men undertake to care for their children". This involves father involvement and being fully present at both physical and emotional level in the upbringing of child (ren). Madhaven et.al. (2008), further indicates that access to a child, interaction with a child and taking responsibility for a

child's well-being are considered to be relevant indicators of father involvement whether they are co-resident or not.

On the other hand, about 37% parents including both mothers and fathers understand fatherhood or rather being a "good father" is determined by the father's ability to provide financially for their child/ren. For these participants, inability to provide financially automatically means that one is not a good father as raising a child requires money and it the father's job to ensure that there is money/food for the family. Lesch and Kelapile (2015) suggested that mothers often placed much prominence on the fathers' financial contribution above any other kind of involvement in the child's upbringing. Although this is true, but the study also found that this idea of financial provision is also adopted by fathers as well. For these participants, being present emotionally and physically to support the child is just not enough to define a good father as well as the role that the father should play in the child's upbringing. Mango (2013) also argues that irresponsible fatherhood is associated with child maintenance to the exclusion of other roles that the father can play. This is similar to the findings made with the participants of the study.

About (23%) of the participants felt that for them fatherhood or being a good father means being present physically and emotionally for your children, showing love and also being able to provide for them financially. For these parents, being present alone is not sufficient if the father is still unable to provide financially for his children.

The study found that for the majority of participants, fatherhood is constructed through their own experiences with the own fathers when they were growing up. They reported that they learned what it means to be a father by simply just mirroring they own fathers and the relationship they had with them. However, this became a problem in cases where some participants had absent fathers themselves when they were growing up as the

findings suggest that for some of these participants, being absent as a father is just normal. In his research study, Mavungu et al. (2013) also found that notable that a number of fathers did not know how a father should behave as they did not have a father figure in their life. He further pointed out to the fact that as some of these absent fathers did not themselves have an involved father points to the possibility of a vicious cycle. This also can lead to normalisation of absent fatherhood due to the fact that some fathers do not see anything wrong with being absent as that's how they grew up. Another interesting fact is that mothers who also grew up with absent fathers also expected and did not see anything wrong with the father of their children being absent as long as they provided for the family. Makusha (2013: p.24) argues that "retrospective understanding of fatherhood is defined as adult's reflections on their relationships with their fathers when they were growing up".

Most participants who grew up with involved fathers in the study shared that they also want to be as good fathers as their fathers were to them or hope that the father of their children be more like their fathers.

Although having an absent father, seem to have had a similar effect for some participants however this was not true for some other participants. It seems as if for some participants it had an adverse effect as they reported that for them fatherhood meant the total opposite of what they experienced with their own fathers. Their construction of fatherhood is based on their urge to change their own personal experiences with their fathers based on how they felt about it. These parents are aware that the effects of a non-existing father-child relationship and therefore are inspired by it to be better fathers than their fathers were to them during their childhood.

Another finding is based on social construction of fatherhood that is influenced by the ideals of masculinity. For these participant's gender roles or what they referred to "what a

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father is supposed to do" is what shaped their own understanding of fatherhood and the role that a father is supposed to play in the upbringing of their children. Research has demonstrated that parenting that is nurturing and engaged in children's daily activities is considered to be a feminine gender role (Richter & Morrell 2006). This means that in contrast to femininity, there is no room for childcare, nurturing and being warm and caring in the well-known definitions of masculinity. Skweyiya et al. (2017 p.132) further argues that "the hegemonic masculinity in any given setting shapes and sets the context and ways in which men can engage in childcare and often this is rather limited".

Childcare for men was mostly seen as involving financial support to your children by most fathers and mothers. The overwhelming pressure on men to provide economically places a significant stress on young men, who also describes low self-confidence due to being jobless, and their inability to give their children money when they asked for it (Sikweyiya et al. 2017). This further limited engagements and involvement for fathers who are unable to provide financially for their children. For most men, this inability to provide made them feel like less of a men and that in turn made them feel like bad fathers to their children. Richter et al. (2006) argues that there is a relationship between a father, fatherhood and masculinity. The first notion of this definition is that in a context wherein both masculinity and fatherhood are strongly associated with being a provider, fathers who are unable to provide material or financial support may feel that they are failures (Patel et al. 2016). One participant spoke about how he disappeared for the life of his children after he was retrenched from work and therefore unable to provide as this affected his ego as a man. Hunter (2010) also found in his study that many men from low socio-economic status are continually finding it difficult to fulfill the "provider role" and this has consequences on their masculinity.

Another interesting finding is also that some mothers also had the same understanding of fatherhood being limited to financial provision and this further pushed men away from

their children in order to evade the pressure they were getting from the mothers to provide. Some mothers went as far as denying the father access just because they were unable to provide for their children. Mavungu et al. (2013) also found that in some cases the pressure that men receive to provide for their children as well as the link between being a provider and masculinity can cause fathers to feel like failures and thereby retreating from their children.

While extant literature, especially from high-income settings, points to changing gender roles in relation to family, with men and women gradually undertaking both provider and nurturing roles (Montgomery, Hosegood, Busza, and Timaeus 2006; Perrone, Wright, and Jackson 2009), we found no evidence pointing to men's involvement in childcare being influenced by a deep-seated commitment to the notion of gender equality. Rather, a number of men drew on the hegemonic masculinity to argue that nurturing of children is the domain of women, and that a man's responsibility is to ensure provision of food, clothing and shelter for the children and wife (Barker and Ricardo 2005; Walker 2005).

These arguments further suggest a strong relation between construction of fatherhood and absent fathers in South Africa. This inability for men to provide for a child further contribute to many fathers feeling emasculated and thus unable to fully assume the role of a "good father" as defined by society. This in turn affect their self-esteem and contribute greatly to fathers who would rather be not present in the upbringing of their children

In addition, another factor that was found to affect father-child involvement was that of denied access due to inability to pay intlawulo for the child. Most fathers in the study reported being denied access to their children due to the fact that they haven't paid intlawulo whilst most mothers also reported to denying fathers access due to fathers having not paid intlawulo for their children. Until the father pays intlawulo, he is not recognized as a legitimate father, especially by the maternal family, and this may result in him being restricted from visiting his child at the mother's family or homestead (Makusha, Richter, &

Bhana, 2012). Few mothers also reported that their families are the ones who forces them to deny the access until the intlawulo is paid to the family. This then means the mother and the maternal family becomes the custodians of the child and the father has no say in the child's upbringing.

Most participants who reported to have not paid intlawulo were either unemployed or had low-paying jobs, and that meant they would fail to pay for *intlawulo*. In turn, this means that they would forfeits their rights to the child, including giving the child his surname and having unlimited access to the child, until the payment is done. The study also found that this was however different for some fathers who had not paid intlawulo but were providing for their children financially. Which also then meant for those who were unemployed and could not afford to do both, denied access was inevitable. Morrell (2006) further argues that poverty is one of the key factors undermining the role of fathers and their involvement in the lives of their children. Given the high level of unemployment is RSA, not all fathers are able to live up to the expectation of paying intlawulo and also provide financially for their children. In their study, "A number of participants reported that the mother of the child would refuse men access to the child, particularly men who have not paid intlawulo (damages paid to the family of the pregnant woman by the man responsible for the pregnancy), or where men were unable to provide financially for the child" (Sikweyiya et al. 2017: pg.142).

The study also found that for most parent's father's new relationship with another partner also affected the father-child relationship. Most fathers reported that they were allowed to have access to their children after breaking up with the mother of the child, however, problems would start once the mother learns that the father is in a new relationship. For most participants this also meant the beginning of conflicts between the mother and the father of the child. In their study, Patel et al. (2016) found that father absence is closely linked to the quality of the relationship between the parents (or former partners), especially

after a divorce or a break up of a non-marital relationship. So therefore this decline in the relationship between the mother and the father meant no access to the child for most fathers. During the interviews mothers it became clear that in cases where intlawulo has not been paid, the child belongs to the maternal family and therefore giving the mother the power to say what goes with the child's upbringing. This then meant that a man's access to his child is determined mainly by the child's mother and her family and is indicative of the power that the mothers have with regard to paternal involvement in their children's lives (Lesch & Kelapile, 2015).

For most mothers who had fathers who were not involved in the upbringing of the child, the general notion was that fathers are very irresponsible and they want to live an obligation free lifestyle or just be remote control fathers. This also takes one back to the ideals of masculinity where most man felt that it is the women's job to care and nurture the child as their role was just provide financially. While a few fathers embraced involvement in care-giving activities, many fathers still dissociated themselves from this type of involvement which they considered to be more naturally suited to female partners (Mavungu 2013). This notion was further enforced by some female participants who strongly believed that the father's job is just to provide. As a result of this socialization, most man did not see the need to be involved in child care activities. One of the participants spoke about remote control fathers who pays subscription referring to those fathers who paid maintenance for their children while not making time to be involved in the child's upbringing.

Whilst some fathers were absent from their children due to being irresponsible or being denied access due to a number of reasons, once again we see how the construction of fatherhood plays a role in absent father as fathers continue being absent without even realizing it as they are just doing what they have been socialized to believe fatherhood meant.

On the other hand, women are also enforcing absent fatherhood by just doing what they think or believe they are supposed to do as mothers.

Although both fathers and mothers play a role in absent fatherhood, they are however aware of some of the negative effect of absent fatherhood on children. From the interviews conducted, the participants raised a number of issues that were perceived by them as some of the effects of absent fathers on children and the family. These included burden of raising a child as single parent without support, emotional damage on children, lack of identity and lack of guidance form a father figure. A number of studies have also indicated the effects of children growing up without their fathers. McLanahan, Tach and Schneider (2013) found strong evidence that father absence negatively affects children's social-emotional development, particularly by increasing externalizing behaviour. This may include poor educational performance and school dropout, teen pregnancy, and drug and alcohol abuse (Peacock, Redpath, Weston, Evans, Daub & Grieg 2008). What was most interesting however is that some mothers still felt that fathers need to take responsibility and pay intlawulo as that is the only way they will have access to their children.

In their views, most of the participants felt that getting fathers to be more involved in the upbringing of their children in a meaningful way is a process that involves not only the fathers, but also the mother of the child and both maternal and paternal families. They described the phenomenon of absent fathers as being enforced by everyone and therefore getting fathers to be more involved will require that all the parties to work together to achieve it. Although most participants were in consensus about the importance of a father in the child's life, but some participants felt that there should be conditions to that the father should meet in order for him to have access to the child. These included the payment of intlawulo,

financial provision and protection of the child from step-mothers. Some parents felt that culture is important and it needs to be observed at all times no matter what. They were adamant to say that the paternal family needs to ensure that the culture is maintained. Sikweyiya et al. (2017) also found that in informal settlements with strong cultural norms, maternal and cultural gatekeeping may simultaneously preclude fathers from being involved in their children's life.

The study found that the community have access to a number of service providers that provides support to families and these included Department of Social Development, Department of Justice and Constitution development, FAMSA, traditional courts and churches. Even in the availability of service providers in the communities that assists with family issues, most fathers felt that most men are unaware of these service providers and they mainly utilised by women. One participant eluded that men generally don't feel comfortable to talk about their issues with professionals and end up doing nothing to fight for their rights to their children. In addition, the participants are worried about the officials being more lenient to women as most officials in these institutions are women. Majority of social workers in the field are women and men feel intimidated to talk to them about their issues with their children.

CHAPTER 7: CONCLUSION

The findings of this study have shown that in as much as there is a high number of absent fathers in South Africa, however there are a number of factors that affect this phenomenon. It has also been found that most fathers in the study have interest of being involved in the upbringing of their children, however they are denied that right due to economic factors as the definition of a father is closely associated with financial provision. As the aim of the study was firstly to explore the construction of fatherhood by unmarried black African parents living apart, it became clear that most parents still define or understand the role of a father as that of providing for the child. This is further complicated by the understanding of fatherhood as closely linked to masculinity which is found in the community. For most participants, child rearing is closely associated with femininity and engaging in such activities does not make one a "real men" in the eyes of the community.

The study also found that the construction of fatherhood is also linked to the parent's experience of fatherhood with their own father during childhood. Having a father who was absent while growing up, a father who only played the role of a financial provider or a father who was involved, for most participants, influenced their understanding of fatherhood. So most mothers expected the father of their children to play a similar role while fathers also wanted to play a similar role in fathering their children. Although it must be noted that some of the parents who grew up with absent fathers wanted to bring about change or be better fathers in reflecting on their own experiences with their fathers. This further suggest that there is a strong correlation between absent fathers and the parent's own understanding of fatherhood and how it is constructed. This further confirms that the construction of fatherhood plays a role in inspiring or discouraging father involvement in the upbringing of the child.

Amongst other factors that contributes to absent fatherhood, the study found that the payment of intlawulo to the maternal family still also plays a role in how much access the father has to the child. This cultural practice makes the maternal family the primary custodians of the child and gives them the power to make decision about things pertaining to the child without involving the father. Once again the socio-economic status of the father determines if the father will have access to that child and taking into account the high level of unemployment in this country, it means for Black African fathers in South Africa, unemployment affects their ability to interact with their children in several ways.

Once again through conceptualization of fatherhood, it was found that some fathers become remote control fathers just because they only understand their role as that of being a provider only.

7.1 Recommendation for the practice

Families that act as primary guardians or gatekeepers of the children must allow fathers access to their children irrespective of whether intlawulo has been paid or not

More community awareness to be done in the communities as most fathers are unaware of their rights and the fact that they have the right to access their children. Section 21 of the children's Act makes such provisions.

Development of community based programmes that address the issues of masculinity versus femininity as well as fatherhood.

7.2 Recommendations for further studies

More studies need to be done on how fatherhood is constructed as well as the influence of childhood experiences of fatherhood in other cultural and racial groups in South Africa.

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APPENDIX A

Ethical approval letter from the University

UNIVERSITY OF ™
KWAZULU-NATAL

INYUVESI
YAKWAZULU-NATALI

29 October 2018

Mr Wiseman M Khanyile 218078276
School of Applied Human Sciences – Social Work
Howard College Campus

Dear Mr Khanyile

Protocol reference number: HSS/1562/018M
Project title: An explorative study of the construction of fatherhood in South Africa: The case of unmarried black African parents in Ethekwini Municipality, KZN

Full Approval – Full Committee Reviewed Protocol

In response to your application received 4 September 2018, the Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee has considered the abovementioned application and the protocol has been granted **FULL APPROVAL**.

Any alteration/s to the approved research protocol i.e. Questionnaire/Interview Schedule, Informed Consent Form, Title of the Project, Location of the Study, Research Approach and Methods must be reviewed and approved through the amendment /modification prior to its implementation. In case you have further queries, please quote the above reference number.

PLEASE NOTE: Research data should be securely stored in the discipline/department for a period of 5 years.

The ethical clearance certificate is only valid for a period of 3 years from the date of issue. Thereafter Recertification must be applied for on an annual basis.

I take this opportunity of wishing you everything of the best with your study.

Yours faithfully

....
Professor Shenuka Singh (Chair)
Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee

/pm

cc Supervisor: Professor J John-Langba
cc Academic Leader Research: Prof Maud Mthembu
cc School Administrator: Ms Ayanda Ntuli

APPENDIX B

Letter of approval to conduct research at FAMSA Durban

FAMSA
Families South Africa
002-292-NP O

UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL

COLLEGE OF HUMANITIES
SCHOOL OF APPLIED HUMAN SCIENCES (SOCIAL WORK)

2/08/2018

DEAR SIR/MADAM ,

RE: APPLICATION FOR APPROVAL TO CONDUCT RESEARCH AT FAMSA-DURBAN

This serves to confirm that Mr W.M. Khanyile approached our organisation to request permission to conduct his research at our satellite office situated in the community of Mpumalanga. The social worker who is based in that community was also informed and agreed to assist Mr Khanyile with information required for his research.

We have thus granted Mr Khanyile permission to conduct his research at our organisation.

Yours faithfully

Mrs Rochelle Govender
(Social Work Supervisor)

FAMSA DURBAN
30 BULWER RD. P.O. BOX 1982
BEREA   DURBAN
4001   4000
TEL: 031 202 8987 FAX: 031 202 8927
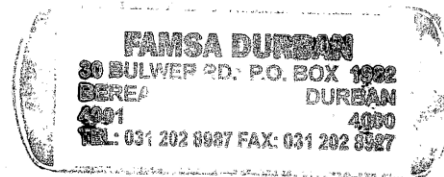
HEAD OFFICE:
30 Bulwer Road, Berea, Glenwood, Durban 4001 . P O Box 1982, Durban 4000
Tel.: (031) 202 8987 . Fax: (031) 202 8927 . Cell.: 082 231 0375
Email: famsadbn@mweb.co.za . www.famsa.org.za
Banking Details: Standard Bank . Durban
Branch Code: 040026, Account No. 050116037
FAMSA Builds Relationships Non Profit Organisation Registration No.: 002-292
UMBUTHO WEZAMAKHAYA NEMINDENI . SAKHA UBUDLELWANE

SOUTH COAST UGU OFFICE:
26 Jan Smuts Drive, Margate Ext 3 (Next to Sea Slopes)
Margate 4275
Tel: (031) 072 0001
Fax: (031) 072 0006
Email: portshepstone2@famsadbn.co.za

COMMUNITY
CHEST

Interview schedule 1: semi-structured interviews

Biographical information of participant	- Gender (observation) - Age - Preferred language - Location - Marital status - Relationship with the other parent - Number of children - Living arrangements
Main research questions	**Probes**
1. What are black African unmarried parent's understanding of fatherhood?	- As a parent, what does it mean to be a father? -What kind of relationship do you think a father should have with their child? -What was your relationship with your father like? -Do you think that (relationship with own father) has had an impact on what you think fatherhood means?
2. To what extent does the social construction of fatherhood contribute to absent father among black unmarried parents?	- What are your expectations of the role that the father should play in their child's life? - Do you think some of these expectation could contribute towards father's being absent or present from the lives of their children?
3. What is the nature and extent of the father's involvement in the lives of their children and factors contributing to absent fathers?	-How often do you see the child/ the father of the child see the child? -For how long do you (they) see the child? -What do you do (they) with the child during visits? Does the child visit the paternal family? How often does the child visit the paternal family? -Is the mother currently living with the child? -What influence does the mother have on father-child relationship? -Maternal family influence on father-child involvement?

	-Paternal family influence on father- child involvement?
4. What are the views of black African unmarried parents on fostering meaningful involvement of fathers in parenting?	- In your opinion, what do you think could be done by the following to ensure that fathers are involved in caring for their children? • mother of the child • father of the child • Maternal family • Paternal family • community
5. What are the available support structures for unmarried Black African parents living apart in their community?	- What are the available support structures for unmarried Black African parents living apart in your community?

Interview schedule 2: Focus group discussions guide

The focus group discussions will cover the following topics for discussion

Biographical information of participant	• Gender (observation) • Age • Preferred language • Location • Marital status • Relationship with the other parent • Number of children • Living arrangements
Main research questions	**Probes**
1. The meaning of fatherhood	- What does it mean to be a father? -What kind of relationship do you think a father should have with their child? -What was your relationship with your father like? -Do you think that (relationship with own father) has had an impact on what you think fatherhood means?
2. The causes of absent fatherhood	- What are some of the things, from your own opinion, that makes fathers to be absent from the lives of their children?
3. The consequences of absent fatherhood on the child	- What are the effects of father absence on children and the family as a whole?
4. The importance of father-child relationship and involvement	- Do you think it is important for the father to be involved in the upbringing of his children? -What role should fathers play in the upbringing of their children?
5. Views on fostering meaningful involvement of fathers in parenting	- What can families do in your area to ensure that fathers are involved in the upbringing of their children?
6. Available support structures for unmarried Black African parents living apart in their community?	- What support structures are available in the community that can be utilized by unmarried black African parents to help foster positive parenting?

ISITHASISELO SESITHATHU

Uhlelo lokuqhuba ingxoxo 1: Imibuzo yengxoxo ehlelekile

Imininingwane ngaba bambe iqhaza	- Ubulili - Iminyaka - Ulimu olukhethekileyo - Indawo ohlala kuyo - Ushadile? - Ubudlelwano nomunye umzali wengane - Inani lezingane - Isimo senhlalo phakathi kwabazali nomtwana
Imibuzo eqavile ngocwaningo	**Imibuzo yophenyo**
1. kungabe ikuphi ukuqonda abazali abamnyama abangashadile abanakho ngokuba ubaba?	- Njengomzali, kuchazani ukuba ngubaba? -ibuphi ubudlelwano ocabanga ukuthi ubaba kumele abe nabo nabantwana bakhe? -kungabe babunjani ubudlelwano bakho Kanye nowakho ubaba? -mawucabanga, kungabe ubudlelwano bakho nobaba wakho bube nawo umthelela kwindlela oqonda ngayo iqhaza likababa emntwaneni?
2. Kungabe indlela abazali abamnyama abangashadile abaqonda ngayo ukuba ngubaba kunomthelela kwizinga lobaba abangalibambi iqhaza ekukhulekiseni kwezingane zabo?	- ngokwakho, iliphi iqhaza ocabanga ukuthi lilindelekile kumuntu ongubaba wengane ekukhulekiseni kwayo? - mawucaba, kungabe loku esikubona kuyinto elindelekile kumuntu ongubaba kunawo umthelela ekubambeni okanye ekungalibambeni iqhaza kobaba ekukhulekiseni kwabantwana babo?
3. kungabe iluphi uhlobo nezinga obaba abazibandakanya ngalo ekukhuliseni abantwana babo, kanti futhi iziphi izinto eziba imithelela yokungalibambi kobaba iqhaza?	-Kungabe uyibona kangaki ingane yakho/ ubaba wengane uyibona kangaki ingane yakhe? -siba singaki isikhathi osichitha naye umntwana? -ikuphi okwenzayo mawusuke uyivakashele ingane? -Kungabe ingane iyabavakashela abantu bakababa wayo? -mawuthi yebo, kwenzeka kangaki?

	-kungabe ingane ihlala nobani?
	-kungabe ukhona umthelela umama abanawo kubudlelwano bababa nengane?
	-kungabe kukhona umthelela umndeni kamama wengane onabo kubudlelwano bababa nengane?
	- kungabe kukhona umthelela umndeni kababa wengane onabo kubudlelwano bababa nengane?
4. imiphi imibono abazali abamnyama abangashadile abanayo mayelana nokugcizelela ukubandakanyeka kukababa ekukhuliseni izingane zabo?	- ngokubona kwakho, iliphi iqhaza elingabanjwa ilaba abalandela ukuqiniseka ukuthi ababa bayazibandakanya nokukhulisa izingane zabo ngendlela eqotho? • Umama wezingane • Ubaba wezingane • Umndeni kamama • Umndeni kababa • Umphakathi wonkana
5. Iziphi izindlela ezikhona kwimiphakathi yenu eningeseka ngayo abazali abamnyama abangashadile ekuqikeleleni ukuthi bayasekana ekukhuliseni ndawonye izingane zabo?	- Iziphi izindlela ezikhona kwimiphakathi yenu eningeseka ngayo abazali abamnyama abangashadile ekuqikeleleni ukuthi bayasekana ekukhuliseni ndawonye izingane zabo?

Uhlelo lokuqhuba ingxoxo 2: imibuzo yengxoxo kwiqembu lokwesekana

Imininingwane ngaba bambe iqhaza	- Ubulili - Iminyaka - Ulimu olukhethekileyo - Indawo ohlala kuyo - Ushadile? - Ubudlelwano nomunye umzali wengane - Inani lezingane - Isimo senhlalo phakathi kwabazali nomtwana
Imibuzo eqavile ngocwaningo	**Imibuzo yophenyo**
1. kuchaza ukuthini ukuba ngubaba?	- kuchaza ukuthini ukuba ngubaba? -ibuphi ubudlelwano obulindelekile phakathi kukababa Kanye nezingane zakhe? -babunjani obakho ubudlelwano Kanye nobaba wakho? - mawucabanga, kungabe ubudlelwano bakho nobaba wakho bube nawo umthelela kwindlela oqonda ngayo iqhaza likababa emntwaneni?
2. yiziphi izimbangela zokuthi obaba bangazibandakayi nokukhulisa izingane zabo?	- Ngokucabanga kwakho, kungabe iziphi izinto ezibangela ukuthi obaba bangalibambi iqhaza ekukhuliseni izingane zabo?
3. imiphi imithelela emibi enicabanga ukuthi ibakhona ezinganeni uma ubaba engalibambi iqhaza ekuzikhuliseni?	- imiphi imithelela emibi enicabanga ukuthi ibakhona ezinganeni Kanye nomndeni wonke uma ubaba engalibambi iqhaza ekuzikhuliseni??
4. kubaluleke ngani ubudlelwano Kanye noukubamba iqhaza kumuntu ongubaba ezinganeni zakhe?	- ucabanga ukuthi kubaluleke kangakannani ukuthi ubaba abambe iqhaza ekukhuliseni izingane zakhe? -iyiphi indima ekumele idlalwe obaba ekukhuliseni izingane zabo?

5. imiphi imibono abazali abamnyama abangashadile abanayo mayelana nokugcizelela ukubandakanyeka kukababa ekukhuliseni izingane zabo?	- ngokubona kwakho, iliphi iqhaza elingabanjwa imiphakathi Kanye nemindeni ukuqiniseka ukuthi ababa bayazibandakanya nokukhulisa izingane zabo ngendlela eqotho?
6. Iziphi izindlela ezikhona kwimiphakathi yenu eningeseka ngayo abazali abamnyama abangashadile ekuqikeleleni ukuthi bayasekana ekukhuliseni ndawonye izingane zabo?	- Iziphi izindlela ezikhona kwimiphakathi yenu eningeseka ngayo abazali abamnyama abangashadile ekuqikeleleni ukuthi bayasekana ekukhuliseni ndawonye izingane zabo?

Participants' informed consent form

Study title:

An explorative study of the construction of fatherhood in South Africa: The case of unmarried black African parents in Ethekwini Municipality, KZN

Introduction

My name is Wiseman Mlondolozi Khanyile, a master's student in the School of Applied Human Sciences (Social Work) at the University of KwaZulu-Natal. I am conducting a study on construction of fatherhood among unmarried black African parents in KwaZulu Natal, South Africa as part of my research project. My intention is to understand unmarried black African parent's experiences and perceptions of fatherhood and absentee fathers.

Invitation

You are being invited to take part in a research project. Before you decide, it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. Ask me if there is anything unclear or if you need additional information. Take time to decide whether or not you would like to take part.

Thank you for reading this.

Project purpose

The aim of the study is to **explore the construct of fatherhood and the factors contributing to absentee fatherhood among unmarried black African parents living apart.** The researcher hopes that this will contribute to an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon of absent fathers among unmarried black African families in South Africa, particularly the construction of fatherhood and the contributing factors to disengagement of fathers as well as related social dynamics.

<u>Nature of participation</u>

Should you agree to participate in this research project, I would like to interview you at a time and place that would suit you. This interview is not supposed to take longer than 90 minutes. If necessary, arrangements will be made with you for follow-up interviews.

Since I would like to give you my full attention during the interview, I might forget some valuable information that you had shared with me. I would like (with your permission) to record the interview via the tape. After the interview, this audio-recording will be written out word-for-word. When the interview is written out, all of the information that might identify you personally will be removed so that no one will be able to link you with any of the information that you have shared during the interview. Some of the information that you have shared will be documented in a research report and nowhere will your name or any personal information be shared; this will make it impossible for anybody to identify you. Important tools such the voice recorder, notes and transcripts of the qualitative researcher will be locked away in a cabinet to which only the researcher has access.

If other people such as supervisors, typists or an independent coder have access to the information, however limited this might be, names will not be disclosed. Participant's identities will be disguised at all times. The data will then be destroyed after 5 years. The recordings obtained from the interviews will be deleted from the recording device.

Please note that your participation in the research is completely voluntary (you are free to participate or not to participate). You are not forced in any way to take part in this research project. It is your decision to participate or not to participate; I would also like to assure you that nothing will affect you in any way now or in future.

If you agree to take part, you still have right to change your mind at any time during the study and to withdraw from the study.

If I feel that the information that you have shared has left you feeling emotionally upset, or anxious, I am required to refer you to a counsellor for debriefing or counselling on your permission of course.

Contact for further information

For any queries before, during and after the interview, you could contact;

Mr WM Khanyile

Social Science, Social Work masters' student (researcher)

Cell: 0790830331

Email: 218078276@stu.ukzn.ac.za

Professor Johannes John-Langba

University Supervisor

Tel: 031 260 2792.

Email: JohnLangbaJ@ukzn.ac.za

If you do agree to participate in this study, I would advise and appreciate you to sign the consent form below.

Thank you for your contribution to the study

DECLARATION OF CONSENT

Consent form

I, _____ agree to participate on An explorative study of the construction of fatherhood in South Africa: The case of unmarried black African parents in Ethekwini Municipality, KZN, conducted by Wiseman Mlondolozi Khanyile (student number: 218078276), Master of Social Science (Social Work) student in the School of Applied Human Sciences at the University of KwaZulu-Natal. I understand the purpose of the study.

I understand that I will be required to participate in a personal interview of about 90 mins. The interviews will be audio taped and transcribed. The transcripts will be stored on Mr Khanyile's personal computer and voice recorder will be locked in a cabinet. These will be destroyed within five years upon completion of the study. I also understand that:

My participation is voluntary.

I have the right to withdraw from the research at any stage I want.

There will be no rewards for participation, nor will there be any negative consequences should I decide to withdraw.

Strict confidentiality and anonymity will be maintained.

I will let Mr. WM Khanyile know immediately if I feel upset during or after the interview to request support.

Please indicate by ticking the appropriate box whether or not you will allow the interview to be audio taped.

   ALLOW   DISALLOW

My signature below indicates my willingness and permission to participate.

Signed at _____ (Place) on _____ (Date)

_____ (Signature)

_____ (Print name)

Ishidi lemininingane lababambiqhaza

Isihloko socwaningo:

Ucwaningo ngokwakhekha kwegama elichaza ukuba ngubaba eMzansi Africa: isigameko kanye nemibono yabazali abamnyama abangashadile ngaphansi kukaMasipala weTheku, KwaZulu Natali.

Isingeniso

Igama lami ngingu Wiseman Mlondolozi Khanyile, ngenza izifundo zamabanga aphezulu kwezenhlalakahle eNyuvesi yaKwaZulu-Natal. Ngiqhuba ucwaningo njengengxenye yokufezekisa izidingo zeziqu zami. Ngenza ucwaningo ngesihloko esidaluliwe ngasenhla. Inhloso yalolucwaningo kungukuqonda ngokwakhekha kwegama elichaza ukuba ngubaba eMzansi Africa ngokubukelela izigameko kanye nemibono yabazali abamnyama abangashadile.

Isimemo:

Uyamenywa ukuba uzibandakanye kulolu cwaningo. Ngaphambi kokuba uvumelane, kubalulekile ukuba uqonde ukuthi lungani ucwaningo futhi yini okuzodingeka ukuthi uyenze. Ngicela uthathe isikhathi sokufunda ukwaziswa okulandelayo ngokucophelela futhi uxoxe nabanye uma ufisa. Ngibuze uma kukhona okungacacile noma uma udinga ulwazi olwengeziwe. Zinike isikhathi noku qonda ngaphambi kokuvuma ukuba ingxenye.

Siyabonga ngokufunda lokhu.

Inhloso yocwaningo:

Inhloso yocwaningo igxile kakhulu ekwakhekha kwegama elichaza ukuba ngubaba eMzansi Africa, kanye nezinto ezibangela ukuthi obaba bangalibambi iqhaza ekukhulisekeni kwabantwana babo phakathi kwabazali abamnyama abangashadile futhi abangahlali ndawonye. Umcwaningi unethemba lokuthi lolucwaningo luzokwandisa ulwazi olunjulu lokuqonda ngobaba abangalibambi iqhaza ekukhuliseni kwabantwana babo phakathi kwabazali abamnyama abangashadile futhi abangahlali ndawonye, ikakhulukazi ngokwakhekha kwegama elichaza ukuba ngubaba kanye nokuthi linamuphi umthelela ekuziqhelisaneni kobaba.

Inqubo yokubamba iqhaza

Uzocelwa ukuba ubambe iqhaza engxoxweni ezothatha isikhathi esingangehora nesigamu. Okulotshiweyo nokuqoshiwe ngengxoxo kuzogcinwa kwi khompuyutha yami kanye nasekhabetheni elikhiyelwayo. Sekuyothi uma kudlula iminyaka emihlanu ibese iyalinyazwa ilahlwe. Ukubamba kwakho iqhaza kulolu cwaningo kuyimfihlo.

Igama lakho ngeke kukhulunywe ngalo. Uma uzimisele ukuba ubuzwe, uzozikhethela ngoku thikha ebhikisini ukuthi uyavumelana nokuthi uqoshwe noma awuvumelani.

Uma uzizwa ecasukile ngesikhathi noma ngemumva kwengxoxo, ngicela ungazise ngokushesha. Ukuze ngikusise ngama ngosizo lwabezenhlalakahle.

Sicela uqaphele ukuthi iqhaza lakho kuyinto yokuzithandela. Unelungelo ukuba uhoxe ekungeneleni isifundo kunoma yisiphi isigaba. Akuyikuba khona imivuzo emibi ngokwenza lokho, futhi kungeke kube khona noma yimuphi imiphumela engemihle.

Imininingwane yokuxhumana ukuze uthole ulwazi oluthe xaxa

Uma unanoma yimuphi umbuzo ngaphambi, ngesikhathi nangemva kwengxoxo, ungase uthintane no;

Mnumzane Khanyile Wiseman Mlondolozi (Umcwaningi)

Izinombolo zamakhale khukhwini: 079 083 0331

I-imeyili: 218078276@stu.ukzn.ac.za

UNjingolwazi u Johannes John-Langba

Umphathi obhekene name eNyuvesi

Izinombolo zocingo : 031 260 2792.

I-imeyili: JohnLangbaJ@ukzn.ac.za

Siyabonga ngomnikelo wakho kulolucwaningo

Ifomu lemvume

Mina, _____ ngivavuma ukubamba iqhaza ocwaningweni olumayelana nokwakhekha kwegama elichaza ukuba ngubaba eMzansi Africa olwenziwa u Wiseman Mlondolozi Khanyile (izinombolo zomfundi: 2180782764), umfundi wamabanga aphezulu ezenhlalakahle eNyuvesi yakwaZulu-Natal. Ngiyaqonda Ihloso yesifundo.

Ngiyaqonda ukuthi kuyodingeka Ukuba ngibambe iqhaza engxoxweni ezothatha isikhathi esingange hora nesgamu. Lezi zingxoxo zizolotswa futhi zizo qoshwa ngemvume yami. Okulotshiweyo nokuqoshiwe ngexoxo kuzogcinwa kwi khompuyutha yomcwaningi kanye nasekhabetheni elikhiyelwayo. Sekuyothi uma kudlula iminyaka emihlanu bese iyalinyazwa ilahlwe. Ngiyaqonda futhi ukuthi:

Ngibamba iqhaza ngokuzithandela.

Nginelungelo ukuba ngihoxe ekungeneleni ucwaningo kunoma yisiphi isigaba socwaningo.

Ngeke kube khona imivuzo nemiphumela engemihle ekuthatheni isinqumo sokuhoxisa.

Ukuzibandakanya kwami kucwaningo kuyimfihlo ngokuphelele.

Ngizokwazisa umcwaningi ngokushesha uma ngizizwa ngicasukile ngesikhathi noma ngemuva kwengxoxo ukuze ngithole ukwesekwa.

Isiginesha yami engezansi ibonisa ukuzimisela kwami futhi imvume ekubambeni iqhaza kucwaningo.

Kusayinwe e _____ (indawo) ngo _____ (Usuku)

_____ (Isignesha)

_____ (Igama ngokugqamile)

Sicela ukhombise ngoku thikha ebhokisini elilandelayo ukuvumelana nokuphikisana kwakho ekuqoshweni kwengxoxo.

 NGIYAVUMA   ANGIVUMI