

**CHANGING CONCEPTUALISATIONS OF
FATHERHOOD:
THE PERCEIVED IMPACT OF GENERATIVE
FATHERING ON HETEROSEXUAL AND GAY
FATHERHOOD IN SOUTH AFRICA**

by

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To my mother, Annatjie Weideman

For being the most inspirational, kindest and considerate individual I know.
Thank you for accepting and loving me for the person I am and for teaching me to never relinquish my individuality, uniqueness and standards for anyone or anything.

Your strength and determination has taught me to soldier through adversity and to become the best 'I', that I could ever be, even though it may not always be regarded as 'appropriate' by others.

I love you. Without your support, this dissertation would not have been possible.

*Tell me where
Where is it written
What is it I meant to be?
That I can't dare ...
It all began the day I found
That from my window I could only see
A piece of sky.
I stepped outside and looked around.
I never dreamed it was so wide
or even half as high.
The time had come ...
To spread my wings.
And even though it seemed at any moment I could fall,
I felt the most,
Amazing things, ...
The things you can't imagine
If you've never flown at all.
Though it's safer to stay on the ground,
Sometimes where danger lies
There the sweetest of pleasures are found.
... The more I live – the more I learn.
The more I realize the less I know.
Each step I take ...
Each page I turn ...
Each mile I travel only means
The more I have to go.
What's wrong with wanting more?
If you can fly – then soar!
With all there is – why settle for
Just a piece of sky?*

**Excerpt from the song "A Piece of Sky" from the film *Yentl*
Composers: Alan and Marilyn Bergman & Marvin Hamlisch
(1983)**

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SUMMARY

In his model of psychosocial development, Erik H Erikson referred to the concept of *generativity* as a value that forms part of the adulthood phase of individuals. The concept has been defined as "... the desire to establish and nurture young people". Applied to parenting and in particular fathering, it refers to "... fathering that meets the needs of children by working to create and maintain a developing ethical relationship with them" (Dollahite et al., 1997a:18). Such a relationship is important insofar as it necessitates the creation and maintenance of three psychosocial strengths, namely hope, fidelity and care – all of which are important for an individual to be healthy and functional (Erikson, 1984; 1997). The dissertation that follows primarily focused on the changing nature of fathering, with particular emphasis on a comparison between heterosexual and gay fathering in South Africa. This comparison served to indicate the manner in which these men conceptualised fathering, and the degree to which they displayed the principles of generative fathering to determine their possible differences and similarities.

Evident from some of the key findings were the following. Firstly, in terms of the manner in which the men defined fathering, both groupings used similar concepts to define the position of a father. Secondly, based on the thorough discussion of the basic principles of generative fathering in Chapter Two, it was quite evident that both heterosexual and gay fathers knowingly and unknowingly ascribed to them. These included the components of generative fathering, being interaction, accessibility and paternal responsibility and the various categories of generative fathering, including ethical work, stewardship, development work and relationship work. Based on these similarities, it was of particular interest to the researcher that it was not the sexual orientation of the respondents which impacted on their relationship with their children, but rather independent factors such as the manner in which they were socialised by their fathers, their educational and occupational levels, as well as spousal support. As such, the research underscored the importance of eradicating traditional notions of the father serving only as moral figure, economic provider and gender role model. In addition, it also emphasised the fact that 'gay fathering' should not be regarded as a contradiction in terms, but that 'gay fathering' and the seemingly stereotypical 'gay lifestyle', should be viewed as two distinct and independent entities.

OPSOMMING

In sy model van psigo-sosiale ontwikkeling, het Erik H. Erikson verwys na die konsep *generatieweiteit* as waarde wat deel uitmaak van die volwasseheidsfase van individue. Die konsep is gedefinieer as "... die begeerte om jong persone tot stand te bring en te versorg". Wanneer van toepassing op ouerskap en spesifiek vaderskap, verwys dit na "... vaderskap wat voorsien in die behoeftes van kinders deur 'n etiese verhouding met hulle te bewerkstellig en in stand te hou" (Dollahite et al., 1997a:18). Sodanige verhouding is belangrik in soverre dit die daarstel en instandhouding van drie psigo-sosiale kragte noodsaak – naamlik hoop, getrouheid en versorging, almal wesentlik belangrik vir 'n individu om gesond en funksioneel te kan wees (Erikson, 1984, 1997). Die verhandeling wat volg fokus primêr op die veranderende aard van vaderskap, met spesifieke klem op die vergelyking tussen heteroseksuele en gay vaderskap in Suid-Afrika. Dié vergelyking dui op die verskille en ooreenkomste tussen die twee vorme van vaderskap met betrekking tot elkeen se konseptualisering van vaderskap, asook die graad waartoe elkeen die beginsels van generatiewe vaderskap demonstreer.

Aspekte wat beduidend was vanuit die kernbevindinge, het die volgende ingesluit. Eerstens, in terme van die wyse waarop die mans vaderskap gedefinieer het, het beide groepe ooreenstemmende konsepte gebruik om die posisie van 'n vader te definieer. Tweedens, gebaseer op 'n indringende bespreking van die basiese beginsels van generatiewe vaderskap in Hoofstuk Twee, was dit duidelik dat beide heteroseksuele en gay vaders wetend en onwetend daarmee geassosieer het. Dit het die komponente van generatiewe vaderskap, waaronder interaksie, toeganklikheid en vaderskapsverantwoordelikheid en die verskillende kategorieë van generatiewe vaderskap insluitend etiese werk, toesighouding, ontwikkelingswerk en verhoudingswerk, ingesluit. Gebaseer op hierdie ooreenkomste, was dit vir die navorser insiggewend dat dit nie die seksuele oriëntasie van die respondente was wat geïmpakteer het op hul verhouding met hul kinders nie. Dit was eerder onafhanklike faktore, waaronder die wyse waarop hulle eie vaders hul gesosialiseer het, hul opvoedkundige en beroepsvlakke asook egliede ondersteuning. Op grond hiervan het die navorser die belangrikheid van die uitwissing van tradisionele begrippe van die vader as morele figuur, ekonomiese voorsiener en gender rolmodel beklemtoon. 'Gay vaderskap' moet aldus nie beskou word as 'n teenstrydigheid in terme nie, maar 'gay vaderskap' en die skynbaar stereotipiese 'gay lewenstyl', moet as twee onderskeibare en onafhanklike entiteite beskou word.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION AND PROBLEM STATEMENT

1.1 KEYWORDS

Fatherhood, Gay Fatherhood, Generative Fathering, Generativity, Parenting

1.2 INTRODUCTION

In setting the background for their interdisciplinary article on the ever dynamic nature of fatherhood, Marsiglio et al. (2000:1173) provided the following argument which the researcher deems as an intricate basis for the study that follows:

The multilayered fatherhood terrain is represented by a wide range of issues, including cultural representations of and discourses about fatherhood, conceptual and empirical analyses of the diverse forms of fatherhood and father involvement, linkages between dimensions of the father-child relationship and children's and fathers' well-being and development, and the social psychology of paternal identity and fathering.

The study undertaken highlighted the **changing nature of fathering** in terms of its diverse and multidimensional nature. This was done by establishing a **comparison** between **heterosexual** and **gay fathering** in South Africa¹. Pertaining to the first of these, the rise in the number of dual-earner couples (Benokraitis, 1996; Newman, 1999; Smit, 2001) and notions centring on the changing roles of men as it relates to fatherhood involvement (Hawkins & Dollahite, 1997), make it all the more imperative to thoroughly demarcate probable novel and unique parenting principles within heterosexual families. In terms of gay fathering, same-sex marriage legislation and other rights afforded to gay men in South Africa (Leonard, 2005; Quintal, 2006:5), which include adoption (De Vos, 2008), underscore the importance of an intricate study of the nature of gay fathering. This notion is emphasised by Cohen and Savin-Williams (1996a:1) who argue that "...in no other time in history have lesbians, gays,

¹ It should be noted from the outset that the study, including the research objectives, questions and problem statement, as well as the literature cited and respondents interviewed, was on Afrikaans-speaking, middle-class, Caucasian heterosexual and gay fathers living in South Africa. The study did not seek to make generalisations or discredit research about the fathering practices of any other racial or ethnic group in South Africa.

and bisexuals been the recipients of so much overt attention and scrutiny...”, which serves as motivating factor for adding an additional dimension to the study on the *diverse nature of fathering*. In addition, the argument will not only focus on the nature of these diverse forms of family, but the manner in which one may work towards the **well-being of family life** as it relates to **parenting principles** and practices, as well as the **definition of fathering** and per implication, **parenting**. This will be provided for in the form of a discussion on the approach of **generative fathering**, with primary emphasis on a comparison between the noted fathering forms, to determine its prevalence in one or both of them. In doing this, the researcher wanted to determine the degree to which these seemingly polar opposites may in fact complement one another and establish (a) new model(s) of fathering and parenting for future generations.

What follows is a discussion on the background to the study, the literature utilised, as well as the research questions, problem statement and research objectives that served as compass for the study. In addition, emphasis on the broad theoretical argument, methodological approach and ethical considerations will complement the discussion.

1.3 BACKGROUND AND PROBLEM STATEMENT

Cohen (1993:1) makes the assertion that the dominant notions of fathers have traditionally been linked to ‘providing’ in the economic needs of their families, a thought that aligns with gender ideologies of men generally regarded as the dominant of the two sexes. As such, Cancian (cited in Cohen, 1993:2) argues that parenting has mainly been equated with “mothering”, a so-called ‘ethic of care’, associated with nurture and empathy (Ritzer & Goodman, 2003), in other words, with women. Yet, despite these views, Pleck (cited in Lamb, 1995:20) cites **four phases** through which the **concept of fatherhood** has progressed, with each phase presenting a new dominant theme and subsequent role for the father that overshadowed the ones which preceded it.

The **first** of these saw the father acting as moral caregiver and teacher, in other words a **moral father-figure** (Lamb, 1995:20). His main responsibilities centred around the socialisation of children in the use of and adherence to appropriate values and norms as taught by, amongst others, Biblical scriptures. With the advent of industrialisation, a definite shift took place in the manner in which the role of the

father was conceptualised (Pleck, cited in Lamb, 1995:20). Here the role of moral teacher was replaced with that of a **second** role, the **breadwinner**, which dominated ideas around fatherhood from the mid-nineteenth century through to the Great Depression. The moral responsibilities of the father were still evident, but breadwinning became the yardstick in identifying a “good father” (Lamb, 1995:21). As a result of the Great Depression and disruption brought to the fore by the Second World War, a new conceptualisation of fatherhood arose – the **gender role model** (Lamb, 1995:21). This portrayed fathers in a more dominant role in the lives of their sons as it related to the importance of traditional gender roles.

Yet, during the mid-1970s a **fourth** stage emerged in which fathers were identified as “...**active, nurturant, caretaking parents**” (Lamb, 1995:21). The active participation and involvement of fathers were deemed imperative factors for successful parenting, in effect becoming the new yardstick by which “good fathers” were defined. The emergence of this stage was cemented within economic and social trends (Coltrane, 1995:266). Economic trends focussed on the manner in which changes took place in the labour market, with all the more women entering it and establishing their position in the market as second primary role, due to amongst others, an increase in the cost of living (Newman, 1999:216). Social trends included the changing attitudes in terms of ‘gendered’ conceptions of the roles men and women played in society, and the need for gender equity which resulted in an increase in shared household responsibilities (Coltrane, 1995:267). In terms of this, men were expected, in addition to childcare, to perform emotion work, thus to manage their emotions in an active manner to improve the emotional well-being of the other members of their family (Smit, 2001:612).

Despite this progression, studies that have centred on the nature of fatherhood, have, according to Smit (2001:102), mainly highlighted the so-called ‘**deficit paradigm**’ in its explanations, or termed in another manner, the ‘role-inadequacy perspective’ (Hawkins & Dollahite, 1997:3). This approach propagates the idea that “...men show low levels of father involvement because, ...men are less than willing to be involved in the lives of their children and ...lack the skill, time and motivation to be active fathers” (Smit, 2004:102). This thought finds solace in notions of amongst others Blankenhorn (cited in Hawkins & Dollahite, 1997:4), who, despite his plea for emphasising responsible fathering, describes men as “...inclined to promiscuity and paternal waywardness ... unwilling or unable to make that vital investment.” Men, in a

sense, are thus defined as being, what Hawkins and Dollahite (1997:6) term, "physically present, but functionally absent."

As such, the role of men within the family was reduced to and sustained as the 'good providing' image of the father, in terms of economic provision. This image, however, has never been able to fully capture the essence of the full range of behaviours fathers should exhibit (Gerson, 1997a:119). Gerson further states that families currently find themselves in a society where "...an array of diverse and contending patterns" exist in terms of fatherhood. This view is shared by the proponents of the paradigm of social-psychology, including Antonovsky (1979) and Barnard (1994), who encourage the use of a salutogenic and fortological paradigm, or as Strümpfer (1995) terms it, *fortigenesis*², rather than that of pathology.

These approaches, in their most primary form, refer to the 'origins of health', in other words, determining the strengths certain individuals possess and exhibit in their daily lives which enable them to transcend not only illness, but weaknesses that plague their daily existence (Antonovsky, 1979:7). Academics should thus strive to move away from constructing so-called 'damage models' (Wolin, quoted in Barnard, 1994:137) which predominantly hypothesise about deficits of both individual and group activity, rather than the inherent strength and vitality of individuals and families.

Within sociology, academics have sought to and may continue to distance themselves from these deficit accounts of fathering, by ascribing to what Erik H. Erikson (1984; 1997) termed as *generativity*. This concept refers to an emphasis on care in contemporary families for future success (Snarey, 1997:ix). Applied to parenting, **generative fathering** "...is a broad framework that adds clarity to the craft of fathering from sociological and ethical as well as psychological perspectives" (Snarey, 1997:ix). As with psychological approaches, Snarey (1997:ix) makes reference to the fact that those academics who have sought to study fatherhood within families, have encountered several obstacles (including rigid views inherent in deficit paradigms) as well as an "... absence of a unifying theoretical framework." Snarey, as well as the researcher, believes that in ascribing to the principles offered

² Such approaches argue that one should "...not only [study] the origins of psychological well-being ..., but also the nature, manifestations, and consequently ways to enhance psychological well-being and develop human capacities" (Wising & Van Eeden, 1997, quoted in Strümpfer, 2005:23). This should serve as counter argument to so-called "damage model[s] ... which is overly attentive to all of the deficits that will be true of someone ..." (Wolin, 1991, cited in Barnard, 1994:137).

by generative fathering, one may be able to transcend the limitations of the deficit paradigm.

Reinforcing this notion is Richter's (2006:62) definition of *generativity* as "...the desire to establish and nurture young people", whereas generative fathering in turn refers to "...fathering that meets the needs of children by working to create and maintain a developing ethical relationship with them" (Dollahite et al., 1997a:18). Such a relationship, according to Erikson (1984; 1997), is important insofar as it necessitates the creation and maintenance of **three psychosocial strengths**, namely **hope**, **fidelity** and **care** – all of which are important for an individual to be healthy and functional. In addition to these strengths, generative fathering emphasises the imperative role of **interaction**, **accessibility** and **paternal responsibility** fathers should display in their parenting roles. The first of these argues for a direct interaction with the child, the second for proximal closeness between father and child, whereas paternal responsibility underscores the father's responsibility and accountability for the welfare of the child (Lamb, 1995:23-24). Against this theoretical background, the emphasis will be placed on the manner in which such an approach may provide the necessary means to fully realise and mobilise fathers as productive, proactive and beneficial parties in the lives of their children (Richter, 2006:62; Smit, 2004:105).

In addition to discussions on heterosexual fathering and the manner in which the principles of generative fathering may influence such practices, the researcher also focused on literature on **gay fathering (and parenting)**.

Consider the following view:

I have always loved children, and there has always been a part of me that wanted to be a dad. As a gay man, I thought it was impossible – who was gonna let me be someone's parent?"
(Mallon, 2004:xi)

In this regard Johnson and O'Connor (2002:2) state that "... there have always been gay and lesbian parents; what has changed [with the progression of time] is their willingness to be open about their sexuality and their unwillingness to see their sexual orientation as an obstacle to having a family." As such, emphasis will be placed on the identity 'formation' of gay men (Bozett, 1988; Cass, 1990; Connell, 1992; Downs, 2006; Konik & Stewart, 2004; Miller, 1979) to comprehend the various

formations thereof, positive influences gay fathers may bring to the fore, obstacles gay fathers experience (within both the heterosexual *and* gay community), as well as the impact of fathering on the gay parent and his children (Baptiste, 1987; Barret & Robinson, 2000; Bozett, 1988; Drucker, 1998; Johnson & O'Connor, 2002; Lev, 2004; Lubbe, 2007; Mallon, 2004; Miller, 1978; Ross, 1990).

Against this background, the following **research question** was formulated: **Which principles of generative fathering (if any) do heterosexual and gay men in South Africa display in their fathering practices?** Sub-questions that were derived from this included:

- **How do heterosexual and gay fathers define fathering?**
- **What are the similarities and differences between heterosexual and gay fathering?**
- **To what degree is generative fathering displayed by heterosexual and gay fathers?**

Based on the research questions, the **problem statement** reads as follows:

Due to the ever dynamic nature and diversification of fatherhood practices, it has become all the more imperative to formulate an **inductive** theoretical framework which may provide a balanced account of the dual roles that men may portray in their families. Yet, despite this ideal, the majority of theoretical studies have, as noted, highlighted pathological arguments. This is attributed to the fact that these studies focussed on the 'deficit paradigms' associated with fathering, rather than on more-involved fathering and fathering portrayed by gay men. Such views have overshadowed attempts to formulate theories in which the strengths and proactive roles of generative fathers, whether heterosexual or gay, may be celebrated. This is why the researcher wanted to undertake a study in which **generative fathering** would serve as theoretical basis, imbedded within an **interpretivistic** and **constructionistic** ontological view as overarching theoretical framework. As noted, the researcher wanted to add an additional dimension to the research by not merely focussing on the manner in which the concept of *generativity* aided or inhibited fathering practices, but also endeavouring to establish a comparative study between fathering within heterosexual and gay familial formations. In Chapter Five the probable differences, similarities, strengths and principles associated with generative

fathering, across the boundaries of sexual orientation, will be discussed to reiterate this point.

1.4 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

Based on the formulated research questions and problem statement, the **research objectives** of the study included the following:

1.4.1 General objective:

The study aimed to **compare heterosexual and gay men, to determine whether the fatherhood-related experiences and practices of heterosexual and gay fathers manifest the principles of generative fathering in South Africa.**

1.4.2 Specific objectives:

In addition to the general objective, the following specific objectives were formulated:

- 1 To give a **theoretical overview** of **fatherhood** and **generative fathering**.
- 2 To give a **theoretical overview** of **gay fathering**.
- 3 To determine the manner in which heterosexual and gay men **define fathering and fathering practices**.
- 4 To explore the possible **differences** and **similarities** in the manner in which heterosexual and gay men **define fathering**.
- 5 To investigate the degree to which **principles of generative fathering** are exhibited by heterosexual and gay men.
 - 5.1 To explore the influence of these principles on the **parenting practices** of heterosexual and gay fathers.
 - 5.2 To determine the influence of these principles on the **definitions of fathering**.
- 6 To make **recommendations** about the realisation of **involved fathering** based on the empirical findings of the study.

1.5 CENTRAL THEORETICAL ARGUMENT

The central theoretical argument was twofold. **Firstly**, it found itself imbedded in the importance of generative fathering as means to improve the central importance of the roles of fathers within the social institution of the family. Complementing the

importance of this argument, was the imperative role of adopting an **interpretivistic epistemological approach** and the **ontological approach of constructionism**. This was based on the fact that both of these approaches place emphasis on the importance of understanding the subjective meanings and interpretations individuals ascribe to in their daily experiences (Bryman, 2001:13), in other words "...reconstructed impressions of the world, and integration of action processes in a general context, which will constitute a new unit" (Sarantakos, 2005:39). As such, the researcher sought to utilise the approach in such a manner as to present readers with diverse, complementary and new fatherhood models, based on subjective impressions of reality.

1.6 CONCLUSION

Against the background to the study on generative fathering and its relationship to heterosexual and gay fathers, the chapter division of the dissertation will be structured in line with the stated general and specific objectives. **Chapter Two** will provide a comprehensive theoretical overview of the changing nature of fathering on national and international level. This discussion will be complemented by an in-depth demarcation of the principles of generative fathering. Following on Chapter Two, **Chapter Three** will commence with a discussion on theoretical explanations of the formulation of the identity of gay men. This will be followed by an overview of, amongst others, the positive features associated with gay fathers and obstacles they may face in their parenting practices. **Chapter Four** will give an overview of the methodological approach used in the study by referring to the specific methods employed to gather the data. **Chapter Five** will serve as discussion and interpretation of the findings accrued during the fieldwork. In this chapter, a reflection will be provided on the possible differences and/or similarities between heterosexual and gay men, as well as the degree to which they display generative fathering. **Finally**, in **Chapter Six**, concluding remarks and recommendations will be put forward for the consideration of the reader.

CHAPTER TWO

FATHERHOOD AND GENERATIVE FATHERING: RETHINKING THE ROLES OF MEN WITHIN THE FAMILY

A THEORETICAL OVERVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

Consider the following two quotes from William Marsiglio's (2004a:1) work:

Daddy. This word, at first glance, appears so simple, so familiar. We've all heard it, most of us have used it, and some of us have had others say it to get our attention. Yet, when looked at with a discerning eye, much more can be seen. If the lens is focussed to look beneath the surface, we find that the word "daddy", and its most mature rendition, "dad," are embedded in a dynamic, complex web of sentiments and relationship issues. ...

Those who whisper, beckon playfully, or shout "daddy" or "dad" do so because they aim to assign an image or a status to a man. The image is one of a male parent – father – as well as a nurturer, playmate, disciplinarian, and protector. These roles carry messages that help people learn their rights and responsibilities. "What can I do?" "What should I do?" The messages, however, are not always clear and are sometimes challenged.

As is evident from these two quotes, it has become all the more difficult to sufficiently conceptualise what is meant when talking about a "dad" or "father." These quotes outline a plethora of interpretations that could be assigned to or associated with the meaning of fatherhood. Traditionally, as was evident in Chapter One, the father was positioned in one dominant role throughout the centuries at different stages (a moral figure, gender role model or breadwinner) with other responsibilities occupying secondary positions, in other words an "either-or"-approach with no opportunity to establish a synergised, all-encompassing paternal role. Gerson (1997a:119) reiterates this notion by stating that the so-called 'good providing' image of the father (in terms of economic provision) has never been able to fully capture the essence of the full range of behaviours fathers should exhibit. She continues by stating that we

currently find ourselves in a society where "... an array of diverse and contending patterns" exist (Gerson, 1997a:119) in terms of fatherhood. This notion is supported by Elkind (1995) who argues that the current post-modern era has seen a definite movement away from principles and beliefs held with regard to the institutions of marriage and family. He attributes this to a shift from the prominence of romantic love towards consensual love, as well as shared parenting (whether it be increased fathering involvement or the role of caregivers) taking the place of maternal love (Elkind 1995:12).

The majority of research on the subject matter of fatherhood has, however, positioned itself within what Hawkins and Dollahite (1997) refer to as the deficit paradigm. The proponents of this paradigm utilise the so-called role-inadequacy perspective to better understand the role of the father in the familial context from a pathological stance, rather than highlighting the probable strengths and contributions fathers could bring to the table. Such an approach, which posits the role of fathers as being representative of forms of "abuse, absence, sour indifference ...[and] violence", should be regarded as quite reckless and inaccurate (Morris, 2004:18). Pruett (2000:6) references the critique of Vicky Phares who cites the lack of consideration for the potential solutions and proactive contributions fathers may provide if their families experience possible adversities, ranging from teen suicide and autism to childhood depression and attention deficit disorder (Pruett, 2000:6). In an interview with Morris (2004:18), Prof. Linda Richter, who serves as executive director of the HSRC³'s Child, Youth and Family Development programme, noted that "...research [is] showing that children benefit from involvement with caring men as they grow up. This is demonstrated in their cognitive development, their self-esteem, and their confidence with peers." She also argued that fathers themselves also reap benefits from their close-knit relationship with their children.

A movement towards involved fathering has found a great deal of representation in the South African judicial system over the last few years in terms of fathers awarded sole custody of their children. Research undertaken during the period December 1995 up to November 1996 found that in 65 percent of the cases, custody was awarded to the mother, whereas 32.9 percent was representative of custody to fathers. Another study during June of 1999 of 100 child custody cases saw 60 percent awarded to mothers, 24 percent to fathers, 13 percent in terms of the

³ Human Sciences Research Council.

separation of children (both parents deemed competent custodians), one percent joint custody, and the final two percent to a third party (Chief Directorate Communication Services of the Department of Justice, 1999:13). In terms of the latter finding it should seem clear that there is a definite increase in custodial cases favouring the father as primary caretaker, with 38 percent of the last 100 cases serving as this unquestionable indicator (Chief Directorate Communication Services of the Department of Justice, 1999:13). On the other side of the spectrum, however, other studies found that only 20 percent of children involved in the “Birth to 20” study based at the University of the Witwatersrand, were living with their biological fathers, whilst the remaining 80 percent had little or no contact with them (Cullinan, 2004:5).

To fully realise, establish and maintain the foregoing positive images of fathering and subsequently reduce problems associated with fatherless children, this chapter will introduce the reader to the principle of *generativity* (Erikson, 1984, 1997) as possible intervening variable in these struggles. Emphasis will be placed on the way in which this principle has led to a contrasting understanding of the meaning of fatherhood and fathering practices. Focus will **firstly** be placed on the **basic premise of the deficit paradigm (2.2)**, in an attempt to fully comprehend the demeaning and counterproductive manner in which it deals with problems associated with fatherhood. The various **fathering-guises (2.2.2)** will be discussed in this section, after which a thorough **critique of the deficit paradigm (2.2.3)** will be provided. Following this, the researcher will introduce the reader to literature related to the **factors (2.2.4) that encourage men’s decisions to become involved as fathers**. The role of *generativity* which highlights the use of ‘strength-related’ approaches associated with fathering, will receive a comprehensive demarcation under Point 2.3. Included here will be a discussion of Erikson’s (1984, 1997) **psychosocial phases of human development**, the **types of generativity**, as well as possible **factors that determine the levels of involvement** of fathers in their children’s lives. The section will conclude with a thorough discussion of the **various categories, components, capabilities and responsibilities**, as well as the **impact associated with generative fathering**.

It should be made clear at the outset, that regardless of the fact that the various components, categories, responsibilities and Erikson’s (1984; 1997) developmental phases, associated with generative fathering are intertwined and overlap, it was decided to discuss each of these in separate sections. The reason for this is to

provide a clear, concise and less ambiguous account of generative fathering to avoid unnecessary uncertainty and confusion on the part of the reader.

2.2 THE ROLE-INADEQUACY PERSPECTIVE OF FATHERING: TRANSCENDING THE DEFICIT PARADIGM

As noted, this section will primarily focus on a clear conceptualisation of the deficit paradigm as it relates to fathering, as well as criticism directed towards it.

2.2.1 The deficit paradigm as precursor to involved fathering

This paradigm, according to Hawkins and Dollahite (1997:3), positions men as individuals who are "...willingly uninvolved with their children and unmotivated to change". They highlight several negative concepts and labels used when referring to such men, which include "...incompetent, unaware, underdeveloped femininity, fear of intimacy, distant, infantile,...emotionally constricted,...hypermasculine, ...narcissistic, abusive, oppressive". Men who partake in the lives of their children do so in an attempt to find their so-called "lost selves" based on their own absent fathers who left them 'wounded' (Corneau, 1991, cited in Hawkins & Dollahite, 1997:5). Other theorists also reinforce the idea of uninvolved fathers by referring to the under-representation of men in domestic labour activities (Hawkins & Dollahite, 1997:5). This is attributed to arguments about men's inability to support their wives more proactively in domestic tasks, despite an increase in men's household participation according to Pleck (cited in Hawkins & Dollahite, 1997:6). This idea was represented in the South African work of Smit (2000:83) and Maconachie (1992:115). They cited the incongruence between egalitarian household-task-allocation between men and women. Their studies underscored the fact that, despite a rise in the husband's participation in household activities, it was still the wife who performed the greater majority of the responsibilities pertaining to, amongst others, the socialisation of the children (Aldous et al., 1998:818). Men have been found to mainly engage in activities that promote a 'hosting' or 'playful' role characterised by a sense of guilt towards the child and competition with the spouse to spend more time with them, rather than that of caring parenting practices. Such fathers are typified as so-called "Disneyland Dads" (Cottle & Dixon, 2007:254; Pruett, 2000:116).

This thought finds solace in LaRossa's (1988:451) reference to the disparity that exists between the two elements of the institution of fatherhood, the so-called **culture of fatherhood** and the **conduct of fatherhood**. The first of these refers to the cultural beliefs, structures and norms that guide fathers' behaviour in contemporary

Western society, whereas the latter refers to the specific actions and activities fathers engage in (LaRossa, 1988:451). Although it has been argued that the culture of fatherhood has seen a progressive change during the past century, LaRossa (1988), Rotundo (1985:20) and Smit (2008:62) have cited instances that underscore the inability of fathering behaviour to mirror that of the culture of fatherhood in terms of change. Rotundo (1985:20), in his study on American fathers, highlights the fact that the changes that have occurred basically serve as reflection of how one would *like* men to act in the father role contrary to the actual state of events. He goes as far as to note that "... there are more *women* who *advocate* ...[this change] than there are *men* who *practice* it".

Such a slow progression may be embedded in **four beliefs that may sustain traditional views of the family** (Lamb, 1982). The **first** centres around the belief that children require two parents of different sexes, a thought emphasised in traditional definitions of family and marriage (cf. Murdock, 1968). **Secondly**, many may believe that responsibilities within the family should be divided between fathers and mothers. The husband should perform the instrumental functions, thus economic provider, whereas the wife serves as homemaker and caretaker of the children, performing the expressive function (Lamb, 1982). **Thirdly** it is argued that women are better equipped or suited for the parenting role and as such display higher levels of involvement with their children (Lamb, 1982:4). Palkovitz (1997:207) makes the assertion that there is no definite proof that either fathers or mothers are more involved in the lives of their children, due to the fact that research is currently progressing towards establishing a better comprehension of involved parenting. What is clear is that each of the parents, based on their gender, is differentially involved in the lives of their children, to varying degrees (Palkovitz, 1997:207). **Finally**, traditional conceptions of the family place emphasis on the importance of primary caretaking of young children by family members (Lamb, 1982:4). In adhering to these beliefs, members of society may view (and continue to view) men as "... uncaring, uninterested, uncommitted, and unwilling" (Hawkins & Dollahite, 1997:11) to partake in the lives of their children.

What follows is a discussion on **three phases** through which men have progressed over the last few centuries, and the specific roles they portrayed in each. The researcher will argue that these phases form part of the deficit paradigm if fathers were still to adhere to these early conceptualisations of fatherhood. The reason for this is twofold. Firstly, these phases afforded men (as fathers) with single functions in

each of the phases (although the preceding functions and phases still played a minimal role), not providing them with the opportunity to transcend such constraints. Secondly, these phases underscored notions of men being obsessed with patriarchal forms of control, whether it is in a moral, economic or gendered form, rather than an egalitarian approach to their family life. The first phase finds representation in the role of moral caregiver⁴, the second as economic provider (the breadwinner) and finally the reinforcement of traditional gender role ideologies and restrictions within the setting of the family. These ideas will be demarcated in detail under Point 2.2.2.

2.2.2 Phases of fatherhood associated with the deficit paradigm

The nature of men's participation in the role of father has progressed through several phases during the past centuries as noted in Chapter One. These include the following.

(a) *The father as moral caregiver*

As alluded to in the introductory chapter (page 2), this first phase positioned the father as a moral caregiver and teacher, focussed on the importance of prescribed values and norms inherent in Biblical scriptures (Lamb, 1995:20). The importance of a so-called "moral oversight and moral teaching" (Lamb, 1986:5) was emphasised insofar as children had to be literate to read and understand religious writings such as the Bible in order to uphold a Christian lifestyle. From the 1830s to the early 1900s, fathers were thus seen as "stern patriarch[s]" who provided the necessary framework within which a "... good moral character, rationality, self-control, and theological understanding" were conveyed (Brotherson & White, 2007:15; cf. Seidler, 2006:81). Although one may associate such a role with the importance of discipline and the realisation of morality in a pre-dominant secular world, such a primary positioning of men within a family setting may cement traditional conceptions and importance attributed to patriarchy, as noted. This idea finds representation in the work of Smit's (2000) discussion of the historical progression of fatherhood involvement amongst Caucasian men in the South African setting in the late 1800s and early 1900s.

During this period, the father occupied the role as patriarch within the family. His authoritarian position was legitimised by his family members, yet, historians such as

⁴ It should be noted that these roles do figure in the approach of generative fathering, but not as all-encompassing and dominant configurations. These roles and functions reciprocally complement other principles associated with different roles and functions of fathering. This amalgam of diverse roles will be discussed in detail under Point 2.3 on Generative Fathering.

Meyer (1940, cited in Smit, 2000:72) and Cronjé (1945, cited in Smit, 2000:72) thought of him as occupying a so-called "ascribed position of omnipotence", which came to the fore in the manner in which he interacted with his children. This father was seen as strict and in many respects inaccessible to his children, who respected him regardless (Smit, 2000:72). Nepgan (1938, cited in Smit, 2000:72), however, typified this individual as someone whose position was characterised greatly by the love for his family. Nepgan also cites the importance of religion and spirituality which was evident in the adoption of the Calvinist Protestant beliefs and centred in the principle of *solī Deo gloria*, which positioned religion as central part of both every aspect of family life, and the identity of a nation.

The foregoing historical background is reflected in Lamb's (1982:3) reference to the fact that children were, during the Victorian era, traditionally placed in the care of the father in the event of marital dissolution. Within this arrangement children were viewed as the 'possessions' of their father, who on his part could autonomously decide what the care of the children would entail until he remarried. The idea of awarding the mother custody only arose in the judicial decisions of the 1830s, which dominated most decisions in the decades and century to follow (Lamb, 1982:3).

(b) ***The father as traditional breadwinner (economic provider)***

The early fathering role of the White Afrikaner (1800s and 1900s) found further representation in this phase, insofar as he was regarded as the provider within his family, based on the evident gendered division of labour on the farms (Smit, 2000:73), a thought that has predominated much of the early academic discourse that positioned fathering involvement as mere economic provision (Chapman, 2004:55; Halford, 2006:386; Lamb, 1995:20; McBride, 1989:15; Pruett, 2000). The mother and daughters performed the domestic tasks, whereas the men were responsible for the more strenuous agricultural activities, such as stock-breeding (Keyter, 1940, cited in Smit, 2000:73). This trend started to recede in the 1960s and signalled a possible change in traditional gender roles within the family, with more married women entering the labour market. This occurred both because they sought additional fulfilment on the one hand, but also based on the rising cost of living, a factor acknowledged by their husbands (Smit, 2000:76). Smit (2000:76) cites statistics that indicated a rise from 19.7 percent of white married women actively involved in the labour market in 1944 to 61.4 percent in the early 1990s in South Africa.

Trends on international level saw an economic resurgence in the wake of World War II, leading to the restoration of the father's position as provider of his family (Rotundo, 1985:15). This revival, according to Rotundo, reinforced the "... opposing trends of father absence and father involvement ...", leading to several middle-class fathers lacking the necessary parental involvement with their children. An economic trend that did prompt a rise in father involvement was the increase in the number of women partaking in the labour market. This trend focussed on the manner in which changes taking place in the labour market were seen as the driving force behind the changing notions as to what constitutes fatherhood. It is argued that although dual-earner families may have made up the minority of households in the past, it is currently outnumbering any other type of family, including that of the traditional "husband-as-sole-breadwinner families" (Coltrane, 1995:266).

With more women emerging in the labour market, usually occupying newer positions in the service sector, and the cutbacks in the manufacturing sector leading to men losing their jobs, the employment of women has become all the less optional in contemporary society (Coltrane, 1995:266). The current uncertain international economic climate underscores this notion, based on the fact that both men and women in the working and middle class are necessitated to partake in the labour market to meet their families' basic survival needs. Additional income may in fact alleviate some of the growing marital discord and tension brought about by probable economic hardship and deprivation (Schoeman, 2008:1). Regardless of the nature of economic markets, women will, in all likelihood, remain in the labour market, committed to flourishing in both their work and family lives, experiencing an upward mobility into managerial and other professional positions (Benokraitis, 1996:394; Coltrane, 1995:266). Such employment may afford them greater opportunities to negotiate the division of household tasks in contrast to those women who are primary caretakers (Aldous, et al., 1998:810; Russell, 1983). They will no longer only be regarded as 'co-economic providers' in the family, but will start earning salaries equal to that of their husbands, leading to the latter experiencing increased pressure to undertake household and childcare responsibilities (Coltrane, 1995:266). Such responsibilities may include cooking, shopping and spending more time with the children (Coltrane, 1995:267).

But, despite the apparent acceptance husbands have displayed related to this change in traditional gender role ideologies in the families (Edwards et al., 1992:59;

Rotundo, 1985:19), several men still resist changing ideologies associated with more involved fathering and pluralistic views of masculinity (Smit, 2000:76). They thus lack the motivation to transcend the role of economic provider. A possible reason for maintaining this traditional image is based on work of amongst others Edwards et al. (1992:59), who cited the idea that the participation of women in the labour market and increased marital problems and subsequent higher divorce rates (Cherlin, 1979, cited in Edwards et al., 1992:59; Greenstein, 1990:657), are in fact causally related due to the so-called "work-family spillover model". This model purposes that work-related stress may manifest in the family setting and vice versa (Paden & Buehler, 1995:101).

Such stressors manifest in several dilemmas the dual-earner couple may face (Smit, 2001). These include, amongst others, the *career-compromise*, *husband-wife*, and *parenthood dilemmas*. Pertaining to the first of these, Smit (2001:605) argues that based on the dual involvement of both husband and wife in the labour market, "... reaching an equitable compromise regarding the value attached to each of the spouses' jobs ..." can be quite problematic. Cemented within the traditional patriarchal ideologies, women may be the ones sacrificing their opportunity to partake in the labour market, whereas men are not afforded the opportunity to spend more time with their children (cf. Knox & Schacht, 2008:354; Ritzer & Goodman, 2003:444). This finds further representation in the relationship between husband and wife, with the latter having to weather a possible apathetic and negative attitude courtesy of a husband who may not want her to partake in the labour market (Smit, 2001:606). Research in the United States has shown that such antagonism within the marital relationship, may impact negatively on the relationship with the children, with many husbands distancing themselves from primary caretaking responsibilities within the domestic sphere (Russell, 1986:38).

Whether it was this antagonism on the father's part or his increased involvement in the labour market that impeded his participation in domestic activities, a new trend came to the fore after the Great Depression. This trend sought to establish a stronger emotional commitment between fathers and their children. Such involvement was especially potent in the more "expressive" (Rotundo, 1985:17) relationship between fathers and their sons.

(c) ***The father as gender role model***

Following the Great Depression and the Second World War, a new conceptualisation on fathering came to the fore. This period saw the father retaining his position of economic provider, but with his role as gender role model serving the dominant function. Brotherson and White (2007:15) typified the father as being more “genial” and involved in the lives of his children, displaying a greater deal of affection and engaging in so-called fun activities. This function sought to advantage children of both sexes, but it was especially boys who benefited most (Lamb, 1986:6). Much of this is attributed to the fact that research has shown that sons who live with their fathers, are more likely to exude masculine behaviour than those living in father-absent homes (Richter, 2006:59; Pleck, 1997:67). This thought was also represented in the work of Lamb (1986:13), who noted that sons were more prone to identify with or display behaviour deemed ‘masculine’ if their relationship with their father was perceived as “good”. This thought was evident in research undertaken in the United States that presented the notion that the masculinity of the father was unimportant for insuring that the son conform to the sex-role standards prescribed by society, insofar as the “warmth” of the father was perceived to be the dominant factor at play (Lamb, 1986:13).

Taking the foregoing into account, one may be left to consider the manner in which fathers serve as gender role models for their children, and most predominantly for their sons and how this socialisation process impacts upon the perceptions and subsequent behaviour of the children. Proponents of *liberal feminism*, for example, argue that individuals (including parents) should acknowledge that both men and women are in fact the same in many respects (cf. Halford & Leonard, 2001:10), a thought that may in fact aid the redefinition of gender roles within the family milieu during the socialisation process. Taking a political stance, this approach attempts to expose distorted views pertaining to sex roles brought to the fore by prejudiced, discriminatory and stereotypical conceptualisations of ‘masculinity’ and ‘femininity’ within various sectors of life (Halford & Leonard, 2001:10), such as the family.

These theorists believe that men and women display many of the same capacities, amongst others, their capacity for rationality, a trait mainly associated with men rather than women as evident in the *cultural feminist* approach (cf. Halford & Leonard, 2001:11). The latter approach mainly highlights the way in which men and women differ from one another. Women are seen as more emotive and supportive,

whereas men are more dominant, aggressive and assertive (Ritzer & Goodman, 2003:444). Based on this, women are allocated "...fewer resources, less status, less authority and less control over their lives" (Halford & Leonard, 2001:11), exacerbated by what Halford and Leonard term 'sex role conditioning' and what Ann Oakley refers to as **gender role socialisation**⁵. The latter process sees parents treat boys and girls differently to insure that the children mirror the given stereotypes of what constitute 'masculinity' and 'femininity' (Halford & Leonard, 2001:11; Haralambos & Holborn, 2008:98).

The first of these include the process of manipulation, whereby a mother may for example dress her daughter in 'feminine' clothes, while her son may be dressed in more masculinity attire (Haralambos & Holborn, 2008:98). The second is canalisation, where boys and girls will either use or play with different objects to prepare them for the respective gender roles when they grow up (girls with dolls and boys with bricks or guns). The final two include verbal appellations which lead children to identify with a specific gender role ('You're a naughty boy'), as well as exposing these children to different activities (girls involved in domestic activities for example) (Haralambos & Holborn, 2008:98).

Delphy (2002:51) focussed in her work on hierarchical structures based on these gendered categories. She noted that these structures intertwine with gender categories constructed by the members of that society – an evident feature of the 'appropriateness'-paradigm (Delphy, 2002:56). This refers to the social construction of values which is deemed appropriate for either men or women to conform to, which lends itself to the creation of a gender hierarchy (Delphy, 2002:56). This notion is echoed in the work of amongst others, Sylvia Walby (1990) and Robert Connell (1987; 2005). Walby (1990:20) references the manner in which this hierarchy may result in a patriarchal system, i.e. interlocked structures that establish and maintain male dominance within society. This, according to her, manifests because of the structuring of paid employment, the domestic division of labour and the use of sexuality. Her work found representation in that of Connell (2005) who also outlines three sources of patriarchal power that may manifest in the manner in which the concept of 'masculinity' is defined. These include the structuring of power relations, with men serving as the dominant party, whereas women may occupy a subordinate position, despite their advancement within contemporary society. Secondly, a

⁵ See Haralambos & Holborn (2008:98) for an in-depth discussion on Oakley's 'Gender Role Socialisation'.

gendered division of labour may also predominate within specific households (Connell, 2005:74) where women may in fact be "...socialized and trained to fulfil a domestic role" (Bradley, 2007:45)⁶. Such a role may afford women with the "greater responsibility" related to the rearing of children, including the planning of activities related to the domestic sphere, as well as the socialisation and monitoring of the child's progress (Russell, 1986:31). Finally, as noted by Walby, Connell also refers to the role of cathexis, thus the manner in which sexual relationships manifest between individuals, whether these are coercive or consensual in nature.

Such a hierarchy finds itself embedded within the social construct of **hegemonic masculinity**, in other words, the "...most widely accepted form of being a man in any given society" (Bradley, 2007:47). Connell's (1987:183; 2005:77) discussion of hegemonic masculinity positions men as individuals who are thought to be 'macho', being very controlling, competitive, aggressive and tough. He states that "...hegemonic masculinity is always constructed in relation to various subordinated masculinities as well as in relation to women", these include more empathetic and "softer forms of heterosexual masculinity" (Connell, 1987:183), such as the so-called 'New Man', and homosexuality. The polar opposite of hegemonic masculinity is that of **emphasised femininity**, thus women who are typified as "...soft, submissive, sexually coy, ...concerned with domesticity..." (Bradley, 2007:48). In constructing these polar opposites, members of society may in fact establish a binary categorisation through which men and women are compelled to *act* and *be* a certain way, deprived of any possible pluralistic approach to their gender identities (Derrida, cited in Bradley, 2007:65). The *role theory approach* for example emphasises this manner in which gender roles are conceptualised (Lewis, 1992:4). It focuses on the importance of ideology pertaining to the family, underlining the cultural expectations of the roles to be performed by each member of a family (whether in the family or the workplace). Newman (1999:213) underscores these expectations for men and women when he states:

[g]ender ideology is what distinguishes the man who believes that breadwinning is "men's work" and housework is "women's work" from the man who believes that "being male" means sharing bread winning and cooperating with household chores.

⁶ As communicated in sub-section 2.2.2(b).

Delphy (2002:51) argues that, with the formulation of the concept 'gender', several possibilities arose. Two of these include differences attributed to the two sexes included into one concept, and also making provision for the importance of a hierarchy that is brought to the fore based on the differences between men and women. According to her, many individuals continue to equate gender with sex, thus adopting a thesis that a natural dichotomy determines the sexual dichotomy of gender – sex being the 'container' and gender the 'content' (Delphy, 2002:52). Based on this, arguments stating that sex precedes gender logically and chronologically, and in turn basically explains it as well, find solace in two popularly held ideologies (Delphy, 2002:52). These include, firstly that the contrasting procreation functions of men and women imply a division of labour between the two. Yet such a theory, according to Delphy, is subject to criticism insofar as it fails to provide sufficient explanations regarding the nature and reasons for such a division, as well as why such a division should be made applicable to all sectors of life. Secondly, she also questions the reasons as to why physical traits based on biology, should lead to contrasting classifications between men and women, and why sex is more prominent than other overtly visible physical traits.

The researcher wholeheartedly agrees with these assertions, as well as the fact that Delphy (2002:53) believes that it may in fact be gender that precedes sex, rather than the other way around. She justifies this by stating that "...sex itself simply marks a social division; that it serves to allow social recognition and identification of those who are dominants and those who are dominated."

Although each of these phases incorporates principles of great importance pertaining to the socialisation of the child, each is far too exclusive rather than inclusive of other possible intervening variables. Each of the phases retained components of its predecessor, but overshadowed these rather than creating a synergy of pluralistic principles. Additional criticism has also been directed towards the work of proponents of the deficit paradigm.

2.2.3 Critique against the deficit paradigm

Based on the foregoing conceptualisation of the 'deficit paradigm', including the discussion of the three developmental phases of fatherhood, attention will now be given to **seven points of criticism** directed towards the deficit paradigm, courtesy of Hawkins and Dollahite (1997).

(a) ***Overemphasising the inadequacies of fathers***

The deficit paradigm, as evidenced in the previous section, overzealously reinforces the idea that fathers are incapable of playing a primary role in the lives of their children, based on an overemphasis on their inadequacies (Hawkins & Dollahite, 1997:7). This is done in **seven** ways. **Firstly**, it is quite evident that the approach is directed towards a **cultural critique of macro-level structures** (cf. LaRossa, 1988). Although Hawkins and Dollahite (1997:9) regard focus on these structures and related problems as laudable, they do however believe that little attention is given to the possibility and the manner in which *personal transformation*, on the part of the father, may be established within the social institution of the family. These so-called “macro-level efforts” may help re-configure the current culture of fatherhood to strengthen the familial and marital ties of fathers, but the manner in which fathers will undertake this personal endeavour, has yet to be addressed by this approach (Hawkins & Dollahite, 1997:9). This is emphasised in the reference to the “diminishing family culture”-position taken by the role-inadequacy perspective, which ascribes an increase in divorce statistics, amongst others, to philosophies related to hedonism and individualism (Hawkins & Dollahite, 1997:9).

(b) ***The deficit paradigm as non-developmental***

Secondly, the role-inadequacy perspective is regarded as non-developmental in nature (Hawkins & Dollahite, 1997:9). Much of the emphasis is placed on the re-scripting of fathering roles within the larger society, without taking the personal development and change of fathers into account (Hawkins & Dollahite, 1997:9). As such, the social adaptability of human beings (Lamb, 1982:2) is ignored, leading to what Lamb refers to as an “unquestioned acceptance” of the traditional institution of the family and its subsequent gendered role allocation. It requires men to adapt to external social and cultural forces, rather than focussing on the manner in which these men create and develop internal transitions towards involved fathering. In focussing on these internal processes that fathers go through, the researcher wishes to emphasise the manner in which transformations within the family, thus the conduct of fatherhood, may in fact impact upon external forces of the ‘culture of fatherhood’, rather than *vice versa* (cf. LaRossa, 1988).

In their study of the developmental dimension of fathering, Hawkins and Dollahite (1997) referenced the work of Erik H. Erikson (1950) on the development of men across their life cycle. In his use of the concept *generativity*⁷, others such as Hawkins et al. (1993, cited in Hawkins & Dollahite, 1997:10) have argued that this dimension of fathering is beneficial to both the child and the father's "growth and well-being". The care provided to the child should not be regarded as an enforcement of cultural expectations, but rather a willing execution on the father's part. In this regard, the assertion is made that

[a]s adult development proceeds, we believe that most fathers come to sense that the quality of their fathering is central to how good a person they are and how happy they, their wives, and their children will be. For most men, ...no social playwright is needed to script the contemporary paternal role; good fathering can come from a set of developmental, relational, and ethical motives within men (Hawkins & Dollahite, 1997:10).

(c) ***Misconstruing the motives of fathers***

Thirdly, the role-inadequacy perspective is seen as misconstruing the motives and desires of fathers (Hawkins & Dollahite, 1997:11). It is plausible to accept that not all fathers are as committed to their role as carer across their lifespan, but the focus of this perspective on fathers as flawed parents, is quite exaggerated. Proponents of the deficit paradigm adapt a set of "attitudinal" '**uns**' in referring to the roles of fathers in the lives of their children, ranging from **uncaring** and **uninterested** to **uncommitted** and **unwilling**. The opposite of this argument has been proven by several authors who noted that many men wholeheartedly acknowledge the importance of their involvement in the lives of their children (Barclay & Lupton, 1999; Brotherson, 2007a; Christiansen & Stueve, 2007; Marsiglio, 1995a; Palm, 2007; Pruett, 2000).

(d) ***The deficit paradigm as inhibitor of change***

Fourthly, by continuously focussing on the deficiencies of men as fathers, it is argued that such an approach may, in all likelihood, inhibit positive change in fathering roles based on the reciprocation in the form of apprehension and resistance

⁷The meaning and underlying principles, components, categories and dimensions of generative fathering will be discussed in detail under Point 2.3.

on the father's part (Doherty, 1991, cited in Hawkins & Dollahite, 1997:12). This is attributed to the fact that this "...harsh glare of role deficiency may prompt men to retreat into the shadows of resentment, rather than illuminate other paths of personal growth" (Hawkins & Dollahite, 1997:12). In addition to this, maternal *gatekeeping* may arise, which basically sees the wife and mother as central figure in the socialisation of the child. This may be attributed to the fact that the father's participation in domestic activities, according to the gender-ideology theory, may in fact be influenced, although to a lesser extent, by the wife's beliefs (Aldous et al., 1998:811) and her attitude towards the father (Russell, 1986:38). This was evident in the research of Barclay and Lupton (1999) undertaken in Australia, who indicated that mothers, in the first three to four weeks after the birth of their children, might be apprehensive about their husbands' involvement with the baby. It is during this time that the father opts to put his own needs "on hold" until the mother's feelings subside. If this behaviour were to be interpreted in a negative manner by the father, resulting in a negative relationship with the mother, he may withdraw from a relationship with the child (Doherty et al., 1998:286). For many men, marriage and parenting form part of a "package deal" (Furstenberg & Cherlin, 1991, cited in Doherty et al., 1998:286). Proponents of the deficit paradigm thus seek to emphasise the idea that "...a woman is a mother all of her life, but a man is a father if he has a wife. ...if he ...does not get along with her, he may be present as a father, but the quality of the relationship with his children is apt to suffer" (Doherty et al., 1998:286).

(e) ***An inadequate conceptualisation of the concept 'care'***

In the **fifth** place, it is argued that the deficit paradigm does not adequately conceptualise the concept of 'care' (Hawkins & Dollahite, 1997:13). In applying the concept of care to the parenting practices of men, it is assumed that a comparison should be drawn between the behaviour of mothers and fathers. These theorists do not take the unique and novel capabilities both sexes bring to their parenting styles into account, leading theorists to argue that "parenting scripts" should be rewritten in order for fathers to parent like mothers (Garbarino, 1993, cited in Hawkins & Dollahite, 1997:13). Regardless of the research that has indicated that both mothers and fathers are more involved in the lives of their children when the children are younger (Aldous, et al., 1998:811), it has been noted that differences exist in parenting techniques that men and women may bring to the table. These include, amongst others, the fact that mothers are more prone to provide care in playing with the child being more "on the job", displaying more sensitivity towards the child and

higher levels of confidence in their parenting roles (Lamb, 1986:11). In contrast to this, based on research Lamb undertook in the United States, he found that fathers may be more prone to act as “playmates” for their children, regarding their interaction with their child as “doing time”, a role not that attractive to them (LaRossa, 1988:454). This even defers their parenting responsibilities to their wives based on their lower levels of confidence as parents. Such a view positions men as *technically present, but functionally absent* fathers (LaRossa, 1988:454). As counterargument, Pruett (1993:46) believes that fathers should not be forced to ‘mother’, basically because the “...child doesn’t expect it, and the father can’t do it. This lesson is his first on the journey to complete himself as a man-now-father: Fathering is not mothering any more than mothering is ever fathering”.

(f) ***A lack of focus on the diversity of fathering***

A **sixth** point of critique underlines the lack of the deficit paradigm to fully capture the diversified forms of fathering brought to the fore by amongst others, divorce, stepfamilies and gay fathering, opting to rather present a homogeneous view of fatherhood, and not taking into account the unique features of each. Based on the problem statement and research questions in Chapter One, a comprehensive discussion on gay fathering will be provided for in Chapter Three. Pertaining to the impact of divorce and formation of stepfamilies, a short overview of the nature of each will be communicated in this section. This will be done to underscore the heterogeneous factors that impact on divorced fathers and stepfathers.

Divorce, for example, according to Pruett (2000:101), serves as one of the single most challenging factors to establish involved fathering, a process he typifies as a so-called ‘fatherneed’. As evident from the discussion thus far, the quality of a marital relationship correlates with the quality of the parent-child relationship, making it all the more difficult for especially fathers to sustain their relationship with their children after divorce (Pruett, 2000:103). Several consequences arise during and after divorce. These include emotional and psychological problems, financial changes and custody issues (Benokraitis, 1996:462; Cottle & Dixon, 2007). In terms of the impact of divorce on the parents, emotionally and psychologically, research in the United States has shown that these individuals may experience stigmatisation from their family, friends or co-workers, exclusion from social networks and find it difficult to adequately conceptualise their role as parent after divorce (Benokraitis, 1996:462; Pruett, 2000:104).

Stepfamilies, defined by Cherlin (1978, cited in Marsiglio, 2004b:22) as an 'incomplete institution', has seen a definite increase in the past few decades, because of, amongst others, the birth of children out of wedlock and increased divorce rates (Marsiglio, 1995c:211). In terms of stepfathers, Marsiglio (2004b:22) argues that a clear conceptualisation of the role of men in the lives of other men's children might be troublesome, based on the fact that the "...bonds with the stepchildren are constructed outside the normative model of biological fatherhood and shared DNA". Benokraitis (1996) cites factors that may inhibit the creation of a positive family milieu. These centre around, amongst others, the complex nature of such families, insofar as several new relationships and roles are established come to the fore, including stepparents, stepsiblings and half-siblings. Such families may experience higher levels of stress due to factors such as complexity and the ambiguity in terms of roles. These notions were evident in the work of Santrock et al. (1988:145) who argued that stepfathers are more inclined to experience ambiguity in terms of the role that they will have to portray in their new families. This may be exacerbated by their lack of knowledge concerning the amount of authority they may exert, tension about leaving their own biological children from their previous marriage, and confusion concerning the "appropriate affectionate interaction" with their stepchildren, especially the stepdaughters (Santrock et al., 1988:146).

As such, it should be evident that the configurations fathering takes on, is not as homogeneous as one would assume. Proponents of the deficit paradigm should thus take due care not to make generalisations about *all* fathers being uninvolved. Different contexts bring different complexities and challenges to the fore, which may necessitate fathers to make decisions that, in some instances, may be detrimental to both him and his child in terms of their relationship.

(g) ***An overemphasis on the concept 'role'***

Finally, criticism is also directed towards the deficit paradigm, in terms of its overemphasis of the concept *role* in its focus on fatherhood. Dollahite et al. (1997a) recommend the use of the term **fatherwork** when engaging in discussions on father involvement. This is attributed to the fact that the metaphor of *role* creates a threefold limited image of fathering. **Firstly**, it describes fathering as *passive*, because the approach assumes that the "father's lines are already culturally scripted". **Secondly**, it *narrows* the parameters of fathering, due to the fact that it deems fathering as a

mere fraction of a man's experiences. **Thirdly**, it positions fathering as a *distinct* role, insofar as it places the different roles of men in separate categories without considering the manner in which these roles intertwine and are interdependent (Hawkins & Dollahite, 1997:15).

Based on the foregoing discussion of the various phases of fathering and the criticism directed towards it, it should seem clear that a multitude of conceptualisations related to the position of men within families, exists. This progression signals the emergence of parenting models in which men may occupy a more central role as involved fathers in the lives of their children. A number of factors, many of which have been alluded to in the preceding pages, has reinforced and intensified both this notion and subsequent movement towards involved fathering.

2.2.4 Changing conceptualisations: Motivating factors for becoming an involved father

It should be noted that these antecedents may be expected to differ, based on different formations increased fathering involvement may take. These include fathers who occupy a full-time occupational position and engage with the children after work or over weekends, or when both parents are employed and share in the childrearing responsibilities (Russell, 1986:32). In summary then, based on research of Radin (1982) and Russell (1986), **five factors that have encouraged increased father involvement** have been presented.

The **first** two of these explanations centre around the economic needs of the family, where the father is either unable to gain employment or **secondly**, where the couple may opt to have both parties involved in the labour market, based on the wife's earning capacity being essential or greater than that of her husband (Brooks & Gilbert, 1995:271; Russell, 1983:77; Russell, 1986:32). Such an occurrence may either be met with apathy or support on the part of the husband. A **third** antecedent highlights both the capacity and desire of the mother to partake in the labour market (cf. Brotherson & White, 2007:15; LaRossa, 1988:452; Radin, 1982:198; Russell, 1986:38), whereas the **fourth** explanation points to beliefs that support egalitarian approaches to parenting, rather than a 'gendered'-specific approach (Russell, 1986:33). Russell (1983:59,77) noted that in cases where the family was forced to change their lifestyles, mothers were seen to be more influential in the negotiation of

roles to be occupied and, as such, experienced a greater deal of marital equality through consensus and reciprocal support from her husband.

The role of fathers, on the other hand, was seen to be more dominant where the change in the couple's parenting practices was a matter of choice, which in the research of Radin (1982:198), was seen as the predominant position. Of interest here is the fact that the reason for the continuance of this so-called "non-traditional"-lifestyle was the opposite of the initial reason of adopting it, thus freedom of choice and increased personal and familial fulfilment, rather than, for example, economic necessity (Russell, 1983:81). In the **fifth** place, several parents cited the importance of the institution of family, rather than alternative child care facilities to care for the child. This may be magnified based on a greater sense of guilt experienced by parents for not portraying a more primary role in the life of their children, or where the economic position or social support system (e.g. absence of help from relatives) may necessitate it (Russell, 1983:79; Smit, 2001:607).

But, regardless of the personal growth of mothers and fathers, it is the impact of parental practices, whether maternal or paternal, that needs to be investigated to have us better comprehend, reinforce, alter or eradicate principles that negate the well-being of the child. At the core of such an investigation, is what Marsiglio (1995b:83) refers to as **univocal reciprocity**, a concept the researcher wishes to position as possible **sixth** factor that has lead to increased fathering involvement. Univocal reciprocity is defined as a "...moral norm than encourages individuals to engage in social exchanges with others without expecting to receive direct or immediate reciprocation." Although traditionally encouraged and valued in the biological parent-child relationship, several issues ranging from the importance of individualism rather than a collective familial stance, changing social conceptions of gender roles and the noted diversification in family formations, made the commitment to the norm all the more tenuous (Marsiglio, 1995b:83).

Despite the difficulty to fully realise this norm in practice, several fathers have opted to create (or have expressed the desire to do so) a more nurturing, selfless and supportive relationship with their children. This, according to the researcher, serves as **seventh** factor for increased fathering involvement, thus, the **need of the father to become involved**. One respondent, in a study undertaken by Gerson (1993, quoted in Marsiglio, 1995b:84), emphasised this notion in the following statement:

You feel like you're gifted by having a child, taking care of somebody and being responsible for their growth and development. It was just something I looked forward to ...someone being dependent on me, someone to share life with, to take care of – that was my need, too.

To fully realise increased (and meaningful) fathering involvement, univocal reciprocation may still be realised in the form of **generative fathering**, which incorporates and develops the basic premise of selflessness, care for others and “the need to be needed” (cf. Marsiglio, 1995b:84) across generations.

2.3 **GENERATIVE FATHERING: A POSSIBLE SOCIAL RECONSTRUCTION OF FATHERING PRACTICES?**

This section will primarily deal with the concept of *generativity*, the manner in which it relates to fathering, its specific principles and the manner in which such an approach may impact upon the parenting practices of fathers.

2.3.1 **The origin of the concept *generativity*: The work of Erik H. Erikson**

The origin of the concept *generativity*, as it relates to fatherhood, is embedded in the work of Erik H. Erikson's **lifespan model of psychosocial development**. In describing the sequence of **eight psychosocial stages** through which individuals progress, Erikson (1997:55) outlines three strengths that are imperative during the socialisation of a child. These include *hope*, which arises during the infancy phase of a child's development, *fidelity* during adolescence and *care* (of which *generativity* is the most potent principle) during adulthood. These concepts, according to Erikson, provide the opportunities for a child to enter the generational cycle and the adult to conclude it.

Before a complete demarcation of the nature of generative fathering, a short, yet coherent overview of Erikson's lifespan model of psychosocial development will be provided. Two reasons are provided for this discussion. Firstly, to explain the manner in which Erikson (1984) originated and included the concept of *generativity* in his work on the life-cycle of individuals. Secondly, the researcher does not only want to explain the origin of *generativity*, but also wishes to emphasise the importance of all the preceding stages that subsequently provide the foundation for the realisation of the principles associated with *generativity*. In doing this, the reader may come to

realise how all these stages influenced men during their own socialisation, to either embrace or discard *generativity* in their positions as fathers. During each of the stages, individuals are presented with dichotomies of psychosocial tasks they have to perform (Erikson, 1984, 1997; Smit, 2004:105). The work of Erikson will be quoted extensively.

As illustrated in Figure 1, these eight stages include infancy, *early childhood*, *the play age*, *the school age*, *adolescence*, *young adulthood*, *adulthood* and *old age*. Each of these stages, as noted, encompasses a specific value deemed as important at that stage of the individual's life. To attain and master this value, a set of contrasting elements and tensions are presented with which the individual should orientate himself in order for him to decide to either embrace or transcend the element (Erikson, 1997:106).

Figure 1: Erik H. Erikson's lifespan model of psychosocial development

Old Age	VIII								Integrity vs. Despair
Adulthood	VII							Generativity vs. Stagnation	
Young Adulthood	VI						Intimacy vs. Isolation		
Adolescence	V					Identity vs. Identity Confusion			
School Age	IV				Industry vs. Inferiority				
Play Age	III			Initiative vs. Guilt					
Early Adulthood	II		Autonomy vs. Shame, Doubt						
Infancy	I	Basic Trust vs. Basic Mistrust							

Source: Adapted from Erikson (1997:56-57)

During the **infancy stage, stage one**, the individual is confronted with the elements of *basic mistrust versus trust*. Here, according to Erikson (1984:222), the first basic demonstration of trust between adult and child manifests in "...the ease of his feeding, the depth of his sleep, the relaxation of his bowels [thus] ...a feeling of familiarity, of having coincided with a feeling of inner goodness". The parental presence, predominantly referred to as the mother, establishes a synergy between both an inner certainty and external predictability. The child is able to let the mother out of his or her sight, due to the fact that he or she knows that the mother will return in due time (Erikson, 1984:222). In doing this, a confident 'trust' is established between parent and child who foster the strength of "hope" that may figure in the later stages of the individual's life cycle (Snarey, 1993:16).

This leads to the **second stage**, that of **early childhood**. During this stage, where the child is on average about two years of age, a great deal of *wilfulness, willpower* and *free will* arises, due to the fact that the child has to navigate his or her way towards either being more *autonomous* or filled with *shame* and *doubt* (Snarey, 1993:16). This involves the child's willingness and determination to demonstrate that he or she is able to "stand on his [or her] own feet" (Erikson, 1984:226) with both freedom of choice and self-restraint portraying a role, a stance typified as being both "...playful but firm and self-satisfying" (Erikson, 1997:107). Although such a stage fosters the development of the *will* of the child, the necessary constraints and limits should be set by parents to avoid the child experiencing *shame*, if he or she were to falter in specific actions they struggle with at such a young age. The father's role is to protect his child from "...overwhelming defeat and promote their freedom of self-expression" which may curtail feelings of insurmountable doubt and concern with shame during their adulthood (Snarey, 1993:16).

The **play stage, thirdly**, positions the distinction between the elements of *initiative versus guilt*. During this stage, the child is provided with the opportunity to move into a new direction, a so-called "...new miracle of vigorous unfolding, which constitutes a new hope and a new responsibility for all" (Erikson, 1984:229). This stage provides the child, based on both intellectual and physical maturation, with the opportunity to explore a "new world" outside the parameters of the family, by for example asking questions about the way certain things work (Snarey, 1993:16). Yet, if they were to fail in their endeavour to successfully execute their task or are reprimanded by their superiors for their actions, a great sense of inadequacy and guilt may arise (Erikson, 1997:108). A supportive, rather than overly critical father may help the child to

experience a sense of purpose (Snarey, 1993:16). In addition, it is, during this stage that the sense of playfulness is established and grounded in the human psyche, his sense of humour and ability to laugh at himself and others (Erikson, 1997:77).

The **fourth stage**, the **school age**, presents the child with new regulations, rules and roles that govern his behaviour. Before he enters the social life, he has to forego his prior freedoms and wishes and enter the institution of the school. Here his “exuberant imagination is tamed and harnessed to the laws of impersonal things” (Erikson, 1984:232). It is during this stage that the importance of industry and competence arises, which are deemed imperative qualities in a competitive western milieu (Erikson, 1997:109). Here he is taught to produce certain things, whether it is learning how to write or paint. This is because he gradually comes to realise that his life will require him to move outside the parameters of the “womb of his family” (Erikson, 1984:233) into a world in which skills and tasks are dominant. Depending on one’s capacity and ability to foster original and unique ideas thereof, the child can be labelled incompetent, and subsequently experience a great deal of inferiority (Erikson, 1984:233).

The two stages that follow the school age are closely interrelated. **Stage five, adolescence**, sees the individuals entering the stage of youth, where they are

primarily concerned with what they appear to be in the eyes of others as compared with what they feel they are, and with the question of how to connect the roles and skills cultivated earlier with the occupational prototypes of the day (Erikson, 1984:235).

This stage concerns itself with the individual attempting to understand who he or she is, thus, discover their *identity*, or who others may think they are or are trying to be (Erikson, 1997:110). In doing this, they are expected to occupy certain adult roles and choose a specific religious, political and moral identity which will direct their value system (Snarey, 1993:17). In achieving this, they are able to establish an “inner coherence” and subsequently the realisation of the strength of fidelity. Achieving this may be quite troublesome for some individuals, leading them to experience *identity confusion*, which makes the individual a “riddle” to both himself and others (Erikson, 1984). **Stage six, young adulthood**, however positions the individual in either an *intimate* or *isolated* relationship, or primarily focuses on the importance of finding *love* (Erikson, 1997:110). Finding intimacy and love is

described as being fulfilling, gratifying, delightful, wonderful and “vulnerably precious” by Erikson. Here the individual attempts to fuse his established identity with others, he “... is ready for intimacy, that is, the capacity to commit himself to concrete affiliations and partnerships and to develop the ethical strength to abide by such commitments, even though they may call for significant sacrifices and compromises” (Erikson, 1984:237). In contemporary western society, such relationships may take the form of marriage or other forms of commitment (Snarey, 1993:18). On the other side of the spectrum, Erikson argues that individuals may be deprived of such an intimate relationship, leaving them with a sense of deprivation and loneliness.

It should seem quite evident that the foregoing stages imbed themselves within this, the **seventh stage**, insofar as the earlier reference to the “ease” of the baby’s feeding, the development of an identity and intimate relationship with others, will figure greatly during this stage, the stage being **adulthood**. Here a polarisation is established between *generativity* and *stagnation*. Generativity, according to Erikson (1984:240), concerns itself with “...establishing and guiding the next generation ...[which is] meant to include ...more popular synonyms [such] as *productivity* and *creativity*, which, however, cannot replace it”. A sense of selflessness, thus the importance of taking care of and accepting responsibility for others, are underlined. Several individuals do not subscribe to the importance of this value and experience a so-called *stagnation*. Herein, the importance of self-concern and self-love predominate the cognition of the individuals, who experience a “retardation” or “personal impoverishment” based on their lack to ascribe to generativity (Erikson, 1984:240). Erikson attributes such views to, amongst others, an excessive emphasis on autonomy and self-love during childhood and adolescence, as well as a lack of faith in the importance of a next generation to care for⁸.

The essence of the **final stage, old age**, is thoughtfully articulated in the words of Erikson (1984:241) who states:

Only in him who in some way has taken care of things and people and has adapted himself to the triumphs and disappointments adherent to being, the originator of others or the generator of products and ideas – only in him will gradually ripen the fruit of these seven stages.

⁸ Also refer to Point 2.2 on the role of the role-inadequacy perspective (deficit paradigm) for additional reasons.

The possessor of the value of *integrity*, is one who is able to acknowledge the gift of life, as well as the fact that one is afforded but one life cycle. The integrity becomes the so-called "...patrimony of his soul, the seal of his moral paternity of himself" (Erikson, 1984:242). The individual looks back on his life with a sense of either pride, based on the integrity with which he lead it, or *despair*, acknowledging that there is not a second opportunity to have another life, "...to try out alternate roads to integrity".

Based on the foregoing discussion of the life-cycles individuals progress through, the researcher will now consider the manner in which fathers may be afforded the opportunity to master this value of *integrity*, by adhering to the principles associated with *generativity*.

2.3.2 ***Generativity as related to fathering***

Lamb (1986:31) argues that, despite the fact that traditional conceptions of fatherhood have provided men with limited opportunities to partake in the socialisation of their children, they still have an imperative role to play in this regard. This thought finds solace in the work of Pruett (2000:1) who referenced studies undertaken amongst couples between 1981 and 1997. These studies underscored Lamb's argument insofar as it reported on the way in which co-parenting as priority within contemporary families, had moved from the eleventh priority to the second during this period in the United States.

This shift has been documented in several other studies (Eggebeen & Knoester, 2001:381; Garbarino, 1993:53; Lamb, 1986; Pleck, 1997:66; Pruett, 1993:46; Russell, 1986:29). Much of the increased levels of fathering involvement have been ascribed to the focus on the concept of 'new fatherhood', which defines fathers as more "progressive men" (Garbarino, 1993:53) who provide more nurturing, active and direct care in rearing their children (Lamb, 1986:4).

Although focus has predominantly only been placed on this role for fathers during the last few decades, the term originated during its so-called 'first wave' in the 1920s, but was exclusively used to refer to those men in the middle socio-economic classes, in amongst others, the United States (Griswold, 1993, cited in Smit, 2008:56). The second wave of 'new fatherhood' in the mid-1970s and early 1980s, brought a juxtaposed position to the forefront, insofar as emphasis was still placed on the role

of men as providers, although not necessarily as the sole providers. An additional focus was also directed towards fathers' increased competence as it related to exerting and maintaining more nurturing, and involved interaction with their children (Smit, 2008:56). Taking the work of Erikson (1984; 1997) into account, one can easily establish a direct link between the concepts *generativity* and 'new fatherhood' based on the fact that both encourage fathering that transcends mere economic provision embedded within a patriarchal mode of operation.

Emphasis will now be placed on the **types of generativity** to be mastered by fathers.

(a) ***The types of generativity***

Snarey (1993:1) believes 'generative' fathers to be

[m]en who contribute to and renew the ongoing cycle of the generations through the *care* they provide as birth fathers (*biological generativity*), childrearing fathers (*paternal generativity*), and cultural fathers (*societal generativity*). It is also about the family members with whom fathers' lives are complexly nested: fathers' own fathers and mothers, their wives, embryos and infants, daughters and sons⁹.

(i) ***Biological generativity***

Biological generativity refers to "...the begetting, bearing, and nursing' of the offspring" (Kotre, 1984, quoted in Snarey, 1993:20). This type of *generativity* is associated with a sense of pride and achievement based on the linkage established between two generations. Biological generativity imbeds itself within the first stage of Erikson's (1984; 1997) developmental stages which concerns itself with the creation of a higher sense of trust over mistrust (Snarey, 1993:21). A direct threat to biological generativity, is infertility. Regardless of the couple's attempts to achieve pregnancy they somehow fall "behind schedule" (Snarey, 1993:21) in their inability to have children. Infertility also indirectly impacts on *parental generativity* as evidenced in the research of Atkinson and Blackwelder (1993:984). These researchers found that society's changing views on fathering involvement are directly correlated with the rise and fall in infertility rates. In the event of higher fertility rates, fathers are mostly

⁹ Emphasis added.

associated with being sole providers rather than nurturers, whereas a decrease in fertility rates presupposes a nurturing role for the father, rather than economic provider (Atkinson & Blackwelder, 1993:984). These authors posit fertility as an intervening variable between the economic conditions experienced, and the manner in which fathering will be defined.

In addition to biological *generativity*, the father should also master the principles associated with **parental generativity**.

(ii) *Parental generativity*

Parental generativity involves stages two (autonomy creation), three (realisation of initiative), four (socialisation in industry) and five (identity formulation) of Erikson's typology (Snarey, 1993:21). Childrearing activities are central to the activities of the father, and he should be able to fully comprehend and realise a sense of selflessness, ethical responsibility and sacrifice in his endeavour to 'care' for his children. It obligates the father to this so-called "irreversible commitment" which has him asking the question "Am I a good parent?" (Everett, 1977, quoted in Snarey, 1993:22) during those instances where he is confronted with challenges such as a son struggling with his perceived sense of inferiority, or a daughter's risk of identity confusion (cf. Erikson, 1984, 1997; Snarey, 1993:22). The concept of **fatherwork**¹⁰ should be highlighted here. Using this concept to discuss fathering, Dollahite et al. (1997a:19) believe that fathers are in fact "...called' by the next generation to meet their needs and labor their well-being". As such, fathers are obligated to forego their non-involvement, convenience and comfort to "...directly experience the moral claims of their children and [be] personally obligated" (Snarey, 1993:357) towards them. In fully realising this obligation, it is recommended that fathers ascribe to the metaphor of 'work', rather than that of 'role' associated with fathering practices (Dollahite et al., 1997a:20).

Reasons for this is attributed to the fact that *fatherhood*, as is evident in the work of LaRossa (1988), denotes prescribed cultural and social expectations of what fathers *should* do in society, rather than what *is* done and how it impacts on their relationship with their children (cf. Dollahite et al., 1997a:21). In ascribing to the metaphor of 'work', the authors assign the images of one's "...life's work,' or 'mission,' or 'labor of love'", as well as a "joyous labor" to fathering, rather than viewing fatherhood as a

¹⁰ This concept was alluded to under Point 2.2.3.

mere role (Bellah et al., 1985, cited in Dollahite et al., 1997a:21). The use of the concept fatherwork heralds **three advantages**. The **first** of these reconnects the seemingly polar opposite terms *family* and *labour* for both parents involved in either the 'private' or 'public spheres' of life (Dollahite et al., 1997a:21). The deficit paradigm has falsely distinguished between these two spheres, placing women in the 'private sphere', thus the family, where they would occupy the roles of wife, mother, daughter, sister or grandmother (Lupton & Barclay, 1997:149; Moen, 1992:129). It was originally assumed that this positioning would fully capture "their sense of self" and the way in which they would conduct their daily lives. Men on the other hand, were seen to occupy the 'public sphere' where their paid employment would provide a so-called "significant definition of the self" (Lupton & Barclay, 1997:149). Lupton and Barclay (1997:150) argue that this distinction is not as rigid as one may have been lead to believe. They attribute their notion to the fact that family life and parenting is by no means separate from the outside world (Lupton & Barclay, 1997:150). Examples of such interplay between the two spheres include the constant negotiation of responsibilities and time management between the two spheres by both parents, as well as the manner in which judicial institutions and the social welfare system intervene in dysfunctional families (Lupton & Barclay, 1997:150).

Although the first advantage discourages the polarisation of the public and private spheres, proponents of the **second advantage** of using the metaphor of *work* argue that by conceptualising fathering as work, fathering is positioned in a context familiar to men (Dollahite et al., 1997a:22). Although fathers have traditionally been associated with the role of economic provider, Dollahite et al. (1997a:22) believe that fathers should continue with their provision in economic terms, but also acknowledge the claims of the current generation and work towards the realisation of the generations to follow concerning several components of their lives. Paid employment and fatherwork are seen to be similar in terms of their necessity, intensity and creativity, as well as proactive dimensions. Fatherwork does however differ from paid employment insofar as it is more people orientated, not limited by specific time constraints, and ethical in nature based on the call to provide and care for the members of one's family (Dollahite et al., 1997a:22).

The **third advantage** ascribes a number of so-called "transformative images" to fathering that are absent in the usage of the metaphor of fathering as a 'role.' Dollahite et al. (1997a:23) note that these images view fathering as a transformative process constantly subject to reinterpretation and redefinition in an endeavour to

strengthen fathers. This view evokes several images including perseverance, education, skills training, improvement, adapting to changing circumstances, problem solving, commitment and loyalty (Dollahite et al., 1997a:23).

(iii) *Societal generativity*

The final form of generativity, *societal generativity*, provides men with the opportunity to transcend the parameters of their familial setting, and have them "...caring for other younger *adults*: serving as mentor, providing leadership, and generally contributing to the strength and continuity of subsequent generations" (Snarey, 1993:22). To serve as leader both within and outside the context of the family, Galbraith and Wall (2007:356) ascribe to Robert Greenleaf's work on *servant leadership*, which according to them, has impacted greatly on leadership styles in organisations and may per implication, to the same in the context of generativity. Greenleaf (1977, quoted in Galbraith & Wall, 2007:356) describes a servant leader as

...[a] servant first ...It begins with the natural feeling that one wants to serve, to serve *first*. Then conscious choice brings one to aspire to lead ...The difference manifests itself in the care taken by the servant – first to make sure that other people's highest-priority needs are being served.

Quite evident from this description is the fact that a servant leader is a person who displays a *willingness* to voluntarily be of service to others, followed by a conscious decision to lead (Galbraith & Wall, 2007:357). Such a leader gains the respect, admiration and love of those he leads, based on his genuine concern with the growth and well-being of others (Galbraith & Wall, 2007:357), a principle the researcher believes is deeply embedded within generative fathering. To fully capture the essence of servant leadership, fathers (and men per implication) should strive to consistently "...perform small and simple acts of service" (Galbraith & Wall, 2007:361) which, depending on available opportunities, may include coaching a sport team, serving on neighbourhood and school committees and occupying a position as mentor for youths (Snarey, 1993:22). This manifests in what Dollahite et al. (1997a:19) term as *generational ethics*, in other words, expectations and the broadened responsibility fathers foster to care for themselves, their families and communities.

The importance of all three of these forms of generativity arises when fathers experience a “generativity chill”, defined as a type of anxiety brought about by a so-called “existential imperilment”. This manifests when fathers may experience a threat of losing their child (pre- and postnatal), their creativity or even their own lives (Snarey, 1993:23). Snarey (1993:24) argues that a fear of death is likely to fuel a greater deal of emphasis on biological, parental and societal generativity to curtail the probable impact and subsequent effects of the threat of stagnation and death. Generative engagement in the lives of either their own family and/or members of the broader community, is dependent on the degree to which these fathers partake and influence decisions, policies, emotions and other factors associated with the stages of psycho-social development of individuals.

Such an involvement, however, does not just surface based on changing views or expectations of fathering roles. Lamb (1997:5) identifies four factors that serve as **determinants of the levels of involvement** that fathers display in their children’s lives. These determinants should be distinguished from the original factors that encourage fathering involvement, as discussed under Point 2.2.4. The researcher attributes this distinction to the fact that those factors served as *encouragement* to partake in children’s lives, whereas these determinants impact on the **level** or **degree** (from a quantitative stance) of involvement fathers display, after the initial encouragement.

(b) ***Determinants of involved fathering: A progression towards generative fathering***

These determinants include **motivation, skills and self-confidence, institutional practices and support.**

(i) *Motivation*

The **first** of these, **motivation**, is comprised of the individual’s *developmental history, personal characteristics and beliefs* (Lamb, 1997:6; Pleck, 1997:80).

The developmental history of the father

In terms of his *developmental history*, two strands of arguments have been presented in American and European research studies. These include, firstly, that men model their paternal behaviour based on the way in which their own fathers raised them (cf.

Brotherson, 2007b:399; LaRossa, 1988:451; Snarey, 1993:304). Modelling of their father's behaviour is likely to occur in three instances. Firstly, their father was relatively better educated, thus providing in the socio-emotional needs of the child during childhood. Secondly, if the father was better employed and able to provide in the socio-emotional needs of the child during adolescence, and thirdly if the familial setting was characterised by a cohesive home atmosphere, which subsequently aids the boy to provide in the social-emotional needs of his own children during adolescence (Snarey, 1993:305).

On the other hand, it is also argued that fathers steer away from the manner in which they were socialised, attempting to compensate for their own fathers' lack of nurture, interaction and involvement by reworking their own parenting principles (Lamb, 1997:6; Pleck, 1997:80; Snarey, 1993:304). Studies undertaken by amongst others, Daly (1993, cited in Pleck, 1997:81), found that men did not regard their own fathers' parenting models in a positive manner, and would like to improve on the way in which they raise their children. This process arises when three patterns of father-son interaction prevailed during childhood. If the father was distant and non-nurturant, Snarey (1993:305) believes that this will serve as adequate predictor for men to rework their fathers' techniques and display a higher level of care to encourage their child's social-emotional and intellectual-academic development. In addition, inconsistent or inadequate supervision, as well as the threat of physical punishment on the part of the father's own father, serves as prediction of a father's desire to provide higher levels of care for his child's physical-athletic development (Snarey, 1993:305).

The personal characteristics of the father

Pertaining to the *personal characteristics* of fathers, focus on the age of prospective fathers also highlighted the way in which older fathers were seen to be more involved with their children than younger fathers (Conrane, 1990, cited in Pleck, 1997:81). This thought was noted in a South African study undertaken by Smit (2008:65), who found that men who became fathers at a later stage in their lives were more inclined to deem views of nurturing, involvement and active fathering practices to be natural, in contrast with those who became fathers at an earlier stage. In addition to these characteristics, Smit (2008:65) also presented findings related to the independent variables of educational qualifications and home language of the father, as well as the educational qualifications and occupational position of his spouse. In terms of the educational attainment and home language of the father, those men with

postgraduate degrees and who were English-speaking, were found to be more inclined to accept the argument of involved fathering (Smit, 2008:65).

In terms of the personal characteristic of the father's gender role orientation, the researcher wishes to focus on those men who are more inclined to adopt an *egalitarian approach* to the division of household tasks, and in effect display a more *androgynous gender orientation*. Smit's (2008:70) study underscored the importance of an egalitarian approach displayed by men who are progressing towards generative fathering. This is attributed to the fact that she found that these men have a greater inclination to view themselves as active and nurturing. Such men are more than likely to demonstrate an androgynous form of fathering. Although several stereotypes persist that present these men as more effeminate, Radin (1982:197) argues that they are no less masculine or more effeminate than any other men, especially those who are secure about their own masculinity and sexuality. Included under the 'umbrella' of the so-called 'new father' (Brotherson & White, 2007:9; Lamb, 1997:6), these fathers are seen to be very responsive, involved, nurturing, caring with high levels of participation (Gerson, 1997b:39; Matta & Knudson-Martin, 2006:33; Pleck, 1997; Volling & Belsky, 1991:462), and more strict than fathers who ascribe to traditional views of fathering (Radin, 1982:200).

The beliefs of the father

The last of the factors associated with the *motivation* of fathers to be more involved in their children's lives, focuses on the *beliefs of the father*. In this regard, Gerson (1997b:38) notes that men will only become generative fathers if they *want* to do so, due to the fact that no amount of coercion will lead a man to that path. If the man were to accept his role as involved father, he should be able to *act* on this decision, and build on egalitarian beliefs associated with androgynous fathering (cf. Gerson, 1997b:39; Lamb, 1997:6; Pleck, 1997:83).

The determinant of motivation is intertwined with the **second** determinant which centres around obtaining and developing the necessary **skills and self-confidence** (Brooks & Gilbert, 1995:271; Lamb, 1997:7; Pleck, 1997:84) of the father.

(ii) *Skills and self-confidence*

Research has indicated that despite the fathers' motivation to partake in primary childrearing, they experience a lack of possible rules or guidelines to direct their

behaviour, or the help of others upon whom their behaviour could be modelled (Barclay & Lupton, 1999:1019; Lamb, 1997:7). Rather than experiencing their roles as fathers as fulfilling, they communicate feelings of distress and use words like 'cope' when relating information about their parenting experiences. In this regard Moen (1992:128) recommends the so-called "new-man" solution. This involves, if fully realised, changes in the domestic setting to provide men with the necessary "...skills, supports, and motivation to share in domestic work" (Moen, 1992:129). Involvement with children by partaking in activities they enjoy, as well as formal skills training programmes serve as positive interventions in increasing the self-confidence of fathers (Lamb, 1997:7). Brotherson (2007b:396) recommends the establishment of educational programmes that reinforce a strength-based focus on paternal influences by advocating and advertising in so-called "institutional" sources of information ranging from books and magazines to churches and the Internet. In addition to this, Dollahite et al. (1997b) provide a comprehensive chapter at the end of their groundbreaking work on generative fathering, in which they outline specific questions and activities that students (and per implication fathers) may participate in to fully comprehend the nature of generative approaches to fathering.

As **third determinant**, *institutional practices* also impacts on the decision of fathers to become more involved in the lives of their children.

(iii) *Institutional practices*

The increased cost of living has made it all the more difficult for families to survive on only one income. This leads to more women entering the labour market in an attempt to curtail negative financial implications for her family (cf. Newman, 1999:216). But although this might increase a greater sense of economic security, the problem still persists as to how these mothers, as well as fathers will balance their work lives with their family responsibilities (cf. Williams, 2001:140).

Establishing family-friendly policies

Based on the increase in numbers of women entering into the labour market (and the subsequent increase in responsibilities both spouses face), various organisations have opted to acknowledge their employees' additional domestic and parental responsibilities outside the parameters of the labour market (Harker, 1995:90). Due to this, these companies have started to introduce family-friendly policies which provide the framework for the creation of "...a more caring working environment..."

(Harker, 1995:90), in which not only the dual role of women is highlighted and supported, but also the encouragement of fathers to be more involved in their children's lives, to effectually avoid so-called 'work-addictive behaviours' (cf. Burke & Nelson, 2001:217; Harker, 1995:91).

Examples of family-friendly working arrangements

These policies find manifestation in particular initiatives. These may include *flexible working arrangements* such as *flexitime*, *part-time work*, *job-sharing* and *home-based work*, as well as *part-time work at home*. *Flexitime* provides a time-frame for workers as to when all of them should be at work, and indicates the flexible time certain individuals choose as most convenient for them to be at work, provided that they work during the "...stated 'core' period of four or more hours a day" (Cook, 1992:206; Sekaran, 1986:128). Sekaran attributes the popularity of this approach to advantages presented to workers insofar as it provides them with "full pay and flexibility in the use of their time", providing advantages to both men and women to effectively combine work and family responsibilities (Cook, 1992:206).

Part-time work refers to a working arrangement whereby "...an employee works less than the full-time hours" (Harker, 1995:95), bringing about an opportunity for parents to establish a balance between their work and family responsibilities (Harker, 1995:95). *Job-sharing* entails two or more individuals undertaking a full-time job on a shared basis, thus sharing the responsibility for the work, the remuneration they receive, as well as other benefits such as holidays allocated to them (Harker, 1995:95). Problems associated with this relate to the lower level of income accrued for the couple, and the added stress and input required by the organisation for managing two people, rather than only one (Sekaran, 1986:128). *Part-time work at home*, also referred to as a *flexiplace*-initiative, makes provision for the individual to work from home, which may require the employee to purchase equipment such as computers and fax machines (Harker, 1995:96).

In addition to flexible working arrangements, leave arrangements should also be taken into account by organisations attempting to be more family-friendly. Here the provision of *paternity leave* is taken into account. This refers to rights afforded to fathers to take time off after the birth of their children (Harker, 1995:96). In contrast to countries such as Sweden, France and Belgium, very little attention has been paid to this in amongst others the United Kingdom (Harker, 1995:96), whereas unpaid parental leave is federally mandated in the United States for companies with fifty or

more employees (Pruett, 2000:195). In South Africa, fathers who are full-time workers are provided with the opportunity to take three days paid family responsibility leave during their annual leave cycle (reasonable proof of paternity may be required by the employer) (Botha, 1997; Department of Labour, 2008). Smit's (2008:67) study presented a statistically significant relationship between men's use of paternity leave, their view of paternal involvement and their actual engagement therein. The findings suggested that the fathers who took paternity leave were more positively inclined towards their role as nurturing fathers and subsequently displayed higher levels of such involvement. Although progressive in nature, such an initiative may not necessarily be adopted by fathers, based on what Dienhart and Daly (1997:159) refer to as "work fixation". According to them, fathers may not take leave due to the fact that informal sanctions may persist amongst male colleagues, whereas the family may be disadvantaged if the father has to take unpaid leave (Haas & Hwang, 1995, cited in Dienhart & Daly, 1997:159).

Problems associated with the implementation of family-friendly policies

The implementation of such policies is however not without its difficulties. The first of these will centre around the *availability of resources* to fund the work-family programme insofar as such a programme will require the employer to invest in all of the paid staff, purchase new equipment, as well as undertake research to formulate the best possible programme (Harker, 1995:102). In addition to this, *support from all levels* of the organisation is essential. In doing this, changing possibly 'outdated' policies and 'preconceived' notions will only be attained through both managerial and employee support (Harker, 1995:102). Managers may oppose such changes insofar as they believe that this may inhibit their control over the workers during their working hours, and undermine the traditional culture of the organisation (Harker, 1995: 103).

Advantages associated with family-friendly policies

In creating such a work environment, **several advantages** may be heralded. The **first** of these pertains to the creation of equal opportunity frameworks for women who, due to these progressive policies, are given the opportunity to transcend their home life and enter the labour market (Harker, 1995:105). The **second** advantage emphasises the manner in which the patriarchal conception of work and family life is challenged with fathers given the opportunity to partake in domestic responsibilities, amongst others the socialisation of their children (Harker, 1995:105; cf. Ritzer & Goodman, 2003). **Thirdly**, one may also argue that family-friendly programmes will benefit the organisation, as well as the employers. The former will benefit due to the

fact that provision is made for the equal representation of men and women in the organisation, whereas employers on the other hand, may also experience a reduction in problems pertaining to staff turnover, absenteeism and increases in loyalty and improved relationships amongst staff members (Harker, 1995:106).

The **fourth determinant** for fathering involvement, **support**, involves the following.

(iv) *Support*

Inherent in higher levels of paternal involvement as reflected in the three forms of *generativity*, expectations directed towards men to change their own attitudes and behaviour as they relate to their responsibilities as fathers, have come to the fore (Barclay & Lupton, 1999:1018). Although several men in Barclay and Lupton's study indicated that the 'absent-father'-model they experienced as children was no longer acceptable in their generation, they found that these men were not necessarily afforded the opportunity to engage in the lives of their children at the outset. They initially experienced frustration and disappointment with their role as fathers and were in fact replicating their own fathers' 'sole-provider'-role "...through force of circumstance rather than choice".

The wife and mother as enabler or inhibitor

The role of the wife and mother in influencing the participation of her husband and father to her children, serves as indicative independent variable here (Aldous et al., 1998; Snarey, 1993). Whilst certain mothers may attempt to exclude fathers from involvement with their children by serving as so-called "gatekeepers" (Doherty et al., 1998:287; Jordan, 1995:66), Smit (2008:68) found encouraging views of mothers in her research in South Africa. Wives of men who commanded a postgraduate degree or occupied managerial positions in the labour market, were seen to be more accepting for husbands to become more actively involved in the lives of their children (cf. Snarey, 1993:302), a finding Smit (2008:69) attributes to the fact that these women may be more exposed than others to feminist thought, and as such influence their husband to encourage co-parenting.

These findings correspond with the work of Pleck (1997:85) and Snarey (1993:303) in the United States, who noted that evidence exists that an increase in maternal employment does lead to an increase in fathers' paternal role in the family, whilst their involvement may also escalate in those instances where men perceive their

wives' career prospects as better than their own. Smit (2001) pointed to the likelihood of a husband-wife dilemma in the event of an asymmetrical economic relationship between the couple. Other sources of increased maternal support may arise in those circumstances where the wife has a positive relationship with her own father, when her father was less involved with her as child, and where the wife displays a greater deal of liberal views concerning gender roles (i.e. more egalitarian than traditional) (Pleck, 1997:85).

Support groups for fathers

In addition to maternal support, Canfield (2007) recommends the formation of small groups within communities that will serve as redemptive milieu for fathers in search of solace. He argues that this assists fathers in their complex roles by providing an environment in which fathers who face "complex family and economic situations" challenge the behaviour of each other, motivate each other to endure and achieve success, exchange advice, best practices and information, and provide feedback on task work given (Canfield, 2007:384).

Benefits of such support groups range from the provision of *companionship* with other men they identify with, and with whom they can share everything, to the emphasis on *accountability* (Canfield, 2007:385). The latter necessitates men to attend these small group meetings based on their accountability towards their wife and children. These groups provide them with the opportunity to vent about possible frustrations and anger-issues they are experiencing, or where they feel that they are getting "...off track, whether in their marriages, with their children, in business, or in their morality" (Canfield, 2007:386). The fellow group members hold each other accountable for their actions as fathers.

In addition to Lamb's (1997) four determinants and based on his discussion of support between husband and wife, the researcher would like to add an **additional determinant** to Lamb's list – **marital affinity**.

(v) *Marital affinity*

Marital affinity is an important factor in determining support for increased paternal involvement (Goddard, 2007:60; Snarey, 1993:302). Snarey attributes this to a comprehensive study undertaken by Belsky et al. (cited in Snarey, 1993:302) that involved 100 families. Their findings indicated that

'...husbands whose love for their spouses declined over time and whose doubts about the durability and wisdom of their marriage ...increased, behave toward their young children in a more negative manner than did other fathers.' In contrast, husbands who showed no such declines 'were disproportionately likely to express positive affect toward their young children and to interact with them in a sensitive, facilitating way.'

To attain a greater degree of marital affinity, the couple should display an undeniable commitment to their marriage by setting boundaries for external influences, and dedicating the necessary time and energy for their union (Goddard, 2007:62). Both parties should attempt to comprehend the differences and unique attributes both bring to the marriage. This may include accepting, valuing and building on each other's differences, as well as aiding each other in terms of possible needs and pressures that may arise (Goddard, 2007:63). This need becomes especially potent during the progression from pregnancy through birth to the actual initialisation of the parenting responsibilities. Here several mothers indicated that, during pregnancy for example, they wanted their husbands to "support and understand" them by partaking in such activities such as cooking and cleaning, acknowledging the emotional turmoil and fluctuations the mother-to-be is experiencing, providing validation in terms of her competence as mother and beauty of her body, as well as encouraging dialogue about the parenting practices (Benokraitis, 1996; Jordan, 1995:67).

Goddard (2007:62) also believes that establishing a connection and bond between the husband and wife through the realisation of common interests, activities and a synchronised affectional system (such as a language of love) may underscore the importance of nurture. Attempts to 'serve' each other by developing a "couple mission" may encourage the couple to reciprocally assist each other in certain endeavours, problems and common purposes which may curtail probable negative factors that influence marital life. To obtain this, the couple could prescribe to what Erickson (1993:888) refers to the practice of *emotion work*, in which especially fathers engage to provide for a more supportive family milieu. She defines this approach as "...the management of one's feelings to create an observable facial and bodily display. Within a ...familial context, this work tends to involve the enhancement of others' emotional well-being and the provision of emotional support" (Erickson, 1993:888). In her study in which she used a survey to assess whether married women deemed emotion work as important for their marital well-being,

Erickson (1993:896) found that emotion work does indeed have a significant impact on the perceptions of women related to marital well-being and feelings of marital burnout.

Although several constraints and conditions faced by involved fathers have been discussed in the foregoing sections, the discussion that follows groups together the specific **constraints and conditions** which generative fathers have to face on a daily basis, and the **categories** comprised of intervening actions that serve to curtail negative manifestations.

2.3.3 The constraints and conditions faced by fathers and the interrelated categories of generative fathering

The most prominent examples of so-called **constraints and conditions** that may impact on the role of generative fathers, include **dependence, scarcity, change and interdependence** (Dollahite et al., 1997a:25). In an attempt to manage each of these constraints, Dollahite et al. (1997a:27) recommend the mastery of **four categories of generative fathering** that may aid fathers in their parenting practices. These include **ethical work, stewardship, development work and relationship work** (Dollahite et al., 1997a:27; Smit, 2004:108).

Schematically, these constraints and conditions, as well as the four categories of generative fathering that serve to counter and manage these constraints and conditions, can be presented as follows:

Table 1: The constraints, conditions and categories of generative fathering

Constraints and conditions		Categories of generative fathering
Dependence	→	Ethical work
Scarcity	→	Stewardship
Change	→	Development work
Interdependence	→	Relationship work

Each of the corresponding constraints and categories will be grouped together in the discussion that follows.

In terms of **dependence**, it is argued that children are brought up by and are, as such, all the more dependent on their mother and father for many years for their survival (Dollahite et al., 1997a:25; Erikson, 1984; 1997; Williams, 2007:114). Many of these children may in fact benefit from the support of their parents, as it relates to their social, economical and emotional needs throughout their lives (Biller, 1993;

Lamb, 1981, cited in Dollahite et al., 1997a:25). This places a great deal of strain on the parents insofar as they are expected to make a number of sacrifices for their children. Against this background, provision is further made for **ethical work** as to be displayed by the parents (Dollahite et al., 1997a:25). Ethical work involves the provision, by the father, of a safe and secure family environment for the children while they are still in his care, and in effect responding to the wants and needs of the child (Biller, 1993; Elshtain, 1993, cited in Dollahite et al., 1997a:27; Smit, 2004:108). This, according to Snarey (1993) should be seen as a “moral endeavour”, rather than merely an aspect of paternal conduct.

Another constraint that fathers may face is **scarcity**, whether it is in terms of material resources such as money and housing, and/or human resources in terms of energy and knowledge or time (Rettig, 1993, cited in Dollahite et al., 1997a:25). It is noted that not all of these needs may be met by the fathers. If these were to happen, fathers are necessitated to negotiate alternatives with their partners and children. Scarcity may impact quite positively on the fatherhood role, based on the fact that it engages “... fathers to become good stewards, to produce and obtain necessary resources for a family’s welfare, and to allocate such resources wisely and well to strengthen the family” (Dollahite et al., 1997a:25). The second category, related to **stewardship**, is applicable here. This refers to the degree to which the father is able to provide the necessary resources in terms of material needs, and even beyond these. The importance of stewardship is communicated by Lee (1976, cited in Dollahite et al., 1997a:28):

Stewardship work involves creative, dedicated effort to *provide resources* for children and family and *provide opportunities* for children to develop and learn to care for their own and others’ physical and psychosocial needs.

The third constraint, **change**, might be evident on both an individual and structural level. The first refers to the fact that no parent raises ‘one’ child throughout his or her life. The child’s life is characterised by a constant flux of change as it relates to the various stages and phases he or she goes through when maturing (Erikson, 1984, 1997; Palm, 2007; Snarey, 1993). In terms of the structural changes, reference should be made to the constant political, social, cultural and economic changes families have to face (Dollahite et al., 1997a:26). Parents are expected to adapt to changing circumstances in an attempt to insure that the well-being of the child is

attended to. The role of **development work** as category of generative work is of the utmost importance here (Dollahite et al., 1997a:26). This does not only refer to the provision of a family milieu which will stimulate a child's physical growth, but also includes the development of the child on a social, cognitive and psychological level (Smit, 2004:108). Conditions of a supportive nature are deemed imperative to insure the healthy growth and development of the child (cf. Erikson, 1984, 1997). To establish a mature relationship with his child, the father has to adapt the processes of care directed towards the child, based on the developmental phases he or she is progressing through, as was evident in the discussion of Erikson's (1984; 1997) stages of psycho-social development.

The final condition is **interdependence**. This refers to the manner in which members of a family are constantly dependent and interdependent on one another pertaining to social and emotional needs, in other words a "... need to be needed" (Dollahite et al., 1997a:25; Erikson, 1964:130). The role of the father is executed in a very dynamic and complex milieu characterised by a number of relationships, these being either between parents and children, or between the parents themselves (Dollahite et al., 1997a:25). Issues which have to be addressed may include those of attachment, communication, love and childcare. This condition makes provision for the role of **relationship work** (Dollahite et al., 1997a:27). Based on the interdependence between parents and children, this type of fatherwork entails the father to serve as socialisation agent in an attempt to teach his children to be more inclined to take others into account, rather than only focussing on their own, self-centred viewpoints (Dollahite et al., 1997a; Erikson, 1984:240; Marsiglio, 1995b:84; Snarey, 1993). Of utmost importance is the construction of healthy relationships and establishing reciprocal love and respect between the generations. This, according to Dollahite et al. (1997a:29) serves as a definite need for children insofar as it makes provision for an 'intergenerational relationship' between the father and his children, as well as other members of the community.

Consequently, three critical **components of generative fathering** will be discussed.

2.3.4 The components of generative fathering

How are men able to insure the manifestation of 'involved fathering?' The answer resides in the three components of generative fathering, namely **interaction**, **accessibility** and **paternal responsibility**.

(a) **Component one: Interaction with the child**

The first of the three components that Lamb (1995:23) identifies, is that of interaction. This refers to the direct 'one-on-one' interaction of the father with his children, whether it involves feeding the child, assisting the child in school-related work and/or playing games with him or her (Lamb, 1995:23; Smit, 2004:110). Such interaction involves the father paying full attention to his child, a situation described as *paternal engagement* (Doherty et al., 1998; LaRossa, 1988:452) which is typified by " ...a typical side-by-side activity – *being* together and *doing* something together" (Brandth & Kvande, 1998:301).

In a South African study undertaken by Richter and Smith (2006:161), they attempted to provide a voice for children on the latter's need to express their expectations related to fathering. It was evident from this study that several respondents expressed their desire for an involved father, thus, a father who spends time with them. Views of the children included, "He makes me happy when he is around. That is the thing that makes me happy", and "He makes me happy when I can play with him and spend time with him" (Richter & Smith, 2006:161).

Brotherson (2007a) identifies **eight practical strategies** fathers can utilise in an attempt to strengthen their relationship with their children. The **first** of these involves shared *recreational activities* with their children, which include camping, fishing (cf. Barclay & Lupton, 1999:1016) or watching television (Brotherson, 2007:112). By engaging in recreational activities, fathers are given the opportunity to see the degree to which their child enjoys the time they spend together, as evident in the following quote of one of the respondents in Brotherson's study:

[My son] and I would have a lot of fun together. One of the enjoyable experiences I remember is that we would play hide-and-go-seek. He couldn't talk, he couldn't walk, but he could crawl. I would go hide and say, 'Okay, Ben, come and find me,' and he would come and find me. When he'd find me he would laugh, and we had a really fun time doing that (Brotherson, 2007a:112).

A **second** practical strategy is through *playing and learning*. Such involvement would revolve around a playful activity which would also serve to educate the child in a

particular skill, such as playing chess or learning how to ride a bicycle (Brotherson, 2007a:112). This notion contradicts the work of Dienhart and Daly (1997:161) whose research noted that women's playful activities are traditionally associated with the development of the child, whereas that of the father is representative of "just having fun". Although such play may in fact manifest in the formation of specific 'routines' such as eating breakfast, one father underscored the importance of merely engaging in playful activities by stating, "[There's] a song about parenthood – 'Moms Are for Maintenance and Dads Are for Fun'" (quoted in Dienhart & Daly, 1997:161). In playing with their children, fathers are given the chance to have a "hands-on, practical approach" to partake in the lives of their children. Their play is usually typified as being more of a "rough-and tumble, interactive play" (Williams, 2007:121). The importance of, what one could term, 'fatherplay', is embedded in the fact that it provides children with the opportunity to communicate their thoughts and feelings, cope with emotional distress and establish a better comprehension of their surrounding world through the use of exploration, imagination and learning (Cohen, 2001:4). Based on the fact that the "language of play" is universal, children are given the chance to express their thoughts and emotions before they are even able to speak, write or rationally express their views (Williams, 2007:123). Four forms of play prevail in the father's interaction with the child. These include *active play* associated with running, jumping and climbing, which develops the basic motor skills of the child. A second is *object play* which serves to develop the finer motor skills such as picking something up, observing it or smelling and tasting it. Thirdly, the father could opt for the use of *social play* where physical or non-physical contact may arise through so-called "peek-a-boo games or wrestling". Finally, the development of the imagination of the child is also provided for in the form of *pretend play* (Williams, 2007:124). Here the father might have the child, as noted by Williams (2007:124), take his temperature with a play thermometer. As noted, play may also aid the child to cope with specific stressors and challenges such as a domestic dispute by mainly being "absorbed" in the "sheer fun of play", helping them to forget things that bring about distress (Williams, 2007:124).

A **third** practical strategy Brotherson (2007a:113) identifies revolves around the use of the father's employment (work) to engage and interact with the child. Here the child will attend specific functions with the father, or partake in activities related to the father's work. A practical example of this was related by one respondent's retrospective account of attending a football game with his journalist father who served as sportswriter for their hometown newspaper (Brotherson, 2007a:113). A

fourth strategy centres around the manner in which a father will provide in the needs of the child by *supporting* him or her in the event of them being ill, anxious or in need of comfort¹¹. It is usually during such instances, that children are seen to be all the more dependent on the support and nurturing of their fathers. Engagement through *spiritual activities* such as prayer, serve as **fifth** strategy. Such activities provides a milieu in which fathers are able to relate moral and spiritual lessons with the children through, amongst others, attending church services, praying, or being involved in specific religious or spiritual practices (Williams, 2007:114). Prayer, specifically, provides a platform of stability and consistency within a family, and in turn involves blessing on the lives of all the parties involved (Marks & Dollahite, 2007:349). In terms of prayer, a wife from the study of Marks and Dollahite (2007:344) noted that:

We pray together as a family. David [her husband] is so good about bedtime. He has never missed a night, praying with the children, the boys in their room, because they're in the same room, and then the girls. I think for them it's routine ...[it] evens their day out. It's something they've learned to expect ...Daddy's always going to be there. I feel like it de-stresses the home.

A **sixth** strategy focuses on the manner in which fathers *express their warmth, love and affection* towards their children. Examples provided here that quench the socio-emotional thirst of children, include regular laughter, hugging, snuggling with each other on the couch, or saying "I love you" (Brotherson, 2007a:114; Richter & Smith, 2006:161). The **seventh** strategy, *establishment and maintenance of family traditions*, establishes so-called "built-in opportunities for parent-child connection" (Brotherson, 2007a:115), which include enjoyable activities such as baking pancakes every weekend, bedtime routines and specific practices during outings or vacations. The **eighth** and final strategy is embedded in the value of *generativity* due to the fact that it incorporates the *sharing of memories and stories* into the father-child relationship. Recalling activities or occurrences (both shared and those of the father himself) from past years by talking about them, watching home videos or looking through photo albums may "...strengthen and reinforce parent-child connections in the present" (Brotherson, 2007a:116). This is echoed in the view of one father in Brotherson's (2007a) study who recalled experiences with his own father, "[A focus

¹¹ This is a thought that will be communicated and intertwines with the discussion on the third component of generative fathering, *paternal responsibility*.

on the past] ...gave me a connection to ...him in understanding what his life had been like and why he had done the things that he'd done".

Based on these eight strategies, one could argue that the relationship between a father and his children is a "bonding" experience with the father just "being there" for the child (cf. Barclay & Lupton, 1999:1016; Palm, 2007:164). Fathers are afforded the opportunity to partake more fully in the rearing of their children by, amongst others, changing the baby's nappies and bathing him or her, an experience one respondent regarded as a "learning experience" (Barclay & Lupton, 1999:1017). By engaging in an in-depth communicative relationship with their children, which may manifest in either verbal or nonverbal exchanges (conversations, touch or written exchanges), the fathers are provided the opportunity "...to listen and attend to children empathetically and responsively" (Dollahite et al., 1997a:32). Although the father's role as breadwinner is still deemed imperative, a greater deal of emphasis is placed on the father's involved interaction with the child (Doherty et al., 1998:283; Marsiglio, 1995a:7). Such engagement with the children presents fathers as more competent than proponents of the deficit paradigm, and per implication the fathers themselves, will have us believe (Pruett, 1993:47).

Accessibility, as **second component** of generative fathering, in contrast to interaction, does not include the direct interaction between father and child, "...but rather refers to the time the father spends in close proximity to the child" (Smit, 2004:110).

(b) ***Component two: Accessibility for the child***

In terms of accessibility, it is argued that the father should, both physically and psychologically, be in close proximity to the child in order for him to respond to the needs of the child if necessary (Smit, 2004:110). An example of this may be the father cooking in the kitchen, preparing a meal for the child, or cleaning the child's room with the child playing either in the next room, or even under the father's feet (Lamb, 1995:24; McBride, 1989:15). Accessibility is characterised as a distal form of parental involvement, in contrast to interaction which is deemed as more proximal in nature, based on its direct face-to-face interaction as shared nature of activities, amongst others (Palkovitz, 1997:212).

Although imperative in the development of the child, the importance of proximity equated with fathering involvement, has been exaggerated over the years.

Proponents of this argument argue that for fathers to adhere to their parental responsibilities, they have to be in close physical proximity of their children (Palkovitz, 1997:204). Yet, Palkovitz (1997:205) asserts that as a father himself, although busying himself with his work when he is physically separated from his children, his thoughts are always resonating with his family, thus making both observable and unobservable activities representative of indirect parental involvement (Palkovitz, 1997:205, 213). LaRossa (1988:454), however, establishes a link between Lamb's distinction between interaction and accessibility, and his reference to a distinction between *primary time* and *secondary time*. He argues that a family, just like a hospital or any other medical care facility, provides direct care to the children born to the mother and father. Just like a hospital, the family has to provide for scheduled 'recesses' for those individuals partaking in childcare, creating a social organisation of those individuals who are primarily involved with the children ("on duty"), and those 'secondarily' involved (accessible) (LaRossa, 1988:454).

Despite the fact that LaRossa's research found, as alluded to in previous sections, that mothers were primarily involved whilst fathers' involvement was only a fraction of the mothers', a reinforcement of increased accessibility may subsequently manifest in interaction with children, based on the current changing conceptualisations of fathering. It has, however, been argued that one should guard against too much emphasis on 'more' involvement as being better for the children. In adhering to such an argument, emphasises will in all likelihood be placed on establishing an equitable balance between the levels of fathering involvement and that of the mothers (Palkovitz, 1997:204). Palkovitz argues that although such an argument may be applicable to some families, the importance of *appropriate involvement* rather than more involvement, should serve as determinant for parental participation. Some involvement may in fact be ill timed, ill motivated or even inappropriate and as such curtail the categories and components of *generative fathering* that attempt to establish a greater sense of personal development of both the father and child (Palkovitz, 1997:204).

The final component of generative fathering, ***paternal responsibility*** is hard to fully operationalise (Doherty et al., 1998:283) and, as such, serves as an all-encompassing component of generative fathering that incorporates each of the foregoing categories and components associated with generative fathering.

(c) **Component three: Paternal responsibility**

Paternal responsibility entails taking full responsibility and to be held accountable for the care and welfare of the child (Lamb, 1995:24). Volling and Belsky (1991:462) argue that such responsibility also includes the father's acknowledgement of the importance of the child's cognitive, physical and emotional needs and addressing these needs, by for example taking the child to the doctor or arranging for day care, if necessary. It does not only involve direct interaction with his children, but may manifest in the forms of anxiety, fear, worry, arranging childcare and babysitters and other forms of contingency planning while the father is occupying his time with other activities (McBride, 1989:15). McBride continues in this regard by stating that although fathers have started to progress away from the traditional breadwinning as the main form of involvement, *paternal responsibility*, deemed as the most important level of fathering involvement, has not seen sufficient participation by men.

(i) **The three domains of paternal responsibility**

The researcher deemed it appropriate to include Table 2 as part of the discussion, based on the fact that it provides a comprehensive overview of the three domains of parental involvement. The information included in the table is an adaptation and summary of a few of several so-called "ways to be involved in parenting" outlined in the work of Palkovitz (1997:209)¹². These 'ways' form part of the three domains of parental involvement. These include the **cognitive domain**, which denotes reasoning, planning, monitoring and evaluation on the part of the father, the **affective domain** which centres on emotions and feelings and finally the **behavioural domain** which incorporates observable forms of involvement, such as talking to the child, advising the child or partaking in a plethora of additional physical activities (Palkovitz, 1997:211).

¹² For a more comprehensive outline of activities associated with the three domains of parental involvement, please consult Palkovitz (1997:209-211).

Table 2: Activities associated with the three domains of parental involvement

Cognitive domain	Affective domain	Behavioural domain
<p><i>Monitoring</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Friendships • Dating partners • Safety • Whereabouts • Health • Grooming • Schoolwork • Checking on sleeping child • Going to parent/teacher conferences • Overseeing TV or movie watching and music listened to • Rides to and from places <p><i>Planning</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Birthdays • Vacations • Education • Holidays • Appointments • Scheduling time with friends <p><i>Thought processes</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Worrying • Planning • Dreaming • Hoping • Evaluating • Praying for the child • "Being there" 	<p><i>Affection</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Loving • Hugging • Kissing • Cuddling • Tickling • Making eye contact • Smiling • Genuine friendship with child • Showing patience • Praising <p><i>Supporting Emotionally</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encouraging • Developing interests 	<p><i>Communication</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Listening • Talking • Writing notes • Expressing love, concerns and forgiveness <p><i>Teaching</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advising • Role modelling • Problem solving • Disciplining • Teaching spiritual development • Fostering independence • Giving chores • Teaching responsibility • Answering questions <p><i>Care-giving & Child-Related Maintenance</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feeding • Bathing • Clothing • Caring for sick child • Tucking into bed • Cleaning • Laundering, ironing • Cooking <p><i>Availability</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attending events • Serving as leader for events and activities • Spending time together • Being with the child <p><i>Shared activities</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shopping • Exercising • Going to the movies • Eating meals • Playing together • Celebrating holidays • Working together <p><i>Protection</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitoring safety • Providing safety gear such as helmets, life jackets

Source: Palkovitz (1997:209-211)

It is argued that the majority of studies on parental involvement have focussed mainly on the overt, behavioural components of interaction and action due to the fact that covert forms of involvement are less empirical insofar as they denote "...the investment of the self, in ways that defy observation" (Palkovitz, 1997:210). Palkovitz does however argue that several parents will in all likelihood cite the additional roles portrayed by cognitive and emotional components of parental involvement as is evident in Table 2, as these components comprise just as much (if not more) of their time, and occupy an imperative position in realisation of involved parenting (and fathering) (cf. Barclay & Lupton, 1999:1016; Marsiglio, 1995a:7; Pleck, 1997).

These domains of parental involvement are linked to and associated with the involvement of the father across the different developmental stages of the child's life as was evident in the groundbreaking work of Erikson (1984; 1997). Adding to the imperative contributions fathers are able to make to the lives of their children across the latter's lifespan, Palm (2007), adapting the work of Ellen Galinsky's (1987, cited in Palm, 2007) life stages of parenthood, outline **four stages of the developmental journey of parenting for fathers and their children**. The researcher believes that this should be associated with the psycho-social developmental stages of Erikson and generative fathering. This is attributed to the fact that it incorporates the elements of the three dimensions of involved parenting associated with *generativity*.

(ii) *The **four stages of the developmental journey of parenting for fathers***

In ascribing to and progressing through these stages, Palm (2007:165) believes that "[m]en bring to parenting their own memories of childhood and role models for fatherhood as they begin their experience as fathers".

During the **first stage** termed the **nurturing stage**, where the father experiences his first so-called "hands on" experience with his child, he may describe his first time holding his baby as "...'unbelievable,' 'awesome,' 'frightening ...,' and 'amazing'" (Palm, 2007:167). To establish meaningful involvement during the first 12 to 15 months of the infant's life, fathers may opt to observe their children for specific styles of communication, to talk to the baby in order for it to get to know his voice, to engage in activities such as bathing, changing, feeding, comforting or making the baby laugh, as well as to originate games that will engage and challenge the baby (cf. Erikson, 1984, 1997, Palm, 2007:167).

Stage two, according to Palm, establishes the father as an **authoritative figure** and **emotional coach**. It is here where the infant changes to the toddler who originates his or her need for assertiveness because of increased levels of “energy, curiosity, and rapidly changing emotions”. Although traditional conceptions of fathering saw them exuding their authority by means of using a deep voice or physical coercion or punishment, Palm (2007:168) argues that such an approach will result in an unproductive power struggle with the child, and unfounded belief that physical power is the only manner to assert authority. Recommendations made by Palm to fathers, include increased interaction with the child through walks in the park and garden, or taking them on errands in the “outside world”, encouraging communication and questions to highlight the curiosity of the child, have them write and draw. In addition, the father could also teach them about different kinds of emotions and the appropriate way to express each, and to model problem solving initiatives and negotiation strategies with your partner (Palm, 2007:169).

During the **third stage** where the child enters his middle child years, fathers should serve as **encouragers**. Defined as the so-called **interpretive stage**, fathers start teaching their children about the diverse world of interests and contradictions, such as sports, politics and work (Palm, 2007:170). Here one notices that children, usually aged between six and twelve years, learn at a more rapid pace and display different needs. To provide in these needs, it is recommended that fathers introduce their children to novel skills such as riding a bicycle or playing a specific sport, and by engaging in their primary school careers (attending school functions and assisting them in their schoolwork). In addition, fathers could also encourage hobbies, model household responsibilities and encourage participation therein, as well as create and maintain specific family traditions to be passed on between the generations (Palm, 2007:171).

Finally, during the adolescent years (13 to 18 years of age) of the child, the **interdependent stage** comes to the forefront where the father takes on the role as **lighthouse** and **guide**. Being exposed to different temptations ranging from sex to drugs, children may find it quite daunting to establish their independence in contemporary society. Based on the great deal of confusion brought to the fore by their mood swings and changing bodies, the children’s search for independence exists concurrently with a locus of security that is reflected in their parents’, and in particular, their father’s necessary guidance and advice (Palm, 2007:173). Here the father may want to continue his monitoring of the child’s school performance, as well

as who the child's dating partners or friends are, partaking in fun activities and earnest communication with their children, encouraging the value of responsibility through part-time work and displaying a continuance of his emotive, affective and nurturing support that was evident in the preceding three stages (Palm, 2007:173). He, in fact, serves as a mentor for his children. In establishing a mentoring relationship¹³ with the children, fathers seek to protect their children from certain risk behaviours, develop a nurturing relationship, formulate pro-social behaviours and establish a sense of mastery in the skills or values the children want to obtain (cf. Pleban & Diez, 2007).

The question that remains to be answered is what the specific effects on both the father and children will be, if fathers were to adopt, implement, maintain and persevere through their life-cycle as generative fathers.

2.3.5 Impact of generative fathering on the father and the child: Reciprocal growth

Firstly, a discussion will be facilitated on the impact of generative fathering principles on the father himself, after which the effects on the child will be afforded a concise demarcation.

(a) *Impact of generative fathering on the father*

As prelude to the advantages that involved fathering practices may have on fathers, Popenoe (1996:74) argues that “[m]en who do not father and who are not married, can be a danger to themselves and to society”. He attributes much of this to the social concern these men bring to the broader society, based on the fact that they are usually associated with risk behaviours such as promiscuity, violence, aggressiveness and substance-abuse. They are grouped into deviant subcultures ranging from delinquents, criminals and killers, to drug dealers and vice lords (Popenoe, 1996:75). Although one may deem such an argument as somewhat exaggerated and not applicable to all unmarried and childless men, research has indicated that marriage and family life serve as imperative civilising force for men (Popenoe, 1996:75).

¹³ A process involving a contextual setting with a relationship between a knowledgeable and less experienced individual, with the former providing the latter with counselling, guidance, modelling and sponsoring. This relationship involves a great deal of reciprocal respect which, as output, serves to develop the less experienced of the two parties on a personal, professional or psychological level (Pleban & Diez, 2007:308).

Associated with Popenoe's argument is the work of Pruett (2000), who outlines so-called **life-changing effects of fatherhood** on fathers. The **first** of these highlights a continuance of a significant thread in Popenoe's argument, that of a rise in **responsibility** for the father. Here the father becomes all the more vulnerable, anxious and uncertain about the way in which he has to go about in caring for his children (Pruett, 2000:172). Dollahite et al. (1997a:19) and Snarey (1993) believe that this forces men to leave behind their convenient lifestyle, as well as views that argue that their wives are responsible for the socialisation of the children and take up the challenge of housework and childcare for both the current generation and the generations to follow. The attentive nature of fathering in general and generative fathering specifically, highlight the importance of making a contribution to the well-being of both society at large, as well as the members thereof, rather than only focussing on the father's own family (Smit, 2004:105).

Secondly, Pruett (2000:173) believes that fathering practices will also motivate men to become more **compassionate**. This has already been documented quite extensively in the foregoing discussion, insofar as the components of generative fathering predispose the father to be more compassionate, nurturing and empathetic in the way in which they care for their children (cf. Barclay & Lupton, 1999; Brotherson, 2007a; Dollahite et al., 1997a; Erikson, 1984, 1997; Palkovitz, 1997; Palm, 2007; Smit, 2008; Snarey, 1993). Being a 'partner' in the care of their children, he shares in the fears, expectations and dreams of the mother, and develops a heightened sense of appreciation for the experiences a mother has to progress through from pregnancy to birth (Pruett, 2000:174).

Thirdly, one finds the father becoming aware of his increasing **competence** in child-rearing activities (Pruett, 2000:176). This serves as direct juxtaposition of the stereotypical notion that fathers *should never* and *will never* be able to occupy the position of 'partnered' or sole-caregiver for their children (cf. Hawkins & Dollahite, 1997). In adhering to and attempting to master the basic principles associated with *generativity*, fathers start to transcend the limitations propagated by the deficit paradigm. In doing this, a **fourth** advantage arises in the form of a **better balanced** approach to their work and familial lives. Family-friendly policies instituted by organisations (Cook, 1982; Harker, 1995; Sekaran, 1986) may alleviate the stressors experienced by dual-earner couples, whereas positive marital relationships also contribute to effective parenting practices and family life (cf. Aldous et al., 1998; Barclay & Lupton, 1999; Doherty et al., 1998; Smit, 2000).

A **fifth** advantage of adhering to the principles of *generativity* centres around the emergence of a **mellower mood** for the father. Although Pruett (2000:180) notes that the term 'mellow' is regarded as a mere 'New Age' adjective, its use is quite prominent when wives describe the transformative effect fathering may have on men (cf. Russell, 1983:81). It is argued that fathers become all the more flexible in their interaction with their children based on their perceived perceptions of their increased competence (Pruett, 2000:180). A respondent in Pruett's (2000:180) study explained the transforming effect of becoming a father in the following way:

'I wasn't looking for a new perspective on life when I became a father. It just barged in with the baby. My feelings about my work, my religion, health, masculinity – all of it came up for review. It slowed me down, big time. My dreams and daydreams were filled with new ideas about life, its dangers and beauties. It was like getting my battery terminals scrubbed.'

But how then do these life-changing effects impact on the child?

(b) ***Impact of generative fathering on the child***

To better comprehend the probable impact generative fathering may have on the father-child relationship, primary emphasis will now be placed on the various levels of a child's development that may either be promoted or inhibited by increased involvement. These include the child's **intellectual, social-emotional and sex-role development**. These all complement the foregoing discussion which positioned the generative father as moral figure, teacher, leader and mentor.

Snarey (1993:150) argues that several studies have indicated that increased parental involvement in the lives of children has a definite impact on their **intellectual development and levels of competence** (cf. Radin, 1982:200; cf. Williams, 2007:122). He cites the study of Bing (1963) who reported on the differential results accrued from research on the manner in which fathers and mothers impacted on the academic performance of the child through their involvement. It was found that it was particularly the father's involvement (especially in terms of reading to his child) with his daughter which served as a high predictor of her verbal skills, whereas the involvement of the mother did not produce the same results for either the son or

daughter. Later studies also highlighted the fact that early father involvement during the childhood phase of the son and daughter may also improve their mathematical ability, in contrast with their absence which may result in lower mathematical aptitude and other quantitative tests (Snarey, 1993:150). In addition to Bing's (1963, cited in Snarey, 1993:150) work, Radin (1972:357) also found that the IQs of boys were positively associated with a loving and nurturing relationship a father shared with their sons. Honzik's (1963, cited in Snarey, 1993:151) work underscored this point by referencing the "close bond" between fathers and both their sons and daughters as reason for their children's IQs. Corresponding with these arguments was Radin and Russell's (1983, quoted in Snarey, 1993:152) statement that the warmth and involvement of fathers in the life of the children, result in higher levels of intellectual competence. Others have also established a link between the father's involvement and the children's cognitive development and problem-solving abilities (Easterbrooks & Goldberg, 1984, cited in Snarey, 1993:151; Hall & Tift, 2007:83).

In his four-decade study on fathering practices in general and paternal generativity specifically, Snarey (1993:180) also focused on the manner in which fathers were influential in the **educational** and **occupational mobility** of their children¹⁴. He found that high levels of social-emotional support during the **daughter's** childhood phase, made a definite contribution to her educational, but not occupational mobility. During the adolescent phase, however, a father's shared athletic activities with his daughter lead to a development on a physical-athletic level, whereas an intense closeness with her father had a further positive impact on her socio-emotional development. The development on these two levels, in turn, served as positive predictor of the daughter's educational and occupational mobility (Snarey, 1993:181). His findings correspond with other studies which cited the importance of one-to-one involvement between father and daughter, insofar as it lead to higher levels of self-esteem, life satisfaction, an ability to cope within a male dominated occupational arena, as well as valuable masculine insights which served as aids to women during their entrance into the traditionally masculine arenas of academia and work (cf. Snarey, 1993:181). In contrast to the findings pertaining to involvement with their daughters, fathers' nurturing and care related to their **sons'** (during childhood) intellectual and socio-emotional development, lead to a definite increase in the latter's educational mobility, whilst development of the physical-athletic component of their sons' being, served as

¹⁴ The researcher links Snarey's (1993) study to the importance of intellectual competence in attaining educational and occupational competence. This will find further representation in the discussion on social-emotional development.

potent predictor of their occupational mobility (Snarey, 1993:182). During the son's adolescent years it was only the care for intellectual-academic development that underscored the son's academic and occupational mobility. Snarey (1993:183) comments on these findings in stating that

[b]oys, ...appear to benefit from all types of positive interaction with their fathers, and boys who received all three forms of paternal nurturance¹⁵ thus had an advantage over boys whose fathers provided only traditional forms of childrearing participation.

The **second level**, as alluded to in the previous paragraph, on which increased father involvement may impact on his child, relates to the latter's **social-emotional competence**. Santrock (1970, cited in Snarey, 1993:153), ascribing to Erikson's developmental stages and relevant skills attained in each, undertook a study in which he attempted to measure the impact the loss of a father might have on 10-year-old boys. He found that boys aged between zero and two years experienced a higher degree of mistrust than trust (associated with Erikson's stage one), and those between three and five years of age displaying higher levels of shame (stage two), guilt (stage three) and inferiority (stage four) than those aged between six and nine years. Based on this, he believed that his findings provided "...'support for Erikson's contention that the development of basic trust in the child's early years serves as a foundation on which ensuing stages must build' ..." (Santrock, 1970, quoted in Snarey, 1993:153). An interesting account of social-emotional support during the adolescence of the sons presented the finding that, although fathers' impact on this level decreased during this period, they still portrayed an imperative role. This was attributed to the fact that both fathers and mothers established a positive relationship between their sons and the sons' peers by promoting the personal happiness, interests and psycho-social development of the child (Feldman & Wentzel, 1990, cited in Snarey, 1993:160). Harsh discipline by the fathers, on the other hand, heralded the opposite effect and resulted in *emotional disengagement* (Phares & Clay, 2007:184).

In terms of the **third level of development**, being the origination of specific **sex roles**, Snarey (1993:155) asserts that highly involved fathers may be more prone to

¹⁵ These include physical-athletic, social-emotional and intellectual-academic.

encourage androgynous and egalitarian approaches pertaining to masculinity and femininity than traditional fathers originally did (Radin, 1982:201). By assuming a more egalitarian approach towards gender roles themselves, it is safe to assume that parents enable children to ascribe to such behaviour themselves (Lamb & Oppenheim, quoted in Snarey, 1993:156). This thought was echoed in a comparative study of traditional and non-traditional families in Israel by Sagi (1982, quoted in Snarey, 1993:156) who stated:

...‘involved fathers do not eliminate the feminine tendencies of their daughters, but add to the sex role orientation a masculine perspective as well ...The less stereotypic models at home enabled [both sons and daughters] to perceive their fathers as maintaining dominance while being capable of reflecting love and warmth at the same time.’

In addition to challenging traditional gender role ideologies, a strong father-daughter relationship also provides a so-called *relationship template*, in other words, a blueprint for her for future relationships with men in her life, whether this is romantic, collegial or merely friendships (Hall & Tift, 2007:84). It also serves as validation for the femininity of the daughter (Barclay & Lupton, 1999:1014). This template and validation highlights the relationship between her mother and father and establishes the foundations on which she may build her relationships with men. The behaviour the father models for his daughter, may be internalised by her and regarded as the appropriate manner in which cross-gender behaviour should occur (Hall & Tift, 2007:84). In the absence of a proactive relationship with a father, however, these girls may position themselves in a subordinate position in relation to men, by attempting to gain validation in self-destructive ways (Hall & Tift, 2007:83). Examples of this include an unmotivated idealisation of, as well as obsession about men (romanticising that which they think they are deprived of) (Hall & Tift, 2007:83).

Negative implications of being fatherless apply to both sons and daughters. Based on research in the United States, it was found that the fatherless boys displayed so-called *protest masculinity*, where one finds young men attempting to compensate for being without a father within a female-headed household, by acting in an aggressive, rebellious and exploitative manner towards women (Draper & Harpending, 1982:257; Popenoe, 1996:156; Scanzoni, 1995:380). In terms of such behaviour, these men feel that the only manner in which they will be able to fully validate their masculinity is

by sexual contact with women, which is deemed a conquest rather than a loving interaction with another individual. This manifests in several negative occurrences. These include both boys and girls becoming sexually active at a very early age, which may result in teenage pregnancy (Popenoe, 1996:63). Children born to these young girls usually grow up fatherless in single-parent households which reinforces problems associated with the feminisation of poverty¹⁶ (Knox & Schacht, 2008:59), social-emotional development, as well as other forms of anti-social behaviour that may result in deviance or crime (Popenoe, 1996:64).

2.4 CONCLUSION

“... The image is one of a male parent – father – as well as a nurturer, playmate, disciplinarian, and protector. These roles carry messages that help people learn and acquire their rights and responsibilities. ‘What can I do?’ ‘What should I do?’ The messages, however, are not always clear and are sometimes challenged” (Marsiglio, 2004a:1).

This introductory quote found definite representation in this chapter, based on the fact that a concise overview of the juxtaposed conceptualisations associated with fathering practices in contemporary society, was provided. Two strands of arguments were heralded.

The chapter commenced with a discussion of the first set of the arguments – the nature of the deficit paradigm which manifests in the so-called role-inadequacy perspective. What came to the fore quite evidently based on the sources cited, was the pathological manner in which proponents of this approach dealt with issues related to fathering. Fathers were presented as uninvolved, uncaring and uninterested to partake in the lives of their children based on the fact that they were either seen as incompetent or unwilling to do so (cf. Hawkins & Dollahite, 1997). Embedded within this discussion were the three phases through which men progressed pertaining to their role as father. These included the moral-caregiver, the breadwinner and the gender role model. The researcher opted to include literature on these three phases within this section, because these roles were not seen as a synergised union, but rather as separate and exclusive configurations which dominated the different time periods of which they formed part. The section was

¹⁶ This term refers to the “disproportionate percentage of poverty experienced by women living alone or with their children. Single mothers are particularly associated with poverty” (Knox & Schacht, 2008:59).

concluded with a comprehensive critique of the basic arguments of the deficit paradigm, including its overemphasis on the inadequacies of fathers, its non-developmental nature, the fact that it misconstrues the motives and desires of fathers, and its inability to fully conceptualise the concept of 'care' (Hawkins & Dollahite, 1997).

As precursor to Point 2.3 on the nature of generative fathering, attention was given to possible factors that may encourage fathers to become involved in the lives of their children. These included the economic needs of the family, the wife's capacity to earn more in the labour market, the mother's desire to transcend her domestic existence, an emphasis on egalitarian rather than patriarchal power structures in the family, and the importance of primary care by the parents rather than alternative child care services (Brotherson & White, 2007; Doherty et al., 1998; LaRossa, 1988; Radin, 1982; Russell, 1986). Point 2.3's dominant theme was centred around the principle of *generativity*. In fully conceptualising this principle, the researcher thought it appropriate to provide a discussion on the origin of *generativity* as one of several principles in Erikson's (1984; 1997) lifespan model of psychosocial development. In doing this the researcher sought to provide a comprehensive foundation from which the reader could come to realise the importance of primary parental care-giving of the child by using the principles associated with the different types of generative fathering, namely biological, parental and societal generativity (Snarey, 1993).

After a discussion of several determinants that impacted on the *level* of involvement displayed by fathers (ranging from motivation and skills to institutional practices and support), the principles of generative fathering were highlighted. These included the different conditions within which the generative father has to function, and the related forms of 'work' he has to perform, including ethical work, stewardship, development work and relationship work. Forming part of the broader concept of fatherwork (Dollahite et al., 1997a), theorists pointed to the degree to which the mastery of these principles would prepare fathers to engage in a more 'involved' fashion in the lives of these children. Here the components of generative fathering came to the fore in the form of interaction, accessibility and the 'convening' principle of generativity, parental responsibility. The latter shed light on three domains fathers have to partake in to insure a generative approach to parenting, namely the *behavioural*, *emotive* and *cognitive domains* (Palkovitz, 1997). The last part of the chapter dealt with the impact of generative fathering on the father, as well as the intellectual, socio-emotional and sex-role origination levels of the child (Barclay & Lupton, 1999; Hall & Tift, 2007;

Phares & Clay, 2007; Popenoe, 1996; Pruett, 2000; Radin, 1982; Rhoden & Robinson, 1997; Snarey, 1993; Williams, 2007).

Evident from the discussion was the fact that fathers, despite possible limitations and problems, are experiencing unprecedented opportunities to partake in the lives of their children in a more nurturing, involved and caring way (cf. Snarey, 1993:357). One should keep in mind that although proponents of the deficit paradigm provide a very bleak positivistic account of the role of fathers, they do, however, emphasise the problems both parents and children face without the necessary proactive parenting practices. Generative fathering provides the opportunity for fathers to reduce negative impacts on their own, as well as the emotional, intellectual and gender role behaviour of their children, by adhering to their ethical and moral obligation towards both their family and the broader community. It highlights the importance of a selfless and progressive approach which cements itself within an interpretivistic epistemological foundation that encourages debate and social change.

The chapter that follows will serve as reflection on the manner in which these ethical and moral obligations find representation in the practices of gay men who foster the need to parent in a more involved manner. This will be done to provide a balanced account in the comparative empirical discussion in Chapter Five.

CHAPTER THREE

GAY FATHERING: TOWARDS THE REALISATION OF GENERATIVE FATHERING

A THEORETICAL OVERVIEW

3.1 INTRODUCTION

Chapter Three will articulate the theoretical foundation for the research objective provided and research questions posed in Chapter One concerning the relationship between gay men and their desire to parent. As communicated in the introduction of the dissertation, several gay men may foster the need to either become fathers or play a more intricate part in the lives of their children. These children may be from previous heterosexual relationships (or marriages), or newly adopted by gay men after 'coming out'. Yet, as will become evident in this chapter, the link between homosexuality and parenting has never been met with a great deal of enthusiasm. Several authors have questioned this synergy, posing questions like, "[h]ow can two loving, homosexual men teach a young boy to care for and love a woman? ...What will two loving moms teach a little girl about men?" (Stanton & Maier, 2005:71). Much of the negative associations with homosexuality and homosexual parenting may in fact be derived from the original meaning of the concept itself.

Although not the primary focus or theme of the dissertation, it was deemed appropriate to shortly discuss the (overlooked) distinction that should be made between the categories 'homosexual' and 'gay', used, quite often, in an interchangeable manner both academically and on societal level. The category of 'homosexuality'¹⁷ dominated discourse about same-sex attraction for nearly a century, viewed in a pathological manner, thus, as condition or disease (Herdt, 1992:4). The category of 'gay' only came to the forefront in the 1950s and 1960s, and most evidently in the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s. This category transcended the mere focus on same-sex attraction as a sexual category and clinical condition, and progressed towards the inclusion of a cultural system that comprised a "spectrum of social life". This included gay social practices, roles and networks which manifested in particular normative behaviour, attitudes and even strategies to curtail the negative effects of stigmatisation (Cass, 1984:117; Herdt, 1992:4-5). Cass (1990:240) argues that this period saw the rise of focus on the 'personalities' of individuals, whether

¹⁷ The term was coined by Benkert in 1869 and mainly resided within medical and historical literature that dealt with pathology.

heterosexual, homosexual or bisexual, rather than merely focussing on 'activities' that rendered homosexuals as sick or deviant. The rise of ideologies that included "...individual rights, tolerance of differences, and the importance of self-fulfilment" again emerged in both society and academia, with primary concern of the individual's (and, one may argue, group of individuals') distinct view of themselves and society (Cass, 1990:240)¹⁸. In a discussion on the formation of 'homosexual cultures' in Los Angeles, New York and San Francisco, the impact of the Stonewall Riot in 1969 and the annual Gay Pride Parade internationally, Herdt (1992:11) makes the assertion that the stigma that plagued the nature of homosexuality, has led to a "...transition from homosexual (secret) to gay (public)".

Yet, the effects of the ever prevailing stigmatisation of same-sex attraction within society which manifested in the so-called "disease model", have been difficult to eradicate from the views held by members of society (Herdt, 1992:6). Based on this, as already indicated, many still use the categories of 'gay' and 'homosexual' in an interchangeable manner. Unaware of this 'overlooked' distinction, members of society may, unknowingly, reinforce stigmas embedded within pathological accounts associated with conceptualisations of 'homosexuality'. In this regard, consider the following words of a fictional character in Holleran's *Dancer from the dance* (1992, quoted in Esterberg, 1996:383):

I have been a full-time fag for the past five years, I realised the other day. Everyone I know is gay, all my fantasies are gay, I am ...those people we used to see in the *discos, bars, baths, all the time* – remember? ...I am completely, hopelessly gay!¹⁹

This, according to the researcher, is the predominant image with which the majority of societal members are presented with when thinking about gay individuals. Writers such as Benne and McDormatt (2004), Besner and Spungin (1995:17), Myers and Scanzoni (2005:115) and Thio (1998:226) have all made reference to the studies that denote the injurious lifestyle that many gay men lead. Such views may strengthen the notion that gay men are obsessed with sexual behaviour. Such views prompted South African journalist Thiel (2005:20) to write an article for the predominantly Afrikaans Christian market magazine, *Maksiman*, in which he investigated the nature

¹⁸ This is a thought that is echoed in the broad theoretical framework in which this dissertation is imbedded, that of an epistemology of interpretivism and ontology of constructionism (see Chapter 1).

¹⁹ Emphasis added.

of homosexuality. He provided his respondents with a number of possible scenarios within which they would interact with gay and lesbian individuals. He did this as an attempt to determine the respondents' perceptions of homosexuality in general. These scenarios all aligned with the foregoing quote insofar as it hypothesised about the manner in which gay men would make advances towards heterosexual men in the showers after a sporting activity, or lesbian women flirting with the wives of the male respondents (to name only two) (Thiel, 2005:20).

An underlying theme within the distinction between the categories of 'gay' and 'homosexual', is reference to the role of two concepts formulated within **symbolic interactionism**. These include George Herbert Mead's reference to the 'me'-and the 'I'-components of 'the self'. As will be evident from the discussion that follows, one finds 'homosexual' individuals occupying the 'me' position within the seemingly dominant heterosexual society, thus, adhering to an "...organised set of attitudes of others which one himself assumes" (cf. Mead, 1962:175). The 'I', however, is regarded as the "...incalculable, unpredictable, and creative aspect of the self" (Ritzer & Goodman, 2003:349). Mead (1962:175) places a great deal of emphasis on the importance of the 'I', insofar as he equates it with novelty, true value disposition, the full realisation of the 'self' and modern societal interactive processes. As such, one could easily assume that if gay people are given the opportunity to fully realise the nature of the 'I'-component of the self, several stereotypical and prejudiced perceptions and misconceptions about homosexuality in general may be dispelled. This might be of particular value in terms of their role as parents, and as overarching theme of the dissertation, as parents who fully realise, implement, maintain and strengthen principles of generative fathering. Weston (1991:49) made the following related comment:

Coming out is structured in terms of a conceptual opposition between hiding (or lying) and honesty, an opposition elaborated through spatial imagery that situates the self within a social landscape. Implicit in most of the coming-out stories ...was a division between an authentic inner self and a surface presentation directed toward an outer world.

Against this background, this chapter will provide a discussion on the **nature of gay fathering**. It will commence with a short, yet coherent overview of the manner in which gay men progress towards the development of, as some may term, a gay

identity. The importance thereof is echoed by academics such as Benkov (1994:31). Benkov attributes focus on gay identity formation to the fact that the 'coming out'-process is twofold – men coming out to themselves and society, as well as gay men coming out as *gay fathers*. Following the discussion on '**gay-identity-formation**', the researcher will focus on the **nature of gay fathering**. Emphasis will be placed on avenues gay men follow to become fathers, their reasons for doing so, and the possible formations such families may take. The chapter will conclude with arguments on the **relationship between gay fathers and their children**. Here the work of several academics on the advantages of gay parenting, obstacles faced within both the heterosexual and gay communities pertaining to gay fathering, and probable coping mechanisms will be demarcated. The discussion will take place amidst two problems – the first centring on the so-called "...abhorrence of any association between homosexuals and children..." and the second on the supposed juxtaposed nature of homosexuality and family life (Benkov, 1994:31). Such perceptions (or even misconceptions) that plague attempts to establish a synergy between these two (seemingly) polar opposites, serve as motivating factor for discussing both 'coming out'-processes. This will be done for **two reasons**. **Firstly**, in order to arrive at a better understanding of the interwoven nature of the two processes for gay men and its impact on them. **Secondly**, based on the in-depth demarcation of the nature of generative fathering in Chapter Two, the reader will be provided with the opportunity to contemplate the presence or lack of the principles²⁰ associated with generative fathering.

The researcher however, despite the progressive arguments of, amongst others Herdt (1992) and Cass (1984; 1990), will not focus predominantly on this 'heterosexual/gay dichotomy' as this is not the primary concern of this dissertation. He will, however, use the concepts interchangeably in an attempt to again reiterate the movement towards a redefinition and utilisation of the category of 'homosexuality' in a more proactive and positive manner. This will be done to exemplify a movement away from pathological accounts towards a more fortological and salutogenic (and per implication, generative) form of the identity of gay men, which may manifest in their parenting and fathering skills. In doing this, foregoing thoughts on liberation, diversity, interpretation and construction that arose in the period between the 1960s and 1990s, may again find sufficient solace in both categories due to the probable inherent strengths within gay (and homosexual) fathering.

²⁰ The principles of generative fathering include its categories, components and dimensions discussed in detail in Chapter 2.

3.2 THE GAY MALE: THE PATH TOWARDS THE AUTHENTIC 'SELF'

In his work *Twelve Night*, William Shakespeare made the potent comment of “[d]arkness is ignorance”. As such, this section will seek to discuss perceptions of homosexuality by enmeshing them in a short, yet coherent discussion of the purposed stages through which several gay men may progress to fully contemplate their sexual orientation. Academics such as Bozett (1988), Cass (1990), Connell (1992), Downs (2006), Konik and Stewart (2004) and Miller (1979) have outlined a number of **'stages' through which men progress in their endeavour to better construct their homosexual existence**. These have been, for the purpose of the discussion on gay fatherhood that follows, reformulated into the following **three phases of 'gay identity'-construction** in an attempt to incorporate all the ideas of the various researchers: *acknowledging same-sex attraction, marginal involvement, comparison, tolerance and compensation* and finally *accepting and authenticating the gay identity*²¹.

3.2.1 Acknowledging same-sex attraction

The **first of these phases** may find the gay individual struggling with the perceived knowledge of occupying a position which may be contradictory to what the mainstream, heterosexual society prescribes. Here the individual recognises that elements of his behaviour (whether it may be actions or thoughts) may be associated with homosexuality (Cass, 1990:248). This phase has been described as a period of “crisis” (Downs, 2006:63; Konik & Stewart, 2004:818) in the life of individuals, insofar they are forced to “...identify ...gay desires in themselves, [thus] confront their very existence” (Benkov, 1994:29). In order for the individual to resolve such feelings, he might seek to explore three *'paths'* within this phase. Pertaining to the **first path**, the individual rejects any possible 'homosexual interpretation' of his behaviour (Cass, 1990:248), dismissing the actions or thoughts as mere curiosity or probable bisexual tendencies (Downs, 2006:46).

The **second path** has the individual acknowledging the possibility of being homosexual, yet citing the undesirable nature thereof, retreating into isolation from

²¹ It should be noted that these are no specific stages or phases through which gay individuals progress, but based on the research of the cited authors, each of whom provided several probable stages for the identity development of gay men, the researcher thought it necessary to condense their work into three categories. This was done in an attempt to provide the reader with a well-structured and comprehensive overview of the different hypotheses, as well as the definite similarities each of the theorists displays in their work, regardless of contrasting conceptualisations for each of their respective stages.

any form of homosexual activity (Cass, 1990:248). He may also display homophobic behaviour (referring to gay men as “faggots” or “homos”), attempting suicide, succumbing to substance abuse, alienating themselves from others or entering a heterosexual marriage (Cohen & Savin-Williams, 1996b:115; Downs, 2006:44-45, 50, 52; Gonsiorek, 1995:24). **Thirdly**, the gay man finds himself within a *marginal situation*, thus, “...those social situations in which individuals are potentially confronted with incompatible normative expectations of belief, attitude and behavior as a consequence of their simultaneous occupancy of two contradictory ... statuses” (Lindquist & Hirabayashi, 1979:88). Feelings ranging from unstable self-concepts, inadequacy and self-doubt, to isolation and loneliness are but a few manifestations such people have to face in their daily existence (Bozett, 1989:140; Grotevant, 1992, cited in Konik & Stewart, 2004:821; Lindquist & Hirabayashi, 1979:88). In an attempt to eradicate such feelings, the gay individual may succumb to his genital urges engaging in so-called “furtive sex” with other gay men, deeming his marriage (if applicable) as a duty and same-sex feelings as temporary (Bozett, 1989:141).

Downs (2006) echoes this notion by emphasising the first of three phases, according to him, through which gay men progress in their identity construction. The first of these find the gay man *overwhelmed by shame*. In his prelude to his discussion of gay men finding themselves within this predicament, Downs (2006:42) states the following, which the researcher believes underscores the struggle many gay men experience initially:

...most – if not all – gay men start at [the] place of being overwhelmed with the shame of being gay in a world that worships masculine power. ...This is the start of his journey as a gay man, and it is by far the most difficult and damaging. He'd do anything not to be gay. He suffers immensely the pain of knowing that he can't change the one thing that makes him so different from other men. He imagines that being gay will ruin his life completely, and *there is nothing he can do to change it*.

In addition to the mentioned manifestations several gay men may succumb to, Grotevant (1992, cited in Konik & Stewart, 2004:821) also cites the impact of social forces such as prejudice and discrimination that curtail efforts of gay men to validate their sexual orientation. He makes reference to the importance of a supportive and optimal environment in which gay individuals explore the probability of developing

their sexual orientation with the necessary aid, including amongst others, the institution of the family. Research in the United States has indicated that individuals are prone to move towards and imbed themselves within environments that provide support and solace, whereas those individuals, who lack such a network of liberation, are deprived of any such opportunity to fully realise their identity (Kroger, 1993, cited in Konik & Stewart, 2004:821).

These findings are represented in the work of Blumstein and Schwartz (1990:310) who cite the importance of the manner in which social life is 'organised' by societal norms and expectations. In other words, they considered the degree to which society provides circumstances that allow individuals to engage in certain activities, amongst others, homosexuality, for "[s]exuality emerges from the circumstances and meanings available to individuals; it is a product of socialization, opportunity, and interpretation" (Blumstein & Schwartz, 1990:310). If individuals (heterosexual and homosexual) are not afforded the opportunity to explore their sexual orientation, they may be deprived of the opportunity to fully realise their sexual orientation. Connell's (1992:744) research outlined six stages²² through which one of his respondents progressed in relation to his sexual identity formation. The first of these find solace in the foregoing arguments, namely *prehistory*. This makes reference to the social setting within which the respondent grew up, described (in this case), as a small conservative country town without particular tensions, thus, a setting in which he could gradually come to terms with his homosexuality. The respondent did however cite his initial engagement in a so-called "sex play" with a male friend, who acted in a very apprehensive manner (Connell, 1992:744).

Much of this initial apprehension may be ascribed to the role of hegemonic²³ masculinity and the resulting homophobia that plague contemporary society. If such a hegemonic ideal is enforced within society, Bilton et al. (2002:154) argue that compulsory heterosexuality may arise. This establishes the normative acceptability of heterosexual behaviour on the one end of a continuum, whereas the unacceptability of homosexuality occupies the extreme opposite. Hegemonic masculinity presupposes the importance for men to adhere to the so-called "masculine ideal" (Burke & Nelson, 2001:211) to which men should aspire to conform to. Such an

²² Connell's (1992) six stages includes: (1) Prehistory (socialisation years), (2) Preparation (sex-play with male friend), (3) Contact with gay community, (4) Acknowledgement of gay identity, (5) Immersion in the gay culture and (6) Consolidation of gay identity.

²³ The concept hegemony refers to the acceptance of a particular "... ideology, regime or whole social system" (Bilton, et al., 2002:154).

ideology defines men as individuals who utilise an “ethic of justice”²⁴ in their everyday life. Against this background, men would be expected to be more logical, aggressive, competitive and task-orientated (Burke & Nelson, 2001:211; Ritzer & Goodman, 2003:444). If such views are internalised, this hegemonic view may not only reflect, but also reproduce specific social dynamics within society, including struggles to obtain resources and power, excluding and including certain groupings and the division of specific gender forms (Connell, 1992:736).

Per implication, gay men find themselves excluded from the category of masculinity insofar as it is argued that many regard homosexuality as a so-called *negation* of what it means to be masculine, based on the supposed effeminate manner of gay people (cf. Benkov, 1994:30; Connell, 1992:736). This idea is echoed by Herek (1986, quoted in Connell, 1992:736) who states:

...to be ‘a man’ in contemporary ...society is to be homophobic – that is, to be hostile toward homosexual persons in general and gay men in particular.

Homophobia (also referred to as heterosexism²⁵), is defined as any form of prejudiced or discriminatory sentiments directed towards those inclined to a same-sex relationship (Thio, 1998:220), in short, the “dread of homosexuality” (Bech, 1997:67). Homophobia manifests in a number of ways, both on an overt and covert level. The first refers to observable discrimination in the form of assaults or verbal humiliation, with several homophobes decrying the existence of gay men (Benkov, 1994:30). The latter may manifest in the form of negative beliefs about homosexual individuals as being “abominable, evil, or unnatural” (Thio, 1998:221). In addition, homophobes also note that they have nothing against gay individuals *per se*, “if only they wouldn’t flaunt their sexuality, throwing it in everyone’s face” (Benkov, 1994:30).

Behaviour such as this, might lead to the internalisation of these negative views by homosexual people, leaving them with thoughts of disgust, self-hatred and humiliation pertaining to their sexual orientation (Du Plessis, 1999:21), resulting in homophobic behaviour within themselves. Torr (1997:66) exemplifies this notion when he recounts details from his path as a young gay priest. Although he tells of a

²⁴ A concept used by Cultural Feminists.

²⁵ Homophobia is also referred to as heterosexism, to be comparable to other forms of discrimination such as racism (in terms of skin colour) and sexism (in terms of gender) (Thio, 1998: 220).

yearning to be able to discuss homosexuality when given the chance during his theology studies to do so, he did however not reflect to have experienced a great deal of sympathy towards homosexuality. When he received a letter from a friend of his who had discovered his own homosexuality, he recalls "...writing a very moralistic and judgemental letter to [my friend] ...I certainly was not very sympathetic or understanding at this point."

If gay individuals succumb to the pressures of homophobia, they may choose to foreclose on admitting to their gay identities, thus retreating into a state of "permanent denial" about their authentic self (Downs, 2006:63). In doing this, they view their relationships with significant others in a cynical and distrusting manner and their future as "...lonely, ...childless and socially outcast" (Downs, 2006:51, 55, 64). Yet, ironically, inherent in his discussion of the role of hegemonic masculinity, Connell (1992:741) portrays homosexual men as more homogeneous than heterogeneous in relation to their heterosexual counterparts. This is attributed to the fact that several of the respondents that participated in his study, cited their "socially masculinised" nature within contemporary society. These gay men were thus able to occupy traditionally male dominated sectors of work, exhibiting an active and authoritative manner. This underlines the idea that despite their sexual orientation, the majority of gay respondents were engaged in some degree of hegemonic masculinity in their adolescent and grownup years, and were able to coexist with the predominant heterosexual community, rather than succumbing to it.

Based on this, it should be deemed appropriate to cite research which has indicated that people within marginal situations (i.e. homosexuals) are able to cope relatively well in adapting to their social settings (Antonovsky, 1955, in Lindquist & Hirabayashi, 1979:88). Against this background, the importance of focussing on the probable strengths gay individuals ascribe to will be reiterated, in order for them to function sufficiently within a seemingly homophobic environment. In doing this, one will not merely adhere to pathological hypothesising that outlines the problems and inherent weaknesses gay men may be struggling with to transcend, but rather commence their full realisation of the "I"-component of their self. Such transcendence will lead the gay individual to progress to the **second phase** in his identity construction, that of **marginal involvement, comparison, tolerance and compensation**. Within this phase, according to Miller (1998:509), the gay individual may seek to engage in sexual experimentation in an attempt to near inner peace and social acceptance.

3.2.2 Marginal involvement, comparison, tolerance and compensation

Miller (1998:509) argues that **marginal involvement** ensues from the gay individual progressing towards the gay world in attempt to meet other individuals like him (also see Cass, 1990:219). Such a stage arises based on the individual's tentative acceptance of the prospect of being homosexual ("I *may* be homosexual"), and concludes with his acknowledgement of the likelihood that such an identity is applicable to him ("I probably *am* a homosexual") (Cass, 1990:248). The initial behaviour of individuals has them undertake a so-called identity *moratorium* during which they question their sexual identity, without committing to a specific "resolution" (Konik & Stewart, 2004:819). They seek to construct their identity through an "active exploration" thereof, a process Worthington et al. (2002:26) define as "...exploring, evaluating or experimenting with one's sexual needs, values, sexual orientation, and/or preferences for activities, partner characteristics, and modes of sexual expression."

Such an 'exploration' may include meeting several gay men in different social settings, whether these be clubs, bars, bathhouses, a bench or cafés (Bech, 1997:111; Downs, 2006:94; Du Plessis, 1997:70) in an attempt to, in all likelihood, commence a "...rehearsal of the homosexual role" (Cass, 1990:249). If such meetings were to be defined as positive and rewarding, further meetings and, per implication identification with other gay men may be necessitated (Cass, 1990:249). In such instances, these settings provide a much needed 'retreat' or 'salvation' for individuals plagued by stigmas, insofar as identification with men who are similar to them based on their sexual orientation, is provided for (Du Plessis, 1997:70). In short, a tolerance of their perceived homosexual identity, rather than final acceptance thereof, arises (Cass, 1990:249). Yet, if such meetings are interpreted in a negative manner, the individual may, on a psychological level, experience a definite decrease in self-esteem and attempt to reduce or cease any future contact with the gay community (Cass, 1990:249). Negative experiences associated with sexual exploitation of the individual by other sexually predatory gay men have also been documented in research (Connell, 1992:744). Connell's study exemplified this statement with one of his respondents citing the "notoriously antisocial ... very cold ..." nature of the gay bar scene, where he felt "raped" by several gay men, having been forced into having anal sex.

These ideas find representation in the research undertaken in West Germany by Dannecker and Reiche (1974, cited in Bech, 1997:112) which outlined **five features** associated with several meeting places for gay men. The **first** of these features cites the *lack of any 'long-term' or 'personal' attributes* within these settings, a feature reinforced by the cultivation of casual sex during the 1970s, based on discourses that imbued it with "personal and social significance" (Seidman, 1991, cited in Bech, 1997:248). This feeling may not last for long, but finding sexual validation from men or even a single man, provides satisfaction over the short term, for the individual in search of his identity (Downs, 2006:77). **Secondly**, it is argued that such milieus *alienate* rather than *authenticate*, based on the fact that sexual roles are portrayed and distances are established, rather than the full presentation of 'the self'. One common denominator of these meetings centres on the fact that several, rather than a few acquaintances (sexual in nature) are established. Bech (1997:111) attributes this as a necessity for individuals in attempt to avoid "...being recognized and unmasked" by others, within a dominant heterosexual society which condemns same-sex behaviour. As such, they progress from one anonymous encounter to the next. This thought is presented by Erving Goffman (1963:12) in his discussion on the manner in which stigmatised individuals seek to uphold their seemingly 'normal', and in the case of this study, heterosexual demeanour in society. Here, the gay (or potentially gay) male, experiencing what Goffman terms as a 'discreditable' stigma, may attempt to manage information about his sexual identity in such a manner as to conceal it from significant others and the societal whole. This further manifests in the form of impression management, whereby the periodic change in sexual partners, may secure his privacy and prohibit others to identify him as gay (cf. Ritzer & Goodman, 2003:361).

Thirdly, *reification* ensues insofar as the sexual partner is treated as merely an object, "to be used and disposed of" whilst, in the **fourth** place, gay men are *instrumentalised*, thus used as a means to an end, an instrument to selfishly construct answers about the other's sexual identity. **Finally**, *fetishism* arises due to the importance attributed to "only the surface of the other person, or only a part of him" (Dannecker & Reiche, 1974, cited in Bech, 1997:112), having the sexual identity take prominence over any other aspect of the social being of the gay individual, with him proclaiming, "I am a sensuous person" (Cass, 1984:116).

In addition to the foregoing 'sexually charged'-nature of this category of identity formation, Downs' (2006) work also provides an interesting insight into another

commonly held perception of contemporary gay men – the manner in which they *compensate* for the shame brought to the fore by the first and second stages. Here, as communicated by Cass (1990), the individual might tolerate his sexual orientation, yet still experience a sense of inferiority in relation to others. In an attempt to eradicate this, the gay man focuses on gaining approval and validation from the significant others in his life (Downs, 2006:76). Many gay people become so-called “validation junkies”, craving the importance of the biggest home, newest car, most respected occupation or most handsome lover. Any deviation from this endeavour resulting in forms of invalidation manifests in verbal, physical or passive retaliation. The first two denote verbal or physical attacks directed toward those who inhibit goal attainment, whereas the latter may manifest psychologically in emotional distress, depression or hypersensitivity, or socially in the form of attempts to sabotage those who wronged them (Downs, 2006:80).

If such individuals however manage to fully compare and tolerate the idea of their being gay and transcend the noted materialistic validation, they progress to the final category of identity formation, during which they “immerse” (Connell, 1992:744) themselves with their homosexual existence.

3.2.3 The two ‘As’: Accepting and authenticating the gay identity

This category is characterised by the researcher as exhibiting the two *As*, *accepting* the gay identity and finally *authenticating* it.

(a) *Accepting the gay identity*

Individuals, who progress to the **acceptance** of their sexual identity, will experience a greater sense of security pertaining to their sexual orientation. This may manifest in an increased contact with members of the homosexual community, as well as the establishment of a network of homosexual friends (Cass, 1990:249). Such acceptance also signals not merely “coming out” to oneself and others, but also a process of “coming *in* to an existing gay milieu” (Connell, 1992:744). Such a stage still presupposes sexual activity outside the realm of a monogamous relationship, as denoted by a respondent in Connell’s (1992:745) study of a festive-like situation:

Rage, rage, rage! Let's do everything you've denied yourself for 25 years. Let's get into it and have a good time sexually. And go out partying and dancing and drinking.

In accepting themselves, homosexual individuals enter a stage termed by Cass (1990:250) as *identity pride*. Here they experience juxtaposed positions on the matter of homosexuality, those who approve it and others who disapprove it, a phenomenon that today, within contemporary democratic societies, still dominates the ideologies and perceptions of many. In such instances, society is presented with the so-called "us-versus-them"-stereotype. This view propagates the idea that homosexuality should be presented as "...the Other or with Otherness and ...as a monster or a disease. [Something that] ...somehow interrupted the western cultural reality of sexuality and gender in a disturbing way" (Herdt, 1997:179).

As such, it is deemed the responsibility of homosexual individuals to rid themselves of any possible negative stereotypes and "heterosexual expectations" directed towards them (Bozett, 1981a:554). This is done in two ways, the first of which involves participation in the social world of homosexuals, thus entering into a sexual relationship with another man, attending gay functions or reading gay literary works. Through doing this, they might be able to gain an increased comprehension, and possibly appreciation, of their minority status, and dispel negative stigmas and stereotypes directed towards them (cf. Bozett, 1988:219). The second suggests that gay people disclose their identities to other members of society. Although possible apprehension in the forms of loss of friendships, stigmatisation or rejection (which are regarded as rare) are foreseen, gay men, on an individual level, will possibly be provided with the opportunity to internalise positive affirmations of others concerning their gay identities (Bozett, 1981a:554; Bozett, 1988:219). Although reactions from significant others cannot be predicted beforehand, such disclosure, according to Bozett, may have the gay individuals experiencing a certification of their identity and promote self-acceptance. This, in turn, fosters the possibility of acceptance of the gay community as a collective (cf. Bozett, 1988:219).

In **disclosing their identities to others**, the most significant social institution in which such a proclamation occurs, will arguably be the family. In this regard, DeVine (1984:11) identifies **five phases through which the family of gay men progress in their attempt to better understand and accept them**. He terms the **first** of this as *subliminal awareness*, during which family members become aware of the possibility

of their son/brother being gay, due to social clues ranging from a specific fashion sense, lack of romantic heterosexual relationships, or the fact that he occupies most of his time with same-sex friends, a thought emphasised by Weston (1991:44). The **second** is termed as the *impact* phase where the revelation of his sexual orientation is made.

This is followed by the **third** phase, *adjustment*, where family members attempt to adapt to the homosexuality and even (in several instances) pressure the individual to conceal his identity (DeVine, 1984:13). Such behaviour manifests in families who exhibit three predominant themes, these being “maintaining respectability at all costs”, thus emphasising the importance of conformity. In addition, seeking to “solve their own problems” and resisting assistance from professionals from the outside, whereas many others may propagate the view of “be as our religion teaches us to be”, with the gay man rejected based on, amongst others, Christian teachings (DeVine, 1984:14). The **fourth** and **fifth** phases involve *resolution*, in other words examining their own views on homosexuality, whereas *integration* sees the family members changing their family’s value system to accommodate their diversity of the son/brother (DeVine, 1984:14).

(b) ***Authenticating the gay identity***

Based on such a bold initiative, on both the part of gay men and their families, the basis for establishing an **authentic gay self** is provided for. At the core of their work, both Benkov (1994) and Downs (2006) make reference to the idea of establishing the *authentic gay self*, as the final step through which gay identity development may progress. This introduces the importance of a ‘long-term relationship’ with other gay males, as well as a continuance of revealing their sexual orientation to their significant others, a process Connell (1992:744) terms as *consolidation*. This phase presents the gay individual with the prerequisite of establishing a primary commitment to his partner, thus something that values “...*both* ...sexual pleasure and ...honesty..., caring and sharing and learning from each other” (Connell, 1992:745).

This foundation for the purposed final phase of gay identity development finds representation in the work of Altman (1996:83) who raises the interesting notion of the increasing importance of establishing both an emotional and sexual bond within gay relationships. As Isherwood (1992, quoted in Altman, 1996:83) argues, “You

know you are homosexual when you discover you can love another man”, thus transcending a mere erotic attraction. This presupposes the importance of the existence of a multidimensional homosexual identity insofar as the gay man acknowledges the importance of his sexual orientation as only one component of his overall identity, a process termed as *identity synthesis* (Cass, 1990:250) and *transformed participation* (Miller, 1979, cited in Patterson & Chan, 1997:251). Proclamations in this regard may include “I am a member of a minority group”, or “I am a person who socialises with gay people” (Cass, 1984:116). This makes provision for sexually, culturally, politically and socially constructed components imbedded within his ‘self’ (cf. Castells, 2004:264). In an attempt to complete his identity construction, the gay individual thus embraces the phase of *open endorsement* (Miller, 1998:512). This involves merging his gay and non-gay worlds and championing the gay lifestyle.

As reader, one should be able to denote the continuous thread of the arguments of symbolic interactionism that dominated the foregoing discussion. Mead’s (1962) reference to the distinction between the ‘I’ and the ‘me’ components found definite representation, a thought the researcher will seek to exemplify in the discussion on gay fathering that follows. Questions to be pondered include the following: “Will gay men, with the realisation of their ‘I’-component of their ‘selves’, be able to realise unique and novel ways of parenting (and the results thereof)?”, “Do they succumb to the organised structure of the ‘me’ in a seemingly compulsory heterosexual world?” and “Does an authentic gay self fully prepare them for their roles as fathers?”

3.3 THE GAY FATHER: A CONTRADICTION IN TERMS?

Consider the following notion of Benkov (1994:142):

Lesbian and gay parents essentially reinvent the family as a pluralistic phenomenon. They self-consciously build from the ground up a variety of family types that don’t conform to the traditional structure. In so doing, they encourage society to ask, “What is a family?” The question has profound meaning in both the culture at large and the very heart of each of our intimate lives.

In the probability of fully realising the potential of such a reinvention of the family as institution in general, and gay fathering specifically, several steps had to be taken. These arose in the early 1970s, when, amongst others, the American Psychiatric Association removed homosexuality from its list of mental disorders in 1973 (Johnson & O'Connor, 2002:1). Coupled with this, The American Psychological Association did the same in 1975, which, in effect, heralded a new era in which clinicians and researchers, amongst others, started to re-conceptualise and incorporate new dimensions in their views of, interactions with, and research on issues related to homosexuality (Johnson & O'Connor, 2002:1).

In addition to these factors, the celebration of basic civil rights in society (Johnson & O'Connor, 2002:2) aided by the mobilisation of several gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered (to be referred to as GLBT hereafter) organisations in the United States (Barret & Robinson, 2000:5) in the early 1990s, furthered this objective. Legislation in South Africa concerning gay individuals, including, amongst others, adoption and marriage rights, also brought about change. Such rights afford gay individuals the opportunity to ponder several questions pertaining to parenting issues. These range from "Should we have children?" and "Where do we go to find an adoption agency that is open to sexual minorities?" (Barret & Robinson, 2000:6). A survey undertaken by Bryant and Demian (1994, cited in Barret & Robinson, 2000:6) indicated that about one-third of the gay fathers who partook in their study (under the age of thirty-five), communicated the need to become fathers citing the realisation of "...a rich source of life satisfaction in parenting."

Despite the possibility of enjoying this 'rich source', creating an amalgam between the concepts of gay, on the one hand, and parenting (and fathering in particular), on the other, has been met with a great deal of disillusionment. Several authors cited the improbability of such a synergy. Patterson and Chan (2000:245) for example, make the assertion that "...the idea of gay fatherhood can seem exotic or even impossible." Others argue that the categories of 'gay' and 'father' occupy two opposite, and per implication, contrasting, contradictory and incompatible identities (Baptiste, 1987:114; Bigner & Jacobsen, 1989b:174; Bozett, 1988:214; Crosbie-Burnett & Helmbrecht, 1993:257). Berkowitz and Marsiglio (2007:366), Patterson (2000:1052) and Taylor (1997:85) term such a synergy as being controversial in nature, with the former two citing the challenges such a family formation will face in terms of the negotiation and construction of gender roles and sexuality. What should be regarded as contradictory

according to Voeller and Walters (1978:149)²⁶, is the fact that a polarisation should be established between people as being heterosexual and homosexual, rather than the two being merely two sexual variants. Due to this, the sanctity, stability and foundations of the traditional family (regarded as heterosexual in nature), are seen to be threatened (Lutzer, 2004; Pfluger, 1997:448). Even from within the gay community itself, activists regard such a move as radical in nature. They argue that “[r]eal gay men don’t need to mimic the lives of straights by buying into the foundations of their lifestyle” (Barret & Robinson, 2000:6).

But does such a movement towards gay fathering presuppose a mirror-image of heterosexual fathering and its distinct practices? Or does such a movement serve to fully capture the unique, novel and generative contributions that gay fathers can make to the lives of their children, and subsequently, to family sociology in general? The discussion that follows will extensively demarcate the intricate phases, formations, principles, features, strengths, obstacles, myths and expectations associated with gay fathering.

3.3.1 Avenues in becoming a gay father

Several authors have outlined a number of formations that a predominantly ‘alternative family’ may take (Barret & Robinson, 2000; Bozett, 1987a; Johnson & O’Connor, 2002; Lev, 2004; Mallon, 2004; Patterson, 2000; Sember, 2006). In one of the most progressive statements made about the nature of the gay family as being ‘alternative’ in nature, Lev (2004:46) points to the institutionalised “... singular model of heterosexual, normatively gendered, single-race, opposite-sex, two-parent families ...” as the so-called foundation for contemporary family life, an institution she regards as a myth. Such views of family formations, arguably internalised by most of society based on the work of sociologists such as George Peter Murdock (1968)²⁷, have lead many to believe that alternative family formations such as gay families, will threaten and subsequently destroy the traditional family.

²⁶ Dr Bruce Voeller was the co-executive director of the *National Gay Task Force* in New York. In this article, published in a question-answer-format, Voeller attempted to answer several questions pertaining to the then (and one could argue, now) misunderstood pairing of homosexuality and fathering for the journal *The Family Coordinator* in 1978.

²⁷ Murdock (1968:37) defined the family as “... a social group characterized by common residence, economic co-operation, and reproduction. It includes adults of both sexes, at least two of whom maintain a socially approved sexual relationship, and one or more children, own or adopted, of the sexually cohabiting adults”.

As such, Lev cites statistics in the United States that indicate the 'mythical' nature of the supposed traditional family and its eventual decline before the emergence of the gay family. Examples of these included a census undertaken in 2000 on the contemporary American family, which indicated that there had been a 72 percent increase in unmarried cohabiting partners, 45 percent in terms of matrifocal²⁸ families, a divorce rate of 40 percent for the first and 60 percent for second marriages (Lev, 2004:46). A clear indication that many of the arguments directed towards the immoral and problematic nature of gay families only serve as attempt to re-direct attention away from the secular (not traditional) and problematic nature of contemporary heterosexual unions. Such rigid notions on gay families overshadow two probable truths that seemingly go unnoticed about gay fathers. Firstly, the fact that the sexual orientation of a parent does not inhibit the ability of the individual to provide the necessary parenting practices deemed indispensable in terms of fathering²⁹ (Bigner & Jacobsen, 1989b:184; Sullivan, 1995, cited in Mallon, 2004:11). This was based largely on the fact that Bigner and Jacobsen's study presented similarities in terms of intimacy and involvement for both heterosexual and gay fathers. Secondly, it is also taken for granted that gay men and lesbian women also have families. These individuals were raised within the stereotypical, heterosexual nuclear family, with *Gay and Lesbian STATS* (cited in Drucker, 1998:36) citing that 98 percent of lesbian and gay children and their siblings (also gay, bisexual or heterosexual), emerged from these 'accepted' and 'normative' familial formations.

Before commencing on a more in-depth discussion on the reasons for gay family formations and its possible configurations, the researcher wishes to implore the reader to keep in mind that such formations do not necessarily take place in a linear manner. Discussions on the family life cycle of gay and lesbian families have cited the foregoing stages presented by Cass (1979, 1990) and Devine (1984) as guidelines to better comprehend the manner in which these families may attempt to establish their social unit. The work of Faderman (1983/1984, cited in Laird, 1993:305) and Sophie (1986, cited in Laird, 1993:305) has refuted the mere adherence to a linear progression of developmental stages in both identity and family development. Their work reflected on differences between lesbian women and gay men, as well as several discrepancies within each category itself.

²⁸ Also termed as women-headed households.

²⁹ Refer to Chapter 2 for an in-depth discussion on the components, categories and principles of generative fathering.

Three common threads do, however, figure in **all prospective gay and lesbian familial configurations**. **Firstly**, that gay fathers should be seen as tenacious, insofar as they had to progress on a path to parenthood, without any former 'blueprint' or structure related to gay parenting (Mallon, 2004:5). **Secondly**, such a choice does not occur overnight, and as such, all gay parents have to undertake in-depth planning and research to better comprehend and discover the opportunities and services available to them, as both prospective *and* gay fathers (Mallon, 2004:5). **Thirdly**, it should be commented that such an endeavour should be regarded as revolutionary in nature, insofar as so many individuals within a compulsory heterosexual society deem the categories of 'gay' and 'father' as incompatible and contradictory (Mallon, 2004:3).

(a) ***Reasons for becoming a father***

As argued in the foregoing paragraph, it should be apparent that **gay men**, like their heterosexual counterparts, may foster the **need to become fathers**. **Several reasons** have been purposed for this.

The **first** of these highlights a possible self-serving reason, which may be intertwined with efforts of members of the gay community to obtain equality in the seemingly homophobic society, the need for higher status (Bigner & Bozett, 1990:158; Patterson & Chan, 1997:252). Another interpretation of this notion is the fact that gay men are less likely than their heterosexual counterparts, to take for granted the responsibilities, respect and appreciation fathers are afforded within contemporary society (Patterson & Chan, 1997:252). As such, it is believed that gay fathers may strive to excel and be more proficient in terms of their parenting role, based additionally on possible feelings of guilt relating to their sexuality and the fact that they feel they are being monitored by the rest of society (Bigner & Jacobsen, 1989b:181). These thoughts find representation in the work of Barret and Robinson (2000:6) who argue that the gay father may possibly experience a rise in life satisfaction that parenting may bring to the fore. This is exemplified in the notion that there is a definite distinction to be made between married and unmarried gay men. It is believed that the former grouping is more likely to internalise negative stereotypes and stigmas directed towards homosexuality and homosexuals (Bigner & Bozett, 1990:158). The authors note that this may lead to gay men abdicating their inherent need to fully realise their gay identity, and succumbing to compulsory heterosexuality to avoid rejection and isolation.

Secondly, gay men may want to become fathers based on their inability to deal with their orientation before entering a heterosexual marriages and subsequently having their children. **Thirdly**, these men want to become fathers because of their desire to parent, based on a so-called "...dissatisfaction with a less 'rooted' gay lifestyle" (Bigner & Jacobsen, 1989a:165). If gay fathers were to decide to obtain a more 'rooted' lifestyle, they may **fourthly** seek to have children merely based on the added joy, value and psychological well-being children may bring to their lives (cf. Bigner & Bozett, 1990:159; cf. Bozett, 1987a:12). Drucker (1998:37) argues that an integral part of the lives of gay men is their need to raise children. She cites statistics of the gay and lesbian population in the United States, where, since 1993, between one and three million gay men were fathers with six to 14 million children having at least one gay parent. Both Barret and Robinson (2000) and Bigner and Bozett (1990) do however refer to the importance of undertaking additional research to substantiate such motivations in becoming a parent.

Regardless of the reasons gay men may provide for becoming parents, **considerations** arise, which should be taken into account before choosing either adoption, surrogacy or other means of progressing toward gay fathering. These include the following. **Firstly**, the means to obtain a child should be considered. **Secondly**, the individual or couple should decide whether they should disclose their sexual orientation to either gain additional legal benefits in societies which acknowledge same-sex unions, or to foreclose it, to avoid probable negative stigmatisation and subsequent dismissal of their request to adopt (Mallon, 2004:16; Martin, 1993:131). These notions will be discussed in the sub-section that follows.

(b) ***Gay family formations***

As precursor to the discussion on the different formations families spearheaded by a gay father may take, the distinction between the categories of 'homosexual' and 'gay' again surfaces in the work of Miller (1979). This reinforces the notion that the 'gay' father is associated predominantly with a more proactive, liberated and, as such, generative category for fathering in contemporary society. In contrast to this, the 'homosexual father' is presented in a more pathological, secretive and stigmatised manner. Although critique may arise based on the researcher's use of views published in the late 1970s and early 1990s, he deems its inclusion as imperative. This should be attributed to three reasons. The first is based on his belief that

homophobia and compulsory heterosexuality are still (although not as much) an unavoidable manifestation within contemporary society, a view to be confirmed in the fieldwork to be undertaken. Secondly, the fact that both Herdt (1992) and Miller (1979) have made invaluable contributions to this field of study, emphasises the fact that one cannot merely discard their views. Finally, such a discussion will serve as re-emphasis on the continuance in the overarching theme of the distinction between the two categories as attempt to progress toward the establishment of both categories as generative rather than pathological.

(i) *Married and divorced gay fathers*

In discussing the formation of this category, the idea of a *gay-father career* is purposed by Bozett (1988:219) and Miller (1978:221), insofar as the latter believes it to be a "heuristic device ...for detailing the stages or sequential development of status passage", a gay father may progress through. Research in the United States has shown that gay fathers usually progress through five sequential stages or "marker events", these being dating, heterosexual marriage, becoming a father, separating or divorcing and finally the enactment of their gay lifestyle (Bozett, 1987a:4). Due to the very public nature of these stages, such events are seen as being cemented within the so-called public career of the gay father, whereas a gradual movement from heterosexual, to bisexual, to finally homosexual, is seen as the private, subjective career (Lindesmith, Strauss & Denzin, 1977, cited in Bozett, 1987a:4).

Several reasons have been presented as to why these **men may enter into a heterosexual union**. These include external pressure from family members, friends and the girlfriend to get married (Bigner & Bozett, 1990:158; Bozett, 1987a:6). In addition to this, they may do so in the hope to eradicate any same-sex feelings, regarding the marriage as a probable "cure" for the 'homosexual-condition', the possibility of genuine affection the man may feel towards the woman he marries, and the fear of isolation, loneliness and need for companionship and stability in his life (Bigner & Bozett, 1990:158; Bozett, 1987a:6). Ross (1990:50) exemplifies Bozett's discussion by listing four additional reasons for heterosexual marriage, these being (in order of importance), the advice of a doctor, the desire to parent children, an emotional relationship with a woman and the necessity to establish a home with another person. Studies by Dannecker and Reiche (1974, cited in Ross, 1990:50) complemented these findings by adding the important facet of socialisation to the list

of reasons. Based on their research, they concluded that the need to marry should be seen as a "...'subconscious social process,' forceful, but beyond control, evidenced only as a 'conformity' to the family life style." They cite the contradiction that exists within every homosexual man in terms of his 'homosexual abnormality' within a framework of 'heterosexual normativity', thus, an unavoidable attempt to hide one's sexual orientation.

Against this background, it was found that the first two years of heterosexual marriage was experienced as satisfactory, after which sexual fantasies of other men would start to arise (Bozett, 1988:220). Due to the fact that many of the wives of the gay men do not know of their sexual orientation, the gay father will attempt to engage in anonymous sexual encounters, described as "fast, impersonal..." (Ross, 1990:41), to avoid having others identify and subsequently report them. Keeping their two identities separate, was found to be quite a daunting task. Many respondents in Miller's (1979:244) study reported that they opted for fake identities which encompassed their names, occupations, addresses and social networks or hiding secret address books or gay magazines. Several of these men, particularly within the fields of academia or arts found it relatively easy to engage in same-sex activities. This was attributed to the loyalty and so-called "professional credibility" of these worlds' occupants, where same-sex activity was defined as a discreet form of "eccentricity", rather than a perversion (Miller, 1978:217; Miller, 1979:245). This part of the gay-father career has been described as the point of "covert behaviour", where the gay man attributes much of his behaviour to genital urges and a lack of reconciliation between an isolated gay world and fantasies and their internalised heterosexual masculine status in society (Bozett, 1988:220; Miller, 1978:214-215).

Such heterosexual marriages are found to be fleeting in nature, unhappy and predominantly end up in divorce (Ross, 1990:37). In his study, Ross presented **four variants of adjustment** that such couples may seek to consider. The **first** of these was usually *separation*. This would take place in those cases where the marriage was devoid of both children and "satisfaction", thus a lack of a common home, companionship or specific division of labour. The **second** form of adjustment manifests in a *platonic marriage*, where the couple abstains from any sexual contact, with primary focus on their careers and children. Sexual liaisons would predominantly take the form of clandestine encounters with other gay men met at discos, parties or male hustlers, outside the realm of the marriage (Bozett, 1981b:96; Bozett, 1982:84; Miller, 1978:214; Ross, 1990:45). To relieve an inner conflict that may arise within the

gay man, both he and his sexual partner may provide justifications for their behaviour, citing physical rather than emotional needs, or defining such situations as "therapy". These thoughts were communicated by a married gay man:

It didn't really occur to me that I was gay. This was just something that I was doing because it was eliminating frustration. I rationalized the fact that it was strictly casual sex and it was with a man, there was no romantic thing, and I wasn't cheating on my wife... (quoted in Bozett, 1982:84).

Thirdly, the gay father may want to establish the *double-standard marriage*, which afforded him both his marriage and an external homosexual liaison, an approach met with great hostility by his wife. **Finally**, the true realisation of a bisexual rather than homosexual orientation is provided for, insofar as the gay father (and husband) engages in both homosexual and heterosexual relations with his wife and lovers in the *innovative marriage* (Ross, 1990:45).

Much of these options of adjustments are presented in quite a negative manner, re-emphasising the pathological description of same-sex attractions as being homosexual rather than gay. As such, gay men who may want to establish a more complete identity as both gay man and father, independent of a heterosexual marriage, may experience feelings of extreme guilt, shame and loss, based on behaviour they (and many in a mainstream heterosexual society) may define as promiscuous. Such ideas find solace in the following words of a gay father who engaged in his first gay sexual experience two years after his heterosexual marriage, which even had him attempt suicide twice:

I was going through all sorts of guilt about being a gay father, and I felt, 'Oh, I'm a terrible father; I can't hack it as a father.' That was one of my biggest, worst fears. I didn't know how to be a gay father. I didn't think it was possible. Seemed like a contradiction of terms to me. I thought, 'I can't.' I was really hating myself for being a gay because I thought it wouldn't work. I thought they were anathema (quoted in Bozett, 1981a:554).

Such notions underscore the argument of Wyers (1987, cited in Barret and Robinson, 2000:18) who argues that 65.6 percent of the American men he interviewed, cited the

emergence of their homosexual orientation as reason for the disillusion of their marriage, not its incompatibility with the marriage. Although these men did experience feelings of depression, guilt and loss after their marriages ended, research found that it was especially their wives who suffered the most (Barret & Robinson, 2000:18). Gochros (1989:83) identified **three stages through which these wives may progress in their adjustment to their husbands' disclosure.**

The **first** of these, the **beginning stage**, may be characterised by a period of *shock*, during which the wife questions the trust and fidelity she shared with her husband for many years (Strommen, 1989, cited in Barret & Robinson, 2000:134). It is during this phase that they question their role in his sexual orientation and even their own sexual orientation. As one such wife stated, "...I was absolutely stunned. I thought he was having an affair with a woman because he was so reluctant to have sex with me. ...I was ashamed and felt dirty and just wanted him to go away. I will never let him near my children again" (Barret & Robinson, 2000:136). A **second, interim period** follows the initial shock, which may last for weeks or even years, during which the wife is seen to occupy a vulnerable position, following her husband's disclosure (Gochros, 1989:84). Reactions may be either positive or negative. In terms of the latter, research has even reported that many women may even use their husbands' sexual orientation as "weapon" in custody battles to obtain sole custody over their children. Baptiste (1987:121) refers to the fact that in the occasion of a synergy between hurt and moral outrage about the husband's sexual orientation, the continual relationship may be problematic in nature. The **third** and final stage sees the emergence of **reintegration**, during which the parties involved adjust to the changes that are about to take place, or have taken place, including a redefinition and identification of needs, rights and resources (Barret & Robinson, 2000:139; Gochros, 1989:84). Such a reintegration may be influenced by three factors. The first cites the wife's, as well as the general "societal attitude" pertaining to homosexuality as determinant. Secondly, reasons for ending the heterosexual relationship and thirdly, the presence or absence of hostile attitudes based on the foregoing (Baptiste, 1987:121).

The enactment of these men's gay lifestyles may include the following. The gay man may take on roles associated with his so-called homosexual identity (which, in all likelihood were formed during his closeted life as married man). These range from what Miller (1978, 1979) terms as firstly his role as trade and homosexual husband, secondly, that of a gay husband and lastly that of a faggot husband. Although the latter term has undergone substantial change in its meaning, from a "bundle of twigs"

used to burn gay individuals during the middle ages, to “up-front champion” (Dodge, 1977, cited in Miller, 1978:219). Today the concept has taken a more derogatory meaning. In keeping with the overall theme of the dissertation, it should be deemed appropriate to regard the realisation of the ‘gay husband identity’ as the stage during which the gay man separates and divorces his wife, and as such, embraces his sexual orientation³⁰.

If this were to occur, the single gay father may for example obtain *sole custody* of the children, in the event where his wife may either voluntarily give the children to her ex-husband, or in the event of her death (Barret & Robinson, 2000:68). In contrast to this, the gay father may also, following his divorce from his wife, obtain *joint custody* of the children. To avoid problems relating to the disclosure of his sexual orientation, one may also find that the father may abstain from disclosing his gay identity in fear of losing his parental rights (Barret & Robinson, 2000:69).

In addition to this form of gay fathering, several authors have outlined a number of additional gay fathering formations. These include *unmarried gay fathers, pregnancy of heterosexual or lesbian women, adoptive gay families* (Barret & Robinson, 2000; Johnson & O’Conner, 2002; Martin, 1993; Patterson & Chan, 1997), and *gay father stepfamilies* (Barret & Robinson, 2000).

(ii) *Unmarried gay fathers*

Such an arrangement may arise in those circumstances where, as noted before, a gay man experiences true love and affection for a heterosexual woman. She may or may not be aware of his sexual orientation, one or both of the parties may not display the desire to get married, the woman may be artificially inseminated by the sperm of the man, or the pregnancy may in fact be unplanned (Barret & Robinson, 2000:65). In certain circumstances both parties may be homosexual, thus gay and lesbian, and regard this formation as means to become parents. Considerations to be taken into account in such configurations range from what to disclose to children, parenting responsibilities, choice and acceptance of external sexual partners and the exposure of such partners to the children (Barret & Robinson, 2000:65).

Related to this formation, are the probable choices of *co-parenting* and *surrogacy*.

³⁰ A more in-depth discussion on the establishment of the gay relationship and subsequent relationship with the children (whether from previous marriage or adopted), will be provided in Point 3.3.2.

(iii) *Pregnancy: co-parenting and surrogacy*

Pertaining to the first of these, *co-parenting* basically involves the gay man (or men) entering into a co-parenting relationship with a heterosexual or lesbian woman, who became pregnant from the semen of one of the men through sexual intercourse or insemination (Lev, 2004:57). Lev refers to the ever more prevalent occurrence of such family formations, where the child is reared in a family with three or four parents, all of whom are not legally recognised. Patterson and Chan (1997:247) term such arrangements as "quadra-parenting", whereby the child may spend a certain amount of time with the gay fathers or the heterosexual or lesbian women. Such an arrangement leads to a possible eradication of negative stereotypes related to children growing up in gay households, based on the fact that the child is socialised by two men, two women and within two homes (Van Gelder, 1991, cited in Patterson & Chan, 1997:248).

Surrogacy has a woman carrying the baby of a gay couple, who will, in effect, also raise the child. It predominantly involves the insemination of the woman with the sperm of one or both men (Lev, 2004:57). In certain circumstances the choice may even be made to fertilise the egg from one woman with the sperm of one of the two men, after which that embryo is placed in the womb of the other woman (Martin, 1993:104). Monetary, legal and political concerns also arise insofar as surrogacy costs in the United States amount to about \$20,000, whereas debates centring on parental rights of the surrogate are also called into question (Lev, 2004:57; Martin, 1993:107), insofar as it is believed that the surrogate will relinquish any rights associated with the child, after the birth (Patterson & Chan, 1997:247). In certain circumstances such arrangements might manifest in positive ways, as is evident from the following quote of one of two men who decided on surrogacy:

'I had always wanted to be a father, and I really couldn't see why it wouldn't work. Jim and I had been together for twelve years. We mixed our sperm together, and a friend of ours was artificially inseminated. We're not sure who Tom's 'real' father is. What's important is that both of us love him and are proud to claim him as a son. He seems to like the idea of having two daddies as well as a mommy' (Barret & Robinson, 2000:8).

Yet, in certain instances, the gay fathers may not consist of such a close bond with a female friend, and as such, decide to enter into paid surrogacy contracts with the aid of lawyers and women they have never met (Martin, 1993:103). Prerequisites for good surrogates include the fact that they should have children of their own due to the fact that these women will be more likely to enter into such a relationship with a greater sense of informed consent (Martin, 1993:110). In addition, Hanafin (1989, cited in Martin, 1993:110) includes financial stability, a good self-esteem, sufficient health and an age bracket of between twenty-four and thirty-five as prerequisites.

Another option considered by gay fathers, is the possible role of *adoption*.

(iv) *Adoptive gay families*

Mallon (2004:45) defines the process of adoption as a "...legal process whereby parental rights of birth parents are terminated and the adopting parent becomes the legal parent." He argues that, in contrast to heterosexual couples who may consider adoption based on reasons such as infertility, adoption is regarded as a primary source for establishing a family milieu for gay fathers. This has been provided for within the South African Constitution insofar as the Child Law Act makes reference not to the sexual orientation of potential parents *per se*, but to the fact that any person in a committed relationship may adopt a child (South Africa, 2005). Research undertaken by Johnson and O'Connor (2002:97) in the United States, underscored this argument with reference to 85 percent of gay fathers citing adoption as means to establish their families. Several processes influence the decision to become adoptive gay parents. These range from firstly obtaining the necessary information on adoption, ranging from books, conversations with other gay men or heterosexuals who have adopted, to interviews with social workers, attorneys, as well as gay-friendly support networks (Martin, 1993:121).

Numerous considerations come to the forefront when a gay couple may decide to adopt. These include decisions pertaining to the type of adoption, channels to follow, costs, timeframes, age and race of the child, as well as possible problems that may arise based on the genetic background of the child (Johnson & O'Connor, 2002:28; Lev, 2004:60). The types of adoption range from *domestic adoptions*, which include *public* or *private adoptions* and *international adoptions* (Martin, 1993:125).

Domestic adoptions refer to the fact that children in need of homes, were born and live in the same country as the adoptive parents, as for example South Africa, and that parents or prospective parents can consult either public or private adoption agencies (cf. Lev, 2004:60). Although both options may be quite time consuming, the latter is regarded as far more expensive, influenced by factors ranging from the age, race and health of the child (Lev, 2004:61). Johnson and O'Connor (2002:28), in terms of race, refer to so-called "trans-racial" adoptions, whereby two or more minority groups, pertaining to race, culture and sexual orientation form a family. In a way then, a familial context in which marginalised and minority groups form a synergy as counterpoint to a seemingly hostile heterosexual society, is established. In contrast to private adoptions, however, public adoptions through state departments are regarded as the more feasible and inexpensive way to undertake adoption (Lev, 2004:61). Earlier studies of Ricketts and Achtenberg (1987:93) have indicated that several gay men who expressed the desire to parent, had chosen to be open about their sexual orientation towards the social worker, amongst others. Due to this, many states in the United States developed certain policies that approved of same-sex adoption or foster care. Yet, despite such early strides, many adoption agencies were reluctant to place children in the care of gay or lesbian parents, based on their fear of the latter "contaminating" the sexuality of the child (Ricketts & Achtenberg, 1987:93). The South Africa Constitution currently, however, does not pose such a problem for same-sex couples.

International adoption on the other hand, entails the adoption of children from other countries by a South African couple. It is argued that, depending on the country of adoption, international adoption may progress faster than domestic adoptions, involve travel to that country, but may also be very expensive (cf. Lev, 2004:61). Emotional hardship may also ensue in the event of the international country opting for a closure of the adoption procedure at any given time. Pertaining to same-sex couples, it is argued that there are currently no or very few countries that may willingly place children in the care of an openly gay, lesbian or bisexual individual (Lev, 2004:63). This may have the same-sex couple decide to either foreclose their sexual orientation during the adoption proceedings, or to have only one partner initially adopt the child, followed by a "second-parent"-adoption in their country of origin after a period of time (cf. Johnson & O'Connor, 2002:3). This, however, should be facilitated by the original parties involved, due to possible questions that may arise pertaining to reasons for withholding information of sexual orientation at the outset (Lev, 2004:65).

Embedded within adoption proceedings, whether domestic or international, is the possibility to opt for either an *open* or *closed* adoption. The former refers to the adoptive parents either knowing about or meeting the biological parents of the child (Lev, 2004:66). Such an initiative does, however, not mean that the adoptive parent negates his or her rights to the child, or that continuous contact with the biological parents are necessary, but provides the opportunity to gain additional information on the birth parents and their whereabouts in time of need (Lev, 2004:66). In the case of international adoption, however, Martin (1993:136) indicates the degree of difficulty to establish links with the birth parents, but echoes the hope that progressive attitudes towards adoption worldwide may see a change in this regard. Lev cites the advantage of having access to medical information of both the parents and child, for possible genetic ailments or predispositions that might be identified early (cf. Johnson & O'Connor, 2002:28). *Closed adoption* had its origins in the ideologies of conservatism, whereby children born out of wedlock or the difficulties faced by infertile couples, saw several states in the United States closing their records on adoption, curtailing any effort to establish a link between the birth and adoptive parents (Martin, 1993:135)³¹. In such cases the adoptive parents may seek to protect their children from any intrusive outside parties, yet, one finds a conflict between such a need for protection and the children's need to gain access to his or her genetic heritage, based on their initial emotional bond with their birth parents (Lev, 2004:67).

Inherent experiences of gay fathers as it relates to the adoption process, range from joy and fulfilment to that of pain and loss. One respondent, who established his family through adoption, noted in a study undertaken by Drucker (1998:120) that although he may have experienced a great deal of antagonism in mainstream society, "...it is through the family unit, however it is composed, that one connects to society. ...It is a place to build lifelong relationships. ...every child needs and deserves a family. A child needs the stability, safety, and commitment found in a loving family unit ...I

³¹ Examples of this included shame associated with pregnancy outside the bonds of marriage. During the 1950s and 1960s era in the United States, such birthmother would be sent away to 'maternity homes' or relatives, whereafter the birth of their children, the child would be given to adoption agencies. These mothers were not afforded the right to know anything about their children, termed as "mistake" (Martin, 1993:135). Infertile couples were also forced to foster the lie about their situation, with adoption agencies attempting to match the biological characteristics of the child to that of the parents, to avoid any exposure of their secret (Martin, 1993:135). Several pathological problems arose from this, with the birthparents not being able to mourn the fact that their children were taken away, whereas the children, sometimes discovered their true identity and experiencing what Martin (1993:135) termed as betrayal and disorientation.

want and need to be a family that has a child.” In undertaking the adoption and deciding whether to disclose his sexual orientation to society, and endure the possible prejudice and discrimination, the same respondent made the following potent comment:

I had to weigh which desire was stronger – to be true to myself, my community, and my friends, or to become a parent. The two goals are often mutually exclusive. I decided not to offer information that I am gay. I didn't feel that it was relevant to whether I should be a parent or not... (quoted in Drucker, 1998:162).

A final formation for gay fathers to consider is that of the *gay father stepfamily*.

(v) *Gay father stepfamilies*

This formation has been found to be the most predominant source of studies of children in gay family settings (Johnson & O'Connor, 2002:32). Such an arrangement presents a number of added complexities to the nature of the family, and per implication, gay fathering (Barret & Robinson, 2000:70). It consists of a live-in male partner who may take on the role of stepfather, a so-called 'parent-like' role in a 'stepfamily-like' relationship to the child or children (Baptiste, 1987:113). As such, many gay fathers may not regard such an arrangement as positive, insofar as it provides an additional complex role to the number of relationships the gay father has to engage in, including that with the children, his ex-wife and her new husband or boyfriend (Barret & Robinson, 2000:70). One can come to expect that these families will become ever more evident, especially within the South African society, due to the legalisation of same-sex marriages in December of 2006 (De Vos, 2008). Even preceding this ruling, the Constitutional Court dismissed stereotypes that were interpreted as discriminatory against gay and lesbian individuals (Louw, 2005:152)³². Based on this revolutionary judgement, it is deemed necessary to quote the court's ruling on same-sex partnerships at length:

³² This ruling was based on the second NCGLE case, *National Coalition for Gay and Lesbian Equality v Minister of Home Affairs, 2000 (1) BCLR 39 (CC)*, which dealt with a residence application by a non-South Africa, in which the concept 'spouse' was defined as referring only to 'married person; a wife, a husband' (as per *New Shorter Oxford Dictionary*-definition).

- iv. Gays and lesbians in same-sex life partnerships are capable as heterosexual spouses of expressing and sharing love in its manifold forms including affection, friendship, eros and charity.
- v. They are likewise as capable of forming intimate, permanent, committed, monogamous, loyal and enduring relationships; of furnishing emotional and spiritual support; and of providing physical care, financial support and assistance in running the common household.
- vi. They are individually able to adopt children and in the case of lesbians to bear them.
- vii. In short, they have the same ability to establish a *consortium omnis vitae*.
- viii. Finally, and of particular importance for the purposes of this case, they are capable of constituting a family, whether nuclear or extended, and of establishing, enjoying and benefiting from family life which is not distinguishable in any significant respect from that of heterosexual spouses.

The majority of gay families parented by a gay couple are to be regarded as **stepfamilies**. The **formation** of such families is based on the progression of **six stages** (McWhirter & Mattison, 1984). The **first** stage accounts for the first year of the relationship. This involves *limerence*, intense longing for a partner, shared activities and a high level of sexual activity. The **second** stage, *nesting*, is evident in years two and three and is characterised by homemaking, a decline in limerence, contradictory notions on the nature of the relationship, and seeking compatibility with each other. Studies have shown that it is particularly during this stage, that partners reported lower satisfaction in terms of affection, sexual relations and shared activity (Kurdek, 1995:248). The **third** stage, *maintenance*, sees a return to individual preoccupation, establishing traditions and dealing with conflict in years four and five. During years six through ten, stage **four**, the so-called *building stage*, arises during which reciprocal dependability, individual independence and success and collaboration predominate. Years eleven through twenty form part of what is called the *releasing stage*, during which trust, the merging of monetary and other physical possessions and a sense of selfishness are dominant. The **finale** stage, *renewing*, concludes the progression after twenty years of cohabitation, where the partners re-evaluate categories ranging from time and money to health, romance and reminiscing (McWhirter & Mattison, 1984).

These family arrangements are prone to have a number of similar dynamics shared with the heterosexual counterpart (Baptiste, 1987:114). These may include the fact that one or both of the partners ended a previous heterosexual union, and as such, may also be a custodial parent. Baptiste, based on his study in the United States, further asserts that it is to be expected that lesbian mothers, rather than gay fathers, are more likely to be given custody of the children, based on stereotypical representations of gay men in society. In addition, rejection of the gay stepparent, general stepparent-stepchildren conflicts, as well as competition for his attention and affection for the biological father (and partner), also plague such relationships (Baptiste, 1987:114). Additional studies, in amongst other the United States, have however presented findings that underscore the importance of the integration of the gay-stepparent into the family dynamics and processes. Patterson and Chan (1997:252) highlighted the rise in marital happiness with the inclusion of the gay partner in the gay-father-child-relationship. A study on lesbian parents had Patterson (2000:1061) conclude that both parents in these relationships experience a higher self-esteem and positive sense of well-being with participation in family activities. Such thoughts found representation in the studies of Garner (2005:85). She found that several children of gay fathers communicated the need for either a commitment or marital ceremony for the gay father and his boyfriend or lover, in an attempt to celebrate and confirm their new family formation.

In addition to the parent-child conflicts that the couple has to manage, a decline in intimacy and sexuality in the gay couple's relationship may also ensue (Baptiste, 1987:127). This is attributed to, amongst others, the couple's attempts to abstain from *publicly displaying affection towards each other, or caution to avoid the children seeing them in bed together (especially in those circumstances where the children are unaware of their father's sexual orientation)*. Baptiste further mentions the issue of sexual exclusivity versus sexual openness, thus a close-knit, monogamous relationship that may be difficult for one or both partners to adhere to.

The dynamic and unique nature of the gay stepfamily and other gay family formations, will find a coherent representation in the discussion on the positive features and limitations or obstacles associated with gay parenting.

3.3.2 **Gay fathers and their children: The impact of gay fathering on the child**

Consider the following proclamation of a woman raised by two lesbian mothers:

I had two people who cared about me, looked after me when I was sick, ...cheered at my graduations and cried at my wedding. I defy anyone to look me in the eye and say there's something wrong with that (quoted in Myers & Scanzoni, 2005:122).

Although associated with lesbian parents, such a quote may also align with the expectations and experiences of children raised within a gay-father-household. The section that follows will provide an in-depth discussion on the interaction between gay fathers and their children – from initial disclosure of the father's sexual orientation to the possible positive features and limitations associated with gay fathering.

(a) ***'Coming out' to the children: Obstacles and recommendations***

It is argued that one of the most imperative considerations to be made by gay fathers, centres around the decision to disclose their sexual orientation to their children, thus "coming out of the closet" (Bigner & Bozett, 1990:160). These authors cite several issues that intensify such a decision, including the necessity and appropriateness of doing so, the most appropriate time for disclosure, as well as the best means. Bigner and Bozett (1990:160) referenced the work of Bozett (1981b:98) who identified two events that promote the disclosure of the identity of the gay father. These include the divorce or separation of the couple (heterosexual marriage) and when the gay father enters into a relationship with another gay man. Although such a disclosure may be associated with a higher degree of psychological and social well-being (Miller, 1986, cited in Bigner & Bozett, 1990:166), the inherent fear of gay men based on homophobia, may inhibit such a realisation (cf. Garner, 2005:42), even in a society as democratic as South Africa.

In addition to the reasons mentioned, other **motivations to come out** may include the following. **Firstly**, both personal (as noted above) and community integrity might be established and reinforced, insofar as foreclosure of a gay identity results in the isolation of gay individuals from the rest of society, which in effect, strengthens the stigma attached to the gay community as "the other" (Garner, 2005:42). By

proclaiming his homosexuality, the father projects the fact that he values his homosexuality, and himself in a positive manner, thus positioning “the notion that homosexuality is good” (Bozett, 1984:62). **Secondly**, although, as communicated in the foregoing section on ‘coming out’ as gay, the sexual identity is only one of many identities of gay individuals, it is still necessary to disclose such a core part of the individual’s identity (Garner, 2005:42). **Thirdly**, a great deal of animosity may arise between the gay father and his children if he decides to withhold this part of his life from them. An example of this found representation in a study that had a son discovering his father’s sexual orientation after reading correspondence between his father and another man on the father’s computer. This resulted in a relationship of distrust and trauma between the gay father and his son, with the latter ending their relationship (Drucker, 1998:123).

In support of this notion, other studies have found that despite the admiration and love children may display toward their fathers, they do not condone his homosexuality (Bozett, 1987b:51). These children “separate their father’s *gay* identity from his *father* identity, with one daughter fostering the belief that her father may “burn in hell” based on his gay identity, for “[i]f he wasn’t gay I’d say he was sent from heaven. That’s how impressed I am with him” (quoted in Bozett, 1987b:51). Such views lead to children avoiding any possible disclosure of their father’s identity to others to the extent of isolating themselves from others. Eric Gutierrez (2002:24), raised by a gay father, recalls the manner in which he handled the situation:

...I began lying about my father [and] I began lying about myself.
I didn’t offer my lies indiscriminately ...I would lie only when
cornered, or when the truth didn’t seem like enough. ...I didn’t lie
to win friends but to not make myself even more of an outcast.

Other studies heralded contrasting findings. Many children displayed their acceptance of their father’s sexual orientation both on a behavioural and verbal level (Bozett, 1987a:13). One of Bozett’s (1981b:102) American respondents told of his children wanting to experience his ‘gay lifestyle’, by going to gay bars and dancing with him. Another daughter argued that “[a]ll I needed to know is if he were gay. I didn’t really need to know anything else” (quoted in Drucker, 1998:144). She attributed this to the fact that a “...good parent is one who listens, is there, and just loves you.” In disclosing his sexual orientation, the gay father affords his children the right to experience his world in both a literal and symbolic manner, possibly resulting

in a more intimate relationship between gay fathers and their children (Bozett, 1984:63).

Theorists have also commented on the relation between the age of the children and their initial acceptance or rejection of the gay father. Arguments have been forwarded which value early disclosure of the gay father's sexual orientation, attributed, amongst others, to the possible prohibition of the child's internalisation of homophobic stigmas within the broader society (Moses & Hawkins, 1982, cited in Bozett, 1987a:14). In doing this, research amongst gay and lesbian parents in the United States, has indicated that children may fare better in terms of their self-esteem (Huggins, 1989, cited in Patterson, 2000:1061), whereas research of Patterson (1992:1035) provided a counterargument. Here she noted that if a child were to learn about his or her parent's sexual orientation in early adolescence, it may impact quite negatively on the child. Additional reasons centre around the unrealistic expectation of older children to accept such a disclosure immediately, based on the mentioned internalised stigmas (Bozett, 1987a:14). Younger children, thus, have been found to be less distressed about the sexual orientation of their father, and more concerned about the probable loss of a parent during divorce or separation (Drucker, 1998:117). She further states that older children are more likely to proclaim possible embarrassment of their gay fathers, and interpret their father's lack of early disclosure as a betrayal.

To **curtail** some of these negative reactions and reinforce positive views, Miller (1987:181) and Schulenberg (1985) recommended the adherence to a number of **principles**. These include the following. **Firstly**, it is recommended that the gay man comes to terms with his own "gayness" before disclosing it to his children (Schulenberg, 1985:29). Findings suggest that gay men who display shame pertaining to their sexual orientation may also elicit negative responses from their children. **Secondly**, disclosure before the child knows or suspects, is also crucial. Learning about their father's gayness from someone else, may have them interpret his foreclosure in a negative light (Schulenberg, 1985:29). **Thirdly**, such disclosure should be planned (Miller, 1987:181). This principle intertwines with the **fourth** principle, that of a quiet milieu without interruptions in which the gay parent talks to his child or children. In the **fifth** place, it is recommended that the father informs his child about his sexual orientation, rather than confessing it (Schulenberg, 1985:29). This will insure that the disclosure takes place in a sincere and positive manner. **In addition**, the father should insure that the child knows that their relationship remains

unchanged (Miller, 1987:182), with the exception of a greater degree of honesty between the parties. **Finally**, both authors also reference possible questions that the father should anticipate, following his disclosure. These may range from the reason for disclosure, the meaning of being 'gay', the child's fear of him- or herself possibly also being gay, whether the father's lover made him gay, or the manner the father may expect them to disclose such information to other parties (Miller, 1987:182; Schulenberg, 1985:30). All of these principles thus underscore the importance of establishing a strong, coherent and positive identity as gay man, before attempting to become a gay father.

In establishing such an identity pertaining to him being gay, the gay father may exhibit a number of parenting principles and practices that will be to the advantage of both the child and society.

(b) ***Positive influences associated with gay fathers***

Gay fathering in general makes provision for the opportunity to have gay fathers transcend the traditional boundaries of what is meant by the concept *family*, and by so doing, "...redefine[] and reinvent[] their own meaning for *family* and *parenting*..." (Benkov, 1994). In doing this, they may provide a novel blueprint for parenting practices for both heterosexual and gay family formations, making these men, "innovators" (Allen, 1997:214) in a sense. These **positive influences** that gay fathers provide for both their families and society, include the following.

The **first** of these positive influences that may add value to the nature of parenting and fathering, serves as counterpoint to the majority of arguments that outline the detrimental effect of homophobia or compulsory heterosexuality in contemporary society. This principle centres around the importance to establish a *sense of appreciation and acceptance of the diversity of others*. In a study undertaken by Johnson and O'Connor (2002:128), 63 percent of gay fathers felt that their children would grow up in a less prejudiced and more tolerant familial context. As one respondent noted, "I think they grow up with a better understanding about differences in people and families and are better able to appreciate these differences." The establishment of respect for diversity, uniqueness and multiculturalism finds further representation in the work of several other authors (Allen, 1997:197; Bozett, 1987b:51; Garner, 2005:33; Meezan & Rauch, 2005:98; Voeller & Walters, 1978:150). In establishing such respect, the gay fathers engage in, what Brown

(1989:451) terms as *normative creativity*, thus the creation of a unique family formation with new principles and practices that challenges traditional conceptions of family life.

A **second** positive influence provides a picture of the gay fathers being a *more appreciative and loving parent* than their heterosexual counterparts (Johnson & O'Connor, 2002:129). Such a view is associated with the hardships and obstacles gay parents have to face to gain custody of their children, gain their children's acceptance, and undertake procedures to have children or manage homophobic behaviour directed toward them (cf. Johnson & O'Connor, 2002:129). They are seen to be more responsive towards the needs of the children, display a more active caretaking role, and exude a greater degree of warmth and love in their parenting practices – all of which are factors that underscore generative fathering (cf. Allen, 1997:197; Barret & Robinson, 2000:95; Bigner & Bozett, 1990:164; Bozett, 1987a:15; Patterson & Chan, 1997:252; Scallen, 1981, cited in Bigner & Bozett, 1990:163). Such results were communicated in the findings of a study undertaken by Meezan and Rauch (2005:98) that emphasised the durability and stability of gay families.

A **third** positive influence highlights the untraditional approach to parenting by gay fathers. Here emphasis is placed on the eradication of traditional gendered conceptions pertaining to the roles of parents, and replace these with *equitable parenting practices and gender roles*. Such an approach, according to Johnson and O'Connor (2002:170), may seek to establish equality for marital partners in terms of the allocation of their tasks, with respondents in a study of Blumstein and Schwartz (1983:505) arguing that they "...try to avoid assuming specialized roles and don't think of each other as mimicking husband and wife behaviour...." These parents thus challenge what is presumed "normal" in terms of gender roles ascribed to families and marriages (Allen, 1997:214; Garner, 2005:33). It has been found that gay fathers are more likely to divide their household chores more equitably, with the non-biological father (the lover, boyfriend or husband) afforded the right to also partake in the life of the child (Johnson & O'Connor, 2002:25; Patterson & Chan, 1997:254). Citing the impossibility to divide the tasks based on gendered categories (Kurdek, 1995:248), the gay couple is seen as androgynous, undertaking tasks deemed either masculine or feminine (Bigner & Jacobsen, 1989b:184; Johnson & O'Connor, 2002:45). This thought is exemplified in the words of Werner, a 23-year-old gay father in Austria, "I am a single gay male raising a young daughter. I live a great range of gender roles, not just one. I am both mother and father to her, now that her

mother has died" (quoted in Drucker, 1998:150). In other cases, the tasks allocated to either of the parties, are determined to a great extent by the specific phase in which the couple finds themselves (McWhirter & Mattison, 1984).

Based on the provision of gender role models, columnist and gay father Dan Savage (cited in Johnson & O'Connor, 2002:49) argued in his essay published in *The New York Times* in 2001, that he encouraged his son to play with masculine-typed toys, something he never did as a child. Against this background, he also communicated his disdain with individuals who suggest that this may lead to the child being socialised into becoming gay. Thus, although these families are deemed less traditional in terms of their parenting practices (Patterson & Chan, 1997:253) and the fact that several gay fathers do not promote sex-typed-toy-behaviour (Bozett, 1987a:15), such notions underscore the great deal of hostility homophobia and hegemonic masculinity brings to the fore in an attempt to maintain the existing status quo as it relates to gender roles (cf. Voeller & Walters, 1978:150).

Fourthly, and in direct alignment with the principles of generative fathering, theorists also highlighted the *lack of importance gay fathers ascribe to the "economic provider role"* which predominated the traditional views on fatherhood (Bozett, 1987:15; Scallen, 1981, cited in Bigner & Bozett, 1990:163; Patterson & Chan, 1997:252). Despite such arguments, Meezan and Rauch (2005:108) make reference to the higher degree of material well-being the child may experience within a family with a gay father or fathers. Such a view finds representation in Downs' (2006) reference to the role of compensation a gay man may seek in order for him to overcome the shame he experiences before accepting and authenticating his gay identity. One may safely assume that during this period of compensation, the gay father attains a degree of personal growth and acceptance as well as material growth, factors that may only act in favour of the well-being of the child.

In the **fifth** place, Johnson and O'Connor (2002:170) also highlight the *satisfactory levels of communication about their children*, the gay couple displays. This thought finds solace in the works of both Bigner and Bozett (1990:163) and Meezan and Rauch (2005), as it relates to the high levels of social investment gay fathers display in the lives of their children. Another novel advantage brought to the fore by gay parenting is communicated in the words of one gay father who states, "I see an advantage if our son turns out to be gay. I think it will be easier for him to come out and accept himself" (quoted in Johnson & O'Connor, 2002:130). In accepting their

child, parents of any sexual orientation will provide the basis for a greater sense of reciprocal respect and openness between familial members, encouraging children to embrace their identity (heterosexual or gay) (Voeller & Walters, 1978:156). In so doing, these children are more than likely to have many gay friends and will be willing to disclose their sexual orientation and express the possibility to engage in same-sex relationships (Meezan & Rauch, 2005:103).

Finally, embedded within the noted positive influences of gay fathering, two additional expectations for their families are also communicated by Johnson and O'Connor (2002). The first centres around the importance of establishing a sense of *discipline* in the rearing practices of children. It has been found that primary gay families, thus gay men who opted for adoption or surrogacy, display a greater degree of disciplinary techniques, non-negative in nature (thus not spanking of children or yelling). (Bigner & Jacobsen, 1989b:181; Johnson & O'Connor, 2002:167). Other research also made reference to the more authoritative patterns of parenting and limit setting practices associated predominantly with gay fathers in contrast with their heterosexual counterparts (Patterson & Chan, 1997:252). The second expectation references the establishment of a *stronger sense of self* for children raised by gay fathers, which finds solace in the work of Patterson and Chan (1997:252) who highlighted the degree of importance placed on encouraging paternal nurturing and autonomy, both of which again figure in discussions on generativity.

Although it should seem clear that these families emphasise the underlying principles of generative fathering, the realisation thereof might be inhibited by a number of limitations associated with or obstacles faced by gay fathering.

(c) ***Limitations and obstacles associated with gay fathering***

Bigner and Bozett (1990:155) make the following assertion:

Gay males who are fathers have a unique and more complex social-psychological environment than other homosexual or heterosexual males. Their challenges of adjustment relate to identity concerns, acceptance of the self, acceptance by family, and acceptance by other homosexuals as well as to matters of more specific parenting...issues.

In addition to the foregoing discussion on problems faced within the gay family, this quote serves to emphasise two categories of possible limitations and obstacles associated with gay fathering, these being *obstacles associated with the heterosexual community* and *obstacles associated with the gay community*.

(i) *Obstacles within the heterosexual community*

A predominant theme cited in the work of several authors (Allen, 1997; Baptiste, 1987; Barret & Robinson, 2000; Crosbie-Burnett & Helmbrecht, 1993; Garner, 1995; Johnson & O'Connor, 2002; Lubbe, 2007; Meezan & Rauch, 2005; Patterson & Chan, 1997; Voeller & Walters, 1978) highlights the manner in which the mainstream heterosexual community curtails proactive practices and principles of gay families.

The predominant obstacle referenced by gay fathers, is the fear of the manner in which their children will be treated by the community of which they form part, based on the latter's awareness of the couples' sexual orientation (Johnson & O'Connor, 2002:131; Patterson, 2000:1054). Although the works of Barret and Robinson (2000:39) and Mallon (2004:14) believe that this may serve as a myth, studies have shown that both the gay couple and their children experience fear for being maltreated, teased, ridiculed or harassed (Meezan & Rauch, 2005:103; Voeller & Walters, 1978:156). Lorde (1984:116) echoes this notion by stating that those groups who occupy the position of being "white, thin, male, young, heterosexual, Christian, and financially secure", are seen as the perpetrators and beneficiaries of heterosexism that oppresses gay and lesbian individuals, and are subsequently afforded the rights sexual minorities are deprived of. This, according to her, perpetuates the so-called "... mythical norm [within which] power reside[s] within this society." Personal accounts of such antagonism found solace in the reflections of two children of gay fathers. The first, thirteen-year-old Chelsea, noted that she only spoke of her father's sexual orientation with her closest friends, whilst with others, including her extended family, the topic was never discussed. She went further by arguing, "[w]hen I hear someone make a prejudiced comment or joke, I never say anything. When someone asks about my family, I say my mom's remarried, and so is my dad..." (quoted in Drucker, 1998:182). The second respondent, Eric Gutierrez (2002:23), told of his father and his lover attending open house at his elementary school. He recalls "... the shift in the air, the defiance of my father and his lover, the disdain of the other parents." Thus, despite the efforts of gay fathers to encourage the creation of a 'stronger sense of self', both the fathers and children are sometimes

forced to project false identities towards the outside world, in attempt to avoid scorn and rejection.

Much of the antagonism directed towards gay individuals, is cemented within possible perceptions, misconceptions, and one would argue '**myths**' related to gay fathers specifically, and gay individuals in general (Barret & Robinson, 2000; Mallon, 2004). Barret and Robinson (2000:38) provide several categories in which various myths about gay men are cemented. These range from the **disturbed parental relationship myth** and **germ myth** to the **molestation** and **sex-fiend myth**.

The **disturbed relationship myth**, primarily argues that gay men were raised by rejecting fathers and overly-involved mothers who caused them to gravitate towards homosexuality (Barret & Robinson, 2000:38). As such, much of this argument is based on arguments that propagate the temporary nature of homosexuality. Proponents of this argument attribute this sexual orientation to environmental factors, or socio-cultural factors, which may include childhood experiences and inappropriate relationships, which according to them, may contribute to the 'creation' of homosexuality (Sanderson & Ellis, 1992:36; Stanton & Maier, 2005:136). "Triangular" patterns in family backgrounds, thus emotionally detached fathers and overly-involved mothers have been identified as possible reasons, whereas those individuals who had suffered sexual abuse as children, were three times as likely to report a homosexual orientation as adults (Stanton & Maier, 2005:136). The interaction between these factors with biological and psychological influences, construct one's sexual orientation, for "[n]o one is 'born gay.' The idea is ridiculous ... I think what gay men are remembering is that they were born *different*" (Paglia, 1994:72). On the other hand, however, other theorists paint a contrasting picture of sexual identity construction.

Pool (1993:291) made reference to research undertaken by Hamer and his colleagues, which noted that an X-chromosome related to male homosexuality, transmitted from the mother rather than the father, also leads to probability of some men being homo- rather than heterosexual. These researchers did however note that such findings may not necessarily be the only explanation for the origin of homosexuality, attributing causes to both genetics and environmental influences. Additional biological explanations surfaced with Dr. Simon LeVay's (1991) research at the Salt Lake Institute where he studied a group of neurons in the hypothalamus of

the human brain (INAH3³³), and found that those neurons were in fact smaller in the brains of homosexual men. In addition to this, many homosexual individuals argue that those individuals, who converted to a heterosexual lifestyle, were in fact not really initially homosexual (Lutzer, 2004:75). Representatives of The National Association of Social Workers (NASW), in the United States, noted that no proof exists that reorientation or 'reparative' therapeutic approaches are an effective means to eradicate homosexuality. It may inflict more harm than good, for they make these individuals "...feel even worse about themselves ...[q]uite simply, ex-gays don't exist" (quoted in Stanton & Maier, 2005:151).

Related to the construction of a gay identity by the gay father, reference to fears of the child also displaying same-sex attraction (Crosbie-Burnett & Helmbrecht, 1993:257), finds solace in Barret and Robinson's (2000:38) so-called **germ myth**. Such a myth primarily argues that interaction between the gay fathers and their children will "transmit" their sexual orientation to their children. Bigner and Bozett (1990:165) argued that relatively few studies have been undertaken to determine whether such assertions may be true, but state that studies have found that there did not exist a relationship between the sexual orientation of the child and the fact that he or she was raised by a gay parent. This argument was echoed in the work of Allen (1997:197), Bozett (1987b:47), Harris and Turner (1986) and Mallon (2004). Yet, the overarching fear of these children is very traumatising, and theoretical arguments have been used to substantiate this fear. Reference can be made, for example, to the work of Goffman (1963), who remarked on the nature of his "with"-relationship.

Those who subscribe to this approach basically assume that if an individual, in this regard, the child of a gay father, is seen in the company of the father, the father's trait of being gay automatically passes to the child. Despite such arguments, one may equate with homophobic ideas, it is believed that children raised in such families will rather be more accepting of diversity in society, with parents who will subsequently provide a much needed haven, rather than being gay themselves (Mallon, 2004:14). A study undertaken by Huggins (1989, cited in Patterson, 2004:244) found that 36 teenagers, half of which were raised in lesbian households and the other half in heterosexual ones, did not define themselves as gay, with only one from a heterosexual household identified as gay. Studies by Bailey et al. (1995, cited in Patterson, 2004:244) indicated that 90 percent of boys, brought up in households

³³ INAH3 – Interstitial Nuclei of the Anterior Hypothalamus.

with gay fathers were heterosexual. This serves as re-emphasis of the point that the sexual orientation of the parent has minimal impact on that of the child (Patterson, 2004:244).

Police records in South Africa, indicate that 90 percent of child molestation cases involved young girls and adult heterosexual men (Du Plessis, 1999:23), and only one perpetrator from 387 cases of child molestation at the Children's Hospital in Denver (in the United States) was in fact gay, while the remaining were all heterosexual (Thio, 1998:225), findings similar to studies of Voeller and Walters (1978). Research of Jenny et al. (1994:42) in the United States reported that 74 percent of molesters of male, and 77 percent of female children had been involved in heterosexual relationships with the child's mother or other female relative, none of whom were identified as gay by the family or social services. Despite this, a third myth that propagates gay men's involvement in **child molestation** still prevails in contemporary society (Mallon, 2004:14). Such a myth argues that gay men, based on their sexual orientation, are more inclined to molest their children than heterosexual men, thus typifying the gay father as a paedophile (Berkowitz & Marsiglio, 2007:374). This view finds representation in the account of a social worker who told of both a sexual offender and child (not acquainted or related) being admitted to a psychiatric hospital at the same time. The child's father was gay, and the staff working in that hospital went as far as to equate the behaviour of the sex offender with the sexual orientation of the father (Barret & Robinson, 2000:48).

In addition to notions of child molestation, the behaviour of gay men has also been equated with promiscuity, a thought aligning with the so-called **sex-fiend myth** (Barret & Robinson, 2000:48) and the previous discussion under Point 3.2.1 and Point 3.2.2. Proponents of this myth argue that sexual behaviour "governs" the lives of gay men, having them portray the roles of "...slaves to their uncontrollable sexual urges" (Barret & Robinson, 2000:48). The authors included the following quote in their work of a gay father struggling with his gay identity:

...The notion of a gay man sacrificing his own immediate pleasure for his children sounds contradictory because sexuality is viewed as the prime motivator for gay men. Part of it too is a general belief that gay men would expose their kids to a lot of open sex and are sexually promiscuous and not concerned about how their children view that. If one accepted that myth, then the

notion of being committed as a father and being willing to sacrifice as a father would seem unusual.

Studies, cited by Myers and Scanzoni (2005:125) indicated the following. The first, by Schmitt (2003:90), indicated that men display a higher need for sexual gratification, larger numbers of sexual partners and, as such, sexual variety, than women. This thought is shared by Pinker (1997:474) who attributes the uncommitted sexual behaviour of gay men akin to their heterosexual counterparts, with only the sex of the object of desire being the main difference. He goes further by referencing the work of Symons (1979) who writes:

'I am suggesting that heterosexual men would be as likely as homosexual men to have sex most often with strangers, to participate in anonymous orgies in public baths, and to stop off in public restrooms for five minutes of fellatio on the way home from work...'

Additional myths include reference to the **identification myth**, which hypothesises that gay men enter into heterosexual marital relationships in an attempt to identify with the identity of his wife (Barret & Robinson, 2000:51). Another argument points to the *instability* that characterises the relationships of gay men, which in effect, may negatively impact on the well-being of the child (Mallon, 2004:13). This idea was also highlighted in a statement by the Vatican in 2003, who stated that if children were to be adopted by gay couples, one would be "doing violence to these children" (quoted in Cable News Network, 2003). A final myth underscores the pathological manner with which several individuals view gay men and fathers, regarding them as "sick and in need of treatment", thus, the **sick myth** (Barret & Robinson, 2000:51). Such a myth, as well as the others, one may argue, is fuelled by an ever prevailing ignorance in society which may lead to gay families isolating themselves. In doing this, these families, according to Garner (2005:3), remain "hidden and mysterious", leading to prejudiced and homophobic individuals formulating unfounded stereotypes associated with gay men.

Although one may think that such obstacles are exclusive to the heterosexual community, research has directed attention to the internal prejudice and discrimination existent amongst (and towards) gay individuals themselves.

(ii) *Obstacles within the gay community*

Bigner and Bozett (1990:159) make the assertion that it is quite common for gay fathers to experience a lack of support, rejection and discrimination from other gay individuals. This, according to them, is attributed to the lack of freedom that gay fathers experience, based on their paternal responsibilities, as well as a lack of comprehension and even apprehension towards children. Much of this is embedded within the idea that the gay community is predominantly childless, and as such, having children becomes a stigma, rather than status symbol, as it might be in the heterosexual community (Baptiste, 1987:123). This sees the construction of a so-called "double closet" (Fadiman, 1983, cited in Bozett, 1987:11), whereby the gay father has to "come-out" twice, as a gay man and as a gay father.

Both gay fathers and their children essentially experience ostracism by the childless gay community (Baptiste, 1987:124). Such ostracism, the author argues, is anticipated from the heterosexual community, not from their gay counterparts. Against this background, isolation ensues for the gay father, whereas the child is viewed as a "shadowy figure", often time concealed from the broader gay community to curtail any discrimination (Baptiste, 1987:124). Such discrimination is viewed in a very negative light by gay fathers insofar as they deem the "sense of community" alongside their gay counterparts, as imperative in establishing a true sense of self (Baptiste, 1987:125). If they do however decide to be open about their role as gay fathers, these men may opt to live apart from the broader gay community (Crosbie-Burnett & Helmbrecht, 1993:256; Drucker, 1998:162; Meyer, 1990:72), based on the incompatibility of the values of the (seemingly) opposite worlds of "father" and "gay" (Bozett, 1987b:50). Characteristics of the "gay world" predominantly sketch gay men as single, financially independent and mobile, whereas the gay father has to adhere to his parental responsibilities within the parameters of certain obligations and restrictions, accepted, Bozett (1987a:10) argues, "without objection". Those gay groupings who are against the establishment of gay families, involving same-sex marriage and gay parenting, attribute this to the fact that an alienation may occur between individuals within the gay community itself, having those who are married being defined as 'morally superior' to the "drag queens [and] club crawlers" on the other side (Stanton & Maier, 2005:61).

(iii) *Strategies to curtail obstacles and limitations*

In an attempt to curtail such negative reactions that may be internalised by both the gay father and his children, Bozett (1987b:41) makes reference to several so-called *social control strategies* that may be adopted by the parties involved.

The **first** is **boundary control**, which comprises three facets. The first refers to the child's *control of the father's behaviour both verbally and behaviourally*. This may manifest in the form of children requesting their fathers to attend school functions alone, or avoiding physical contact with their lovers or partners in public. The second facet refers to *control of the child's behaviour*. This involves the child not inviting the father to his or her home or place of employment, for as one respondent argued, "I didn't want people talking about me behind my back or pointing at me going 'Oh, her dad's a fag.'" (quoted in Bozett, 1987b:41). A third variant is the *control of the behaviour of others vis-à-vis the father*. This may have children avoiding bringing friends home to meet their father. In this regard, Bozett references the concept of "shameful differentness" coined by Goffman (1963) to indicate the probable shame the child may experience when their friends discover the father's sexual orientation.

The **second** of the three **social control strategies**, is **non-disclosure**. Such an approach basically positions the children in a manner whereby they foreclose any possible conversations about the sexual orientation of their father. The **third strategy** involves **full disclosure**, thus telling others about the father. Reasons for this vary from preparation of friends and significant others before meeting the gay father to avoid any shock or surprise. On the other hand however, a gay respondent stated that he told others because his father's sexual orientation is but "...one part of my family. It's significant." In doing this, gay children themselves are better able to find peace with their own sexual orientation (Bozett, 1987b:42). In addition, four factors influence the degree to which children will utilise the mentioned strategies (Bozett, 1987b:43). The first factor is *mutuality*, thus, identification of their own unique, different or counter-culture attributes to that of their father. Secondly, *obtrusiveness*, which involves the discernability of the father's homosexuality in public, and thirdly the *age* of the child, with older rather than younger children displaying more control over the behaviour of others or their own. Finally, *living arrangements*, also influence the degree to which children will use the strategies, based on the fact that those living with their gay father and his lover or partner, may have no or very little control over their behaviour (Bozett, 1987b:44).

3.4 CONCLUSION

The chapter commenced with the question, “[h]ow can two loving, homosexual men teach a young boy to care for and love a woman? ...What will two loving moms teach a little girl about men?” (Stanton & Maier, 2005:71). From the foregoing discussion, the answer to this question seems quite simple, insofar as the literature exemplified the similarities pertaining to both heterosexual and gay/homosexual parenting. Although both consist of their own unique attributes, principles and practices, they share similarities in terms of joys, hardships, obstacles and limitations. Yet, despite this, three contradictory categories have created an array of complexities associated with gay fathering. These being the polarisation between ‘gay’ versus ‘homosexual’, ‘gay/homosexuality’ versus ‘heterosexuality’ and ‘gay/homosexuality’ versus ‘fathering’.

Pertaining to the first two of these categories, on one side of the continuum, one finds homosexuality associated with the perceptions and ignorance of mainstream society, having the gay individual succumbing to the ‘me’-category of Mead (1962:175). On the other side, the gay father may seek to re-emphasise the inherent meaning of liberation, change, strength and novelty associated with the category of ‘gay’, thus highlighting the ‘I’-category. Views that reinforce the pathological views of homosexuality are due to ideologies that prescribe the importance of ‘compulsory heterosexuality’, ‘hegemonic masculinity’ and per implication, homophobia. Such views maintain the dominance of heterosexuality in society and curtail efforts of sexual minorities, of which gay fathers form part, to fully realise and celebrate diversity.

In terms of the third polarised category, a continuous process of coming out to oneself, one’s family, significant others and society as a gay man, is seen as but one phase of not only a double (Fadiman, 1983, cited in Bozett, 1987), but *triple closet*. After curtailing negative reactions after his disclosure, the gay individual has to further face the so-called ‘second closet’, that of coming out as a gay father to the gay community, a process that may ironically be met with hostility by those akin to him. The third closet, according to the researcher arises with the gay man authenticating and openly endorsing (cf. Downs, 2006; cf. Miller, 1979) both his roles as gay man and gay father, championing and integrating both his sexual orientation and role as father within a framework of pride, liberation and self-assertion.

Thus, a continuance of the pathological differentiation between gay and homosexual and gay/homosexual and heterosexual, only reinforces ideologies that propagate the seemingly contradictory relationship between homosexuality and fatherhood, for the latter is deemed as only a heterosexual right. Yet, as cited, several principles of generative fathering are also cemented within the basic practices and principles of gay fathering, whereas the majority of obstacles and limitations associated with gay fatherhood, have their origin in the hostile homophobic environment of which the gay family forms part, rather than originating from within the internal structures of the gay family itself. An occurrence the researcher deems the real contradiction. This is ascribed to the fact that proponents of traditional family formations (i.e. heterosexual in nature), seek to uphold the definitions, structures, roles and practices associated with these families, in an attempt to primarily safeguard the sanctity of marriage, the couple and children. Yet, one cannot help but question whether such efforts are truly reactive, rather than proactive in nature. Reasons for this relate to the fact that such practices curtail the realisation of the sanctity of relationships – whether in terms of marriage or parenting – that gay individuals may not be afforded to experience. In doing this, degradation, discrimination, and prejudice result in gay individuals succumbing to alcoholism, isolation and suicide, amongst others, factors that serve to disintegrate the moral fabric of society. The inherent irony evident from the foregoing discussion is the fact that, by inhibiting the realisation of new forms of parenting that may not even differ as much from heterosexual parenting, probable similarities and complementary practices, will never be fully realised. Thus, debates on pathology dominating debates on *generativity*.

What should be quite evident from Chapter Two and Chapter Three is the lack of South African academic sources and research related to generative and gay fathering of Caucasian men. Another potent observation would be the fact that no studies have been undertaken in the South African context on the relationship between fathering practices (whether heterosexual or gay) and Erikson's concept of *generativity*. Against this background, Chapter Four will focus on the specific research methodology used to gain the necessary insights of the heterosexual and gay fathers, to complement the existing academic research on fathering.

CHAPTER FOUR

GENERATIVE FATHERING IN THE FATHERING PRACTICES OF HETEROSEXUAL AND GAY FATHERS IN SOUTH AFRICA

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

4.1 INTRODUCTION

In addition to the literature studies provided for in Chapter Two and Chapter Three, this chapter will seek to discuss the research methodology used to accrue data for the study. Aiding the specific research design and subsequent methods used, the forgoing chapters provided the basis for the research methodology by citing several academic accounts and research on the subject matter of heterosexual, generative and gay fathering. These sources were based on historical and contemporary perspectives on fathering and views on its possible future formations. Examples of these sources included books, dissertations of MA and PhD-students, Internet sources, academic journals and newspaper articles. Based on the literature study, the researcher compiled an interview schedule for in-depth interviews and self-administered questionnaires to gather data for the purpose of the study.

The choice of the research design served as reflection of the research objectives stated in Chapter One. In adhering to a specific research design, one is afforded the opportunity to be directed towards the correct research actions, the rationalisation of sufficient use of time and resources and the implementation of a systematic approach to the research to be undertaken (Sarantakos, 2005:106). Additional advantages of the research design centred around the provision of a concise overview of the research purposes, provided order and clarity to the steps undertaken during the research which enabled the researcher to accurately estimate possible costs (cf. Sarantakos, 2005:106).

Chapter Four will firstly focus on the nature of the fixed qualitative research design, with emphasis on the reasons for using it, as well as the steps associated with it. This will be followed by a discussion of the research methodology, where the nature of the research methods, data collection and data analysis will be highlighted. Finally, an overview of the importance of ethical considerations associated with this study will be communicated.

4.2 THE QUALITATIVE RESEARCH DESIGN

This particular study adopted a **qualitative research design** (cf. Sarantakos, 2005:112), although a smaller segment added a quantitative dimension.

4.2.1 Reasons for using the qualitative research design

Six reasons underscored the choice of this particular design. **Firstly**, the researcher already had a precise idea of the particular "... nature of the research topic and [was] interested in the way [in] which people [would] respond to it" (Sarantakos, 2005:112), without knowing what their responses would be. **Secondly**, the choice for this design is attributed to the fact that data analysis was conducted entirely after the completion of the fieldwork (cf. Sarantakos, 2005:112).

Thirdly, the researcher was given an "insider perspective" into the lives and views of his research subjects (cf. Babbie & Mouton, 2004:271), thus "...attempts to see things from that person's point of view" (Bogdan & Taylor, 1975, quoted in Babbie & Mouton, 2004:271). This idea finds solace in the work of Alfred Schutz and his hermeneutic-phenomenological approach, in which emphasis is placed on how individuals make sense of their everyday world and the manner in which researchers will eradicate their own preconceptions in understanding their respondents (Bryman, 2001:14). The roots of such an approach can be traced to the work of Max Weber and his reference to *Verstehen*, in other words, attempting to understand the views of your respondents, rather than merely trying to explain them (Bryman, 2001:13; Sarantakos, 2005:40). The researcher dealt with the specific views, interpretations and perceptions of the fathers who partook in the study, based on their own personal experiences of their context (Sarantakos, 2005:40). Related to these views, was the qualitative paradigm of symbolic interactionism. This approach, according to Herbert Blumer (1969, cited in Sarantakos, 2005:43), is best suited for the naturalistic methods of exploration and inspection within social research (cf. Babbie & Mouton, 2004:270). He attributes this to three main premises of symbolic interactionism. The first notes that people act towards other individuals or things based on the meanings they ascribe to them, secondly that meaning results from interaction between people, and thirdly that such meaning is dependent on an ever-dynamic process of interpretation, modification and change (Babbie & Mouton, 2004:31). Based on this, proponents of symbolic interactionism, and per implication the other paradigms discussed, encourage the social researcher

...to get as close as possible to the subjects that are being studied in order to understand the meanings they attach to their actions and interactions with other people (Babbie & Mouton, 2004:32).

As **fourth** reason to adopt the principles of a qualitative research design, the importance of the specific context of which the respondents form part, should be noted (Babbie & Mouton, 2004:272). This approach, which is often referred to as the “contextualist or holistic research strategy of qualitative research”, afforded the researcher the opportunity to “... describe and understand events within the *concrete, natural context in which they occur*” (cf. Babbie & Mouton, 2004:272). In the case of this study, the researcher was able to interview Caucasian heterosexual and gay men in their familial contexts, of which the nature was influenced by the broader societal context and culture of South Africa. Related to the foregoing four reasons, the provision of “thick” or in-depth description and comprehension of the results of the research represents the **fifth** reason for opting for the qualitative research design. In terms of this, it was possible to provide detailed accounts of the views and actions of the heterosexual and gay fathers based on his increased understanding of their views (cf. Babbie & Mouton, 2004:271).

The **final** reason is intertwined with the basic theoretical argument provided for in Chapter One. Here the researcher emphasised the importance of undertaking an inductive rather than deductive approach in his research, by immersing himself in the natural context of his respondents to accurately generate second-order constructs and novel interpretations within the field of fathering, rather than adhering to an existing or deductively based study (cf. Babbie & Mouton, 2004:273).

4.2.2 Steps associated with the qualitative research design

Six steps characterised the fixed qualitative research design. The **first** of these included the selection of the research topic and the research methodology followed, **secondly**, by the framing of the problem statement, research objectives and research questions (cf. Sarantakos, 2005:112). **Thirdly**, during the sampling phase, the choice of setting or context, as well as respondents was provided for, whereas data collection as **fourth** step centred on the choice of research methods, the fieldwork (conducting the research) and recording and organising the data accrued

(Sarantakos, 2005:112). The **final two steps** focussed on data analysis and the subsequent reporting of the findings in an in-depth discussion.

Based on the in-depth discussion of steps one through three in Chapter One, this particular chapter will highlight the **nature** of the research methods chosen, the data collection, as well as the manner in which data analysis took place (steps four and five)³⁴.

4.3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This section will highlight the different **research methods** used to obtain information on the research questions posed. This will be followed by a focus on the data collection and subsequent data analysis, as well as ethical considerations associated with the study.

4.3.1 Research methods

In addition to the provision of a literature study, a triangular approach in terms of his actual data-collection process was adopted, by using both **qualitative** and **quantitative means** in his **in-depth interviews** and **self-administered questionnaires**³⁵.

(a) *In-depth interviews*

In order to obtain the empirical data, in-depth interviews with both heterosexual and gay individuals were conducted based on a semi-standardised questionnaire (cf. Sarantakos, 2005:240). By utilising this method, Neuman (2003:290) believes that one will be able to gain awareness about factors such as non-verbal communication and the specific milieu in which the interview took place (which might aid in constructing a meaningful interpretation on the researcher's part). In addition, answers provided by respondents lead the interviewer to ask additional questions, pertaining to the subject matter, which originally, did not figure in the compilation of the questionnaire (cf. Sarantakos, 2005:240).

³⁴ Step six will be provided for in Chapter Five.

³⁵ See Annexure B (Heterosexual Fathers Questionnaire) and Annexure C (Gay Fathers Questionnaire) for the complete interview schedule and self-administered questionnaire for each of the two groups of respondents. Both the interview schedule and self-administered questionnaire were completely similar.

The decision in utilising in-depth interviews mainly centred around the importance of the subjective nature implied by the foregoing discussion, whereby the emotions and views of heterosexual and gay men in South Africa are regarded as important to increase comprehension in relation to the research questions, research objectives and problem statement posed (cf. Wisker, 2001:165). Instead of focussing on numerical variables utilised by quantitative researchers, the researcher deemed the ideas of his respondents and the context of which they form part (Neuman, 2003:146) as important factors to construct a better view as to how these men conceptualise their roles as fathers, and the manner in which *generativity* may impact on the execution of their roles.

This emphasises the importance of the context within which the study was undertaken, thus, the parameters of family life, as defined by heterosexual and gay fathers. This aligned directly with Neuman's (2003:78) notion that theory imbedded within the approach used for this research report tells a story, thus a report that reads "... more like a novel or biography than like mathematical proof ... rich in detailed description ... of the meaningful everyday experiences of the people being studied" (Neuman, 2003:79). Thus, regardless of possible disadvantages, such as being quite time-consuming in terms of both the interview itself and later transcription, this approach was thought to be beneficial (cf. Wisker, 2001:165).

Five stages comprised the complete **interviewing process** undertaken by the researcher (cf. Babbie & Mouton, 2004:290). **Firstly**, the researcher provided a clarification of the background and purpose of the study and the methods to be used, thus thematising. **Secondly**, he designed the process through which the research would progress, whilst the **third** stage had him undertake the actual interviewing process. Following on the interview process, was **fourthly**, the transcribing of the interviews undertaken followed by the analyses of the gathered materials and the verification of the reliability and validity of the gathered material. **Finally**, in Chapter Five, a complete and concise report on the research findings within the context of generative fathering, was provided (cf. Babbie & Mouton, 2004:290).

(b) ***Self-administered questionnaires***

In addition to the in-depth interviews, **self-administered questionnaires** were also sent to selected respondents who were not able to partake in in-depth interviews. Also referred to as a 'self-completion questionnaire' (Bryman & Bell, 2003:141), the

use of this basically implied that, in contrast to a face-to-face interview, respondents were asked to complete the questionnaire themselves (Babbie & Mouton, 2004:258). Advantages of utilising these types of questionnaires included the following. It brought about less financial costs (in terms of, for example travelling), the questionnaires were quicker to administer and the respondents were given the opportunity to complete the questionnaire at their earliest convenience (Bryman & Bell, 2003:142). It may, however, also be associated with several disadvantages. These include misunderstandings that respondents may experience in terms of the meaning of concepts or the phrasing of questions (cf. Bryman & Bell, 2003:144). In addition, longer questionnaires are not necessarily regarded as feasible, based on the fact that response rates are expected to be low (cf. Bryman & Bell, 2003:144).

It should be noted that *both* the interview schedule and the self-administered questionnaire were identical in nature, to insure that both methods provided insights on similar themes related to the research questions posed. Related to both these methods, is the fact that the process of **triangulation** was evident in the research methods used. This process implies the advantage of observing "...something from several angles than to [merely] look at it in only one way" (Neuman, 2003:138). Neuman cites different formations that triangulation may take, such as triangulation of measure, triangulation of observers and triangulation of theory. For the purpose of this study, however, the researcher ascribed to **triangulation of method**. This, according to Neuman (2003:139) refers to a 'mixture' of qualitative and quantitative methods that may herald different, yet complementary strengths to each other (cf. Wisker, 2001:157). In doing so, he believes that "...a study using both is fuller or more comprehensive". This thought is echoed by Sarantakos (2005:146) who believes that triangulation affords researchers the opportunity "...to be thorough in addressing all possible aspects of the topic" by adding increased amounts of data, which subsequently, may increase the knowledge of the researcher and the reader. In addition, he believes that this method also enriches the data presented, and that a higher degree of validity and credibility is attained (Sarantakos, 2005:146).

Although not as extensive as the predominant qualitative nature of the research, one section in both the interview schedule and self-administered questionnaire provided a quantitative dimension. The section on the **domains of generative fathering** (behavioural, emotive and cognitive), was characterised by the use of the Likert type questions to determine the **level of involvement** of the heterosexual and gay fathers in each of these domains. Regarded as a widely and commonly used scale in survey

research (Babbie & Mouton, 2004:154; Neuman, 2003:197), these scales are also referred to as 'additive scales' because the responses of the individuals partaking in the study, are added up and converted to percentages to gain insight into their views and opinions on specific themes. These scales usually incorporate questions that ask individuals "...to indicate whether they agree or disagree with a statement" (Neuman, 2003:197), or other variations thereof. To measure the levels of involvement in the three noted domains, the categories of *never involved*, *seldom involved*, *involved* and *very involved* were provided for. The responses for each of the items provided on the scale were added up and converted into percentages, in order for the summation of the scores to provide the reader with an overall view of the men's involvement in each of the respective domains³⁶ (cf. Babbie & Mouton, 2004:154). By doing this, the researcher believes that he has underscored the listed advantages of triangulation. This is attributed to the fact that the numerical data (number of responses of fathers) in fact complemented the qualitative accounts provided by the respondents on their choice of level, further enriched by a comparison to and amalgam with academic literature on the subject matter (cf. Sarantakos, 2005).

In terms of the **data collection**, the in-depth interviews and self-administered questionnaires were utilised in the following manner.

4.3.2 Data collection

The study predominantly utilised, as noted, a qualitative research design, with **in-depth interviews** with selected respondents as its core. The respondents who partook in the in-depth interviews were all Caucasian males, grouped into two groups, heterosexual fathers and gay fathers.

With in-depth interviews as primary method, provision was made for semi-structured, open-ended questions to generate the necessary subjective perceptions of the heterosexual and gay men partaking in the study. These interviews took place at the places of work and home where the respondents felt most comfortable. The interviews were arranged in advance and lasted for one to two hours, depending on the feedback from the respondent. With their permission, a tape recording was made of these interviews, in an attempt to insure precise interpretation and analysis of the transcripts. From these interviews, the non-probability sampling method of snowball-

³⁶ Refer to Chapter Two for an in-depth discussion of the domains of generative fathering. In addition, refer to Chapter Five, where Tables 7 and 8 and Figures 2, 3 and 4 provide insight into the levels of the respondents' involvement in the lives of their children.

sampling lead the researcher to additional respondents who contributed proactively to the study (cf. Neuman, 2003). These in-depth interviews were regarded as appropriate for this particular study, due to the sensitive nature of the subject matter, and the discreetness that many of the respondents wanted to attain (cf. Wisker, 2001:165). In addition to this, as noted in the foregoing section, **self-administered questionnaires** were sent to respondents who were not able to directly interact during in-depth interview sessions. These were also arranged in advance, and a set time for the timely return of the questionnaire by the respondent was communicated (cf. Babbie & Mouton, 2004:258-259).

The biographical character of each of the heterosexual and gay fathers who partook in the study, included the following.

(a) ***The biographical description of the heterosexual fathers***

Heterosexual fathers were selected based on biographical variables that corresponded with that of the gay respondents (sexual orientation and marital status excluded), including race, age, educational attainment, occupational status and income.

The following information can be derived from Table 3 and Table 4. Pertaining to the age range of the heterosexual men who partook in the study, the majority (nine) was aged between 50 and 59, whereas the remaining five respondents found themselves in their thirties (one), forties (three), and sixties (two). Geographical location had seven residing in the province of Gauteng, five in the North-West Province and the remaining three were from the Eastern Cape town of Oudtshoorn. The majority of respondents had post-graduate academic qualifications (fourteen), whilst thirteen of the respondents were still in a marital relationship, with two being divorced men. In addition to the information communicated in these tables, it should be highlighted that all of these fathers were Caucasian, Afrikaans-speaking and came from a middle-class economic background.

In terms of the sex of the children, there were 17 males and 17 females, whereas the mean age of the 34 children was 23 years, the youngest being six months and the oldest 40 years. From the information available, it was quite evident that the majority of the children left their parents' residence in their early twenties, whilst those who left

earlier (18 or 19-years of age), did so to further their studies at university level, but returned home during university recesses and holiday periods.

Table 3: Biographical information on heterosexual fathers (in-depth interviews)

Name	Age	Occupation	Province	Academic Qualifications	Relationship Status	Number of children & sex	Age	Period in household	Fathering type
Barry	59	Primary school principal	Gauteng	BA	Married	1 son 1 daughter	25 30	Son = 25 Daughter = 23	Biological father
Ernst	53	Lecturer	North-West	D Admin	Divorced	1 son 1 daughter	31 24	20 years Still lives with mother	Biological father (divorced)
Ethan	53	Primary school principal	Gauteng	Teacher's Diploma	Married (second marriage)	1 son 2 daughters	25 22 12	Oldest children with mother. Youngest still in household	Divorced biological father (older children) / Biological father (younger daughter)
Gary	43	Lecturer	North-West	PhD	Married	1 daughter	9	9 years	Biological father
George	53	Lecturer	North-West	PhD	Married	2 sons	23 27	23-year-old still living with parents	Biological father
Joel	49	Primary school principal	Gauteng	THED	Married	3 sons	12 17 20	Younger children still in household. Older son attending university	Biological father
John	54	Lecturer	North-West	D Phil	Married	2 sons 1 daughter	25 28 29	23 years	Biological father

Name	Age	Occupation	Province	Academic Qualifications	Relationship Status	Number of children & sex	Age	Period in household	Fathering type
Steven	53	Psychologist	Gauteng	MA	Married	2 sons	24 27	Both still living with parents	Biological father
William	63	Retired teacher	Gauteng	BCom	Married	1 daughter	30	27 years	Biological father
Winton	54	Project Manager	Gauteng	IT-Certificate	Married	3 daughters	21 22 25	All three still living with parents	Biological father

Table 4: Biographical information on heterosexual fathers (self-administered questionnaires)

Name	Age	Occupation	Province	Academic Qualifications	Relationship Status	Number of children & sex	Age	Period in household	Fathering type
Christopher	54	Primary school teacher	Gauteng	BA, BEd	Married	3 daughters	19 32 34	19 Early 20s Early 20s	Biological father Stepfather to older daughters
Kevin	57	Medical doctor	Eastern Cape	MBChB	Married	3 sons 1 daughter	29 27 25 21	Not available	Biological father
Ryan	62	Pastor	Eastern Cape	Diploma in Theology	Married	1 son 1 daughter	40 38	18 years	Biological father
Sean	46	Lecturer	North-West	PhD	Married	1 son 1 daughter	10 12	10 years 12 years	Biological father
Tiaan	30	Self-employed	Eastern Cape	Grade 12	Married	1 daughter	6 months	6 months	Biological father

(b) ***The biographical description of the gay fathers***

Pertaining to the access to gay fathers, assistance from a gay pastor, lead the researcher to one respondent in Pretoria. Although this pastor directed a request towards members of the congregation to partake in his study, no feedback was received from that and other congregations. Through the process of snowball sampling, the researcher was lead to three additional respondents in the Johannesburg suburbs of Melville and Westdene, and two in the North-West Province city of Potchefstroom. In addition to these in-depth interviews, psychologist Dr. Juan du Plessis disseminated eight self-administered questionnaires in the Cape Province. Of the eight questionnaires, three were returned.

In terms of the gay men, the following information was evident from Table 5 and Table 6. The age range of the gay men who partook in the study mainly varied between 40 and 48 (seven respondents), whereas the remaining five were either in their early thirties (two), mid- and late fifties (two) or early seventies (one). Although the researcher acknowledges the discrepancy in the ages of the men who formed part of the respondent-base, the choice of the men can be justified for the following reason. It was extremely difficult to gain adequate access to gay men with children who were willing to be either interviewed, or to complete a self-administered questionnaire. Based on this, as well as the theoretical foundation of generative fathering which emphasises selfless care across generations, it was regarded as appropriate to welcome participation of all the gay men who wanted to express their views, whether younger or older.

Pertaining to the geographical location of the men, five resided in Gauteng, three in the Western Cape, two in the KwaZulu-Natal Province, and two in the North-West Province. Seven respondents had post-graduate academic qualifications, four had their matric certificate, and one respondent did not relate this information in his self-administered questionnaire. In terms of their relationship status, five were in long-term relationships, three were single and four of the respondents had opted for marriage, since the legalisation of same-sex unions in South Africa in 2006 (cf. De Vos, 2008). The gay men's affiliation as father came to the fore most predominantly because of previous heterosexual marriages (in eleven of the cases), with only one respondent, Patrick having never been married or never having had children. He does, however, occupy the position of stepfather for Matthew's children, although he

has not opted for legal adoption. All eleven of these fathers are divorced, as it relates to their previous heterosexual marriages.

All of these fathers were Caucasian and Afrikaans-speaking, with only Matthew and Patrick displaying a bilingual (Afrikaans and English) language usage in their household. In terms of the sex of the children, there were thirteen males and six females, with the mean age being 20 years, the youngest being three years and the oldest 47. From the information available, it was found that the majority of the children lived with their biological mothers after the divorce (in ten of the cases). The exception to the rule, this being Matthew and Patrick's relationship with the children, initially mirrored the other ten cases. The mother, in this case however, gave up her sole custody in favour of their gay father, due to the fact that she goes through, as Matthew put it, "disappearing acts", always leaving the children with him. At the time of the interview, for example, they did not know anything about her whereabouts. As such, they believed that their household would provide a more suitable and stable setting than that of the biological mother.

Table 5: Biographical information on gay fathers (in-depth interviews)

Name	Age	Occupation	Province	Academic Qualifications	Relationship Status	Number of children & sex	Age	Period in household	Fathering type
Anthony	48	Lecturer	North-West	DLitt et Phil	Single	1 son 1 daughter	20 23	Living in his townhouse	Previous heterosexual marriage - divorced
Clive	46	Pastor	Gauteng	Theology (ADM)	Involved	1 daughter	22	Married 22 years	Previous heterosexual marriage - divorced
Gene	44	Farmer	North-West	NTC5	Single	1 son 1 daughter	23 21	18 years	Previous heterosexual marriage - divorced
Hugh	40	Lecturer	Gauteng	BA	Involved	2 daughters	16 17	Living with biological mother	Previous heterosexual marriage - divorced
Matthew	41	Regional Sales Manager	Gauteng	Diploma Business Management	Gay marriage (to Patrick)	3 sons	15 16 19	Living with father for 11 years - sole custody	Previous heterosexual marriage - divorced
Patrick	43	Self-employed	Gauteng	MBA	Gay marriage (to Matthew)	3 sons	15 16 19	See above	Not adopted, but role as stepfather
Robert	44	Entertainment industry	Gauteng	National Higher Diploma	Involved (five years)	1 son 1 daughter	17 14	Living with mother	Previous heterosexual marriage - divorced

Table 6: Biographical information on gay fathers (self-administered questionnaires)

Name	Age	Occupation	Province	Academic Qualifications	Relationship Status	Number of children & sex	Age	Period in household	Fathering type
Adrian	30	Restaurant manager	KwaZulu-Natal	Grade 12	Single	1 daughter	3	Living with mother	Previous heterosexual marriage – divorced
Daniel	57	Politician	Western Cape	BA	Gay marriage (to Jeremy)	1 son	29	25 years	Previous heterosexual marriage – divorced
Jeremy	55	Businessman	Western Cape	Not available	Gay marriage (to Daniel)	1 son	29	22 years	Previous heterosexual marriage – divorced
Liam	30	Administration Manager	KwaZulu-Natal	Grade 12	Involved	1 son	9	Living with mother	Previous heterosexual marriage – divorced
Melvin	74	Retired farmer	Western Cape	Grade 12	Involved	1 son	47	21 years	Previous heterosexual marriage – divorced

(c) **Limitations associated with the data collection**

The following **limitations** arose during the collection of data for the study.

Firstly, although gay respondents initially displayed a great deal of eagerness and motivation to partake in the study, when sent the self-administered questionnaires or contacted to conduct interviews, very few responses were received. This could be attributed to Bryman and Bell's (2003:144) reference to the fact that longer questionnaires are not regarded as feasible. They attribute this to the fact that the response rates may be low. In addition, one potential respondent attributed his non-participation to the fact that he thought researchers treated respondents, especially gay men, as "guinea-pigs" – conducting the interviewing and leaving, without ever providing feedback on his or her findings. Although laudable, in ascribing to these reasons, these men, according to the researcher, forewent a chance to provide insights into their lifestyles as gay men and fathers, which may have eradicated negative myths held about them.

Secondly, several potential gay respondents, who may have provided invaluable insights, did not want to partake, based on the fact that they had not yet disclosed their sexual orientation to their significant others. In some instances, according to contacts of the researcher, these men were still married to women and had children.

A **third** limitation proved to be quite uncomfortable. After one of the interview sessions with a gay man and his partner, subtle (yet one could debate the relativity of the term) attempts were made by the men to engage the researcher in sexual behaviour. They started to recall several sexual encounters with other men during the period of their relationship. This was interpreted in a very negative manner, based on the fact that their behaviour reinforced the misconceptions held by many individuals, about gay men (cf. Barret & Robinson, 2000).

Following the collection of the data, **data analysis** commenced.

4.3.3 **Data analysis**

To analyse the data, the researcher worked with the recorded, translated and transcribed data. In doing this, he focused on several principles pertaining to qualitative data analysis. These include, firstly, exploring and comprehending views

and actions communicated by respondents, rather than merely explaining it and as such remaining committed to the analysis and projection of the natural context of which the respondents form part (Mouton, 1996:168). In addition, the researcher sought to construct accounts or stories that serve as true reflection of the "...internal meaning and coherence of the social phenomenon, rather than breaking it up into its constituent 'components'" (Mouton, 1996:168). Finally, the researcher, as will be evident in Chapter Five, will provide contextualised reports on findings based on the feedback of respondents, in contrast to generalised explanations of the data (Mouton, 1996:168). As stated earlier, the analysis will take place in an inductive manner, in other words undertaking "...detailed observations of the world and move toward more abstract generalizations and ideas" (Neuman, 2003:51). This process thus involved refining the social concepts central to the research (fatherhood, generative fathering and gay fatherhood) to formulate empirical generalisations and building a new theory "... from the ground up".

In constructing these accounts or stories, the researcher formulated the questions, in both the questionnaire for in-depth interviews and the self-administered ones, in such a manner as to reflect specific central themes, each building on the one preceding it³⁷. The **first** of these **themes** dealt with the concept of **masculinity** and the manner in which both heterosexual and gay men defined it. For the gay men, additional questions were posed related to the manner in which they constructed and/or dealt with their gay identity. This section on masculinity was deemed imperative insofar as it provided the basis for the **second theme**, this being **the men's definition and reasoning related to fatherhood**. The researcher regarded the themes as intertwined, due to the fact that the respondents' views of masculinity, whether these included an overemphasis on hegemonic masculinity and patriarchy, or a fear of emphasised femininity or a "new man approach", may greatly impact their conceptualisation of their position, role or involvement as fathers (cf. Bradley, 2007; Connell, 1987; 1995; Walby, 1990)³⁸. The **third theme** dealt with the **relationship between father and child**, with focus on positive influences and obstacles associated with fathering. The **fourth theme** included the questions related to the **domains, components and categories and constraints of generative fathering**. Here the researcher attempted to highlight and further reinforce arguments on the similarities and/or differences in the parenting practices of heterosexual and gay men, as it relates to *generativity*. The **fifth** and final theme included questions on

³⁷ These themes will be discussed in detail in Chapter Five.

³⁸ A comprehensive discussion on these concepts is provided in Chapter Two.

possible **intervening variables** (both positive and negative) from external groups from within the heterosexual and gay community, whether these included kin, friends, colleagues, agencies or broader heterosexual or gay communities.

These themes find representation in two sections in Chapter Five, where a concise report of the findings will be provided for, after which an in-depth analysis, interpretation and synergy with previous academic research will be established. However, before commencing with this, an overview of the ethical considerations associated with the study, will be provided.

4.3.4 Ethical considerations

In undertaking the research, the researcher adhered to the principle of voluntary consent (Neuman, 2003:123), providing respondents with the choice to partake in the study, without being coerced to do so. To insure this, the researcher compiled an **Informed Consent Statement**³⁹, which was to be read and signed by the respondents, informing them of amongst others the rationale of the study and the importance of adhering to and upholding ethical standards during the study. This, in turn, provided the researcher with the necessary permission to publish research findings communicated by respondents (cf. Bryman, 2001:480; Neuman, 2003:124).

In addition to this, the sensitive nature of the subject matter was further acknowledged in terms of **privacy, confidentiality** and **anonymity** in relation to information communicated by the respondents (cf. Neuman, 2003:124). By insuring the **privacy** of an individual respondent, the researcher guaranteed to not disclose the participants' identity after the completion of an interview. This manifested in two forms. The first of these was **confidentiality**, whereby the researcher possessed both the names of respondents and the information communicated, but still abstained from releasing it on public level (cf. Neuman, 2003:126). **Anonymity** on the other hand had respondents remain nameless without anyone knowing who communicated the information (cf. Neuman, 2003:126).

4.4 CONCLUSION

Chapter Four focussed on the specific research design adopted for this particular study in terms of the reasoning behind it and its particular stages. As evident, a

³⁹ See Annexure A for a copy of the Informed Consent Statement used during the interviews.

qualitative research design was selected, primarily with in-depth interviews and self-administered questionnaires as its central research methods. Information was also related on the nature of the data collection, the biographical variables associated with the heterosexual and gay respondents and limitations experienced. In conclusion, the inductive data analysis was discussed, as well as the ethical standards adhered to during the study.

Chapter Five will provide an in-depth and indelible “thick description” (cf. Babbie & Mouton, 2004:270), based on the themes discussed, on the nature of heterosexual and gay men’s fathering in South Africa. In addition, he will also ponder the probability of fully realising the importance of *generativity* in both of these groupings. In doing this, it is anticipated that insightful results will be provided that will not only answer the research questions, but also contribute to the current debates and body of knowledge related to fathering, both in South Africa and on international level.

CHAPTER FIVE

GENERATIVE FATHERING IN THE FATHERING PRACTICES OF HETEROSEXUAL AND GAY FATHERS IN SOUTH AFRICA

FINDINGS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter will primarily centre around the findings accrued during the fieldwork. Much of the nature of this qualitative study has been described quite thoroughly in Chapter Four of the dissertation. Here a synergy will be established between the academic literature on fathering (as communicated in Chapters Two and Three) and the views of heterosexual and gay men in South Africa. All of this will be based on the general and specific objectives stated under Point 1.4 in Chapter One. These included the manner in which the two groups defined the concept fathering, the differences and similarities they displayed in their definitions, and the degree to which they displayed the principles of generative fathering in their parenting practices.

Point 5.2 will direct the reader's attention to the **results of the fieldwork**. Here a detailed portrayal of the ideas communicated by the respondents will be highlighted, with the views of the heterosexual fathers cited first, followed by the views of their gay counterparts on the same issues⁴⁰. This will find resonance in several **thematic categories**. These will include an initial focus on the manner in which both groupings view masculinity, followed by an emphasis on their ideas related to fathering and their relationship with their children and their involvement in the lives of the children (based on the domains, components and categories and constraints associated with generative fathering).

This will provide the basis for Point 5.3, which will deal with an **in-depth interpretation and discussion** of the reported findings. Here the researcher will seek to judiciously establish a synergy between the views of the heterosexual and gay respondents with the academic literature discussed in Chapters Two and Three. By providing for such an amalgam, the researcher will attempt to underline either the similarities or differences of the respondents' views, and that of previous studies undertaken by noted academics in the field of parenting in general, and fathering in

⁴⁰ An additional theme on *gay identity* will however form part of the section on reporting of the findings, and the subsequent section on the in-depth discussion, interpretation and analysis of the data accrued from gay men.

particular. This discussion will further underscore the stated general objective and research questions. This will be done to determine whether generative fathering does indeed figure in the parenting practices of heterosexual and gay men in South Africa, and if it does, whether there are differences and/or similarities in the manner in which these men adopt such principles.

5.2 FINDINGS RELATED TO THE STUDY: A REPORT

As noted above, attention will now be directed towards the results accrued during the fieldwork. Under Point 5.2.1, emphasis will be placed on the findings associated with heterosexual men and their views on fathering. This will be complemented with a similar discussion under Point 5.2.2 on the views of gay men on the same themes used for their heterosexual counterparts. The themes used were based on concepts, themes and typologies consulted in Chapters Two and Three, which were subsequently used in the compilation of the questions used in the **interview schedule** during the **in-depth interviews**, and in the **self-administered questionnaires**. All of this was in direct alignment with both the General and Specific Objectives.

5.2.1 Heterosexual fathers: Towards an understanding of fathering

The themes that will guide the discussion in this section will be **threefold**. **Firstly**, attention will be given to the heterosexual fathers' views on what the gender-category of **masculinity** entails. This will provide the basis for the **second** theme on their **views on fathering**, followed by the **third** and final theme on the **principles of generative fathering**, and a discussion of the manner in which the respondents displayed these principles in their parenting practices.

(a) *The meaning of 'masculinity' to heterosexual men*

Here three sub-themes, each related to the conceptualisation of masculinity, will be discussed based on the findings. These include specific **concepts and phrases associated with masculinity**, arguments on whether the respondents regarded themselves as masculine (based on their own definitions), and whether their parents displayed gender-specific socialisation processes in raising them.

Responses relating to the first sub-theme, found the majority of respondents (eight) using labels such as leader, "the strong one", protector and "enforcer of respect" to

conceptualise the characteristics of a masculine man. In addition, others associated masculinity with men who are able to “take charge” in terms of decision making and are, as such, more purposive. Concepts such as gentleman, calmness and a Biblical interpretation of king, priest and prophet were also highlighted. An interesting distinction came to the fore with Kevin citing a “...well-built physical male” as masculine, in contrast to Joel, Sean, George and Winton opting for an amalgam between the intellectual *and* physical attributes of a man, as prerequisites to be defined as masculine.

Based on these criteria for masculinity, the respondents were asked, **secondly**, whether they **regarded themselves as masculine**. All but one respondent, Kevin, thought themselves to be masculine. Very evident in their responses was the fact that three of these men ascribed to their own unique definition of masculinity, opting, as one did, to equate masculinity with a more androgynous approach to their daily lives. In terms of the other two, Winton believed himself to be masculine when “...you feel that you are necessary to fill critical spaces in your friends’ and family’s lives”, whereas Gary made the assertion that he “...proof[s] myself to myself, I have my own identity, I don’t need to be one of the boys”.

Only three of the respondents argued that their view of masculinity and subsequent ‘gendered behaviour’ could *not* be attributed to their own primary socialisation. **Thirdly** then, ten respondents evoked memories of a **very conservative upbringing and gender role socialisation** (cf. Haralambos & Holborn, 2008:98). These men associated their parents’ primary focus with sporting activities (such as rugby and cricket), going to the army, being a “man’s man” in their interaction with their father and peers, and being able to “stand their ground” in the face of adversity or conflict, thus not “acting like a sissy”. The three respondents who provided the adverse response attributed their reasoning to the fact that their parents were more liberal, provided them with more freedom and only made subtle attempts (rather than forced) to inform their children on the different activities associated with men and women.

The section that follows will provide a report on the findings related to the men’s views on fathering practices.

(b) ***Heterosexual men and fathering: Moving towards generative fathering***

Grouped into four sub-themes, this section will communicate the results of the men's views on fathering. This will include the respondents' definition of the concept fathering, possible reasons for becoming fathers, factors that influenced their level of involvement, and finally the nature of their relationship with their children.

(i) *Defining the concept 'fathering'*

Several concepts used to define masculinity resurfaced in the discussions on how heterosexual men defined the concept fathering. Descriptions such as leader, calmness, decision-maker and protector (provider of security) were again highlighted. In addition to these concepts, the men also thought a father to be a caretaker and provider in physical, emotional and spiritual configurations. Related to provision on a physical level, the importance of traditional breadwinning was reiterated, whilst the ideas of "being there", being a friend to the child, displaying interest in their lives, listening and loving them, found solace on the emotional level.

In addition to these views, fathering was also seen to incorporate an educational facet insofar as the father serves as a compass by listening to his children and adequately advising them on challenging issues they may be facing. In doing this, they should act selflessly to establish a lifelong connection with their children in order for the realisation of a sustainable father-child relationship which provides the foundation for autonomous and unique future generations.

A number of reasons to take on this daunting task was also provided for by the fathers.

(ii) *Reasons for becoming a father*

Nine men pointed to the expectations of the dominant heterosexual society as reason for becoming a father. In terms of this reason, responses included the following. Three respondents believed that parenting was a "normal manifestation ...[of a] normal⁴¹ marriage". They argued that you get "overwhelmed" by the demands of the cycle of heterosexual romantic love – falling in love, getting engaged and subsequently married, and then having children. This, according to John, leads to a

⁴¹ Interpreted as 'heterosexual'.

greater degree of acceptance within the larger social context of society and its cultural expectations and framework. The expectation exists that by having children, your marriage and family life will be enriched and encourage you to work even harder to succeed, in order to provide in the needs of your dependents.

Other respondents did not however ascribe to this view. They noted that they wanted to be fathers based on their own free will. This was evident in the responses of Ethan and William who believed that becoming a father should be seen as a "...natural given, a need that every man possesses and wants to experience". Gary added to this argument by stating that it was a "...deep yearning within me and my wife" to have children, for by not having a child, according to Tiaan, the father is left with a "gap" in his life.

Providing in this need to father and filling the mentioned 'gap' may be influenced by a number of factors that either encourage or impede the involvement of fathers.

(iii) *Factors that impacted on the level of fathering involvement*

In gaining insights into the impact of these factors, the researcher based his questions on the work of Lamb (1997), who placed emphasis on **four** such **factors**. These included the father's **motivation, skills and self-confidence**, as well as **institutional practices** and **support** from external agents.

Motivation

None of the respondents believed that they needed any degree of motivation from external sources to undertake their role as fathers. According to John, "... there was no burning motivation to be involved, it just came spontaneously", with Gary stating, "I needed no motivation, everything emerges from a loving relationship with my child ...we have a fantastic relationship". Another respondent argued that one has to be motivated for the sake of the child, whereas three others believed that increased motivation from the father's part would benefit the child in terms of the provision of an adequate role model. Such role modelling may take the form of a relationship-template for future interactions in either romantic or business liaisons. An interesting account was provided by five respondents who argued that their increased involvement in the lives of their children would reinforce their status-position as fathers insofar as they would gain a greater deal of satisfaction from it.

To complement this discussion on motivation, a focus was also placed on the respondents' relationship with their own fathers. Here, four sections are provided. The first one highlighted the nature of the relationships of the respondents with their own fathers, thus whether they remained close. Secondly, based on this relationship, emphasis will be placed on whether they modelled their fathers' behaviour, or compensated for it. Thirdly, a reflection is given on instances or memories that impacted on them, as well as the effect of this impact, and finally, whether the way their fathers treat their grandchildren differed from the way in which their fathers raised them as children.

Ten respondents said that they had **retained a close relationship with their fathers**, with one referring to his relationship with his father as "relatively" close. The remaining four respondents recalled relationships characterised by a great deal of strain, with Ernst saying, "...my father had grown irritable and non-supportive of me, my sisters and my girlfriends...". He attributed this, in part to the fact that his father is currently married to his third wife, who on her part, has 'poisoned' his father against his children.

Secondly, in terms of **modelling** or **compensating** for their fathers' parenting practices, the following was found. Seven respondents noted that they **modelled** their fathers' behaviour, whereas eight argued the complete opposite. Those who modelled their fathers' behaviour remembered their fathers as "...great, quiet, a rock" (Steven), as someone who never forced them to do or be someone other than what the values they were taught, ascribed. These values were all embedded in a Christian foundation which highlighted honesty and discipline. As such, the influence of their fathers' parenting practices, left an indelible impact on the respondents' parenting measures. Despite their positive recollections, the respondents attempted to even improve on their seemingly 'perfect' fathering practices, citing a heightened sense of intensity and involvement in terms of their children's activities, more open communication and emotive support. They wanted their children to experience a sense of safety, love and belonging, as Barry noted, "I wanted my child to feel the same way my father had me feel – it was a purposeful attempt". Such an attempt, according to all the respondents, also included minimal physical punishment.

Those who **compensated** for their fathers' upbringing, characterised their fathers as individuals who never displayed any affection, love or emotion towards them. In this regard, Tiaan remarked that "I make an effort to do exactly the opposite" in terms of

his parenting behaviour, than what his father did. The respondents' fathers were seen to be very anti-social, rigid and confused (as related to themselves and their role as fathers). Gary noted that although his father loved him, he was never able to fully establish a meaningful relationship with Gary, but rather found it easier to interact with Gary's mother and sisters. In William's case, his parents' divorce when he was only seven years old, left him without a biological father, but provided him with an uncle who occupied this 'vacancy' in his life.

Thirdly, the respondents provided an in-depth recollection of many **memories associated with their relationship with their fathers**. Ten were very positively inclined towards the way their fathers brought them up. Several of them recalled that their fathers were very "gentle" and rarely, if ever aggressive, also providing support and merely "being there" when they needed them. Winton emphasised this point by directing attention to the fact that his father even when against the "...typical, strong masculinity of that time" during the 1950s and 1960s, by being more supportive and caring than other fathers. John cited his father's steadfastness, desire to always question facts and strong Christian religious affiliation whereas Christopher and William complimented their father figures as positive role models in terms of open communication, exerting justice, discipline and acceptance of others, in their own behaviour. In terms of Gary's situation discussed in the above paragraph, he attributes his father's love, for particularly his mother and sisters, as reason why he now strives to provide such love and support to his own wife and daughter. Such positive relationships lead to the creation of a more stable self-image for the respondents, a more liberal approach to life and resulting respect for diversity, a greater deal of introspection about internal motivations and feelings (before acting on it), and more sensitivity and gentleness. In short, such a relationship according to Joel, "...made me feel good".

Those who provided the counter arguments used descriptions such as "negative, indecisive, ...unreasonable loss of his temper, ...uncontrollable ...overly-critical". Ernst told of growing up with such a father. When he was voted as student-body member, his father said that the only reason for that was that the school wanted money. His father even blamed him for his divorce. This tumultuous relationship even lead to a stuttering problem for Ernst, "Every time I speak to him, I start to stutter..." George also recalled his father's "bombastic" manner when he partook in sporting activities during his school years. "After a rugby match he would criticise me for being 'worthless' and 'awkward'", whereas Tiaan noted that when he and his father were

partaking in shared activities, his father would at some or other point get angry at Tiaan and start to scream and shout. Personal influences on these men ranged from being traumatised, a deterioration of their self-image, heralding attempts not to be like their fathers, and in several cases leaving them emotionally unstable.

The **fourth** and final facet to be focussed on here is the manner in which these men's fathers **treated their grandchildren**. Eight respondents reflected on the positive manner in which their fathers treated the grandchildren. Two of them cited the consistent manner in which their fathers were just as positively inclined towards the grandchildren, as they were to their own children. Others, however, described their fathers as being more calm, displaying higher levels of self-control, spending more time with the children and being more concerned. Ethan's children, for example, viewed their grandparents as their heroes, a feeling that was, according to Ethan, reciprocated. Ernst's father was involved with his children at a younger age, but as they grew older he started to refer to them as "spoilt brats", whereas George and John's fathers' involvement lacked an emotional connection in terms of "picking the children up, kissing them" and being "uninvolved", respectively.

Skills and self-confidence

The **skills** of a father, according to all the respondents, are imperative. Five respondents noted that they "picked up on" certain parenting practices with the progression of time with reference to emulating the roles of their wives or own fathers. Two respondents attributed their increased involvement to reading books on parenting and expressing the desire to attend a course on successful fathering. In addition, Barry remarked that it is a "natural process ...a pleasure" to get involved in the lives of your children, with Ethan jokingly remarking that "...female hormones have always existed within me ...being a father has always been a part of me". Respondents, such as Sean, argued that it is imperative for all fathers to be effective.

Related to discussions on the importance of **self-confidence**, the respondents argued the following. One noted that it was part of being "a man" to set a good example for your children, and as such, the father should display a high level of self-confidence. In doing this, Steven believes that the father will serve as a good role model for especially his sons. Such behaviour comes to the fore by means of a so-called "chemical metamorphoses", according to Ernst. Your success as father is reflected in your children's performance, and *vice versa*. Acting as role model "rubs off" on your children and provides them with the necessary certainty and direction for

their own future endeavours. In turn, their success serves as reflection of their role as parent, and serves as motivation to excel even more.

Institutional practices

Based on the feedback from the fathers, the researcher established the importance of three interrelated themes, these being the impact of the working hours on the father-child relationship, the nature of the father's employment, and the manner in which the father's occupation may serve as example to the children. **Firstly**, in terms of the **working hours** of the father, all of the fathers interviewed found themselves in a dual-earner family. Regardless of the difficulty to "always be there", as evident in the feedback of Ethan and John, eight fathers were (and are still) afforded the opportunity to work flexitime, especially those in teaching professions on primary, secondary and tertiary level. Other provisions such as sabbaticals and holidays were also contributing factors. William's daughter, for example, attended the same school where he taught and she became, as he said, "...his shadow". Winton and his wife, on the other hand, both agreed that she would not work for the first seven to eight years of their daughters' lives, with fathers like John highlighting the important role child-care facilities, such as day-care-centres played while raising their children, "...our schedules left us with no other choice".

As is evident from this first theme, the **nature of the father's employment** also plays a significant role. Steven noted that the psychological profession afforded him the luxury of better comprehending the problems and developmental phases his sons progressed through, and subsequently enabled him to be a better support system for them. This thought was echoed in the contributions of Barry, Christopher, Ethan, Joel, Sean and William, who believed that by being a teacher and lecturer, and as such working with children, teenagers and younger adults on a more frequent basis, provided them with the necessary skills and insight to emulate in their parenting roles. This is related to the manner in which the **occupation** of the father may **serve as example** to his child. If the father is successful in his occupation, John remarked, then the children will attempt to emulate the same dedication and motivation in their own lives and careers. Gary noted, for example, that his position as lecturer awakened a desire in his daughter to become more analytical and critical in her own life (even at a very young age), encouraging her to, amongst others, write stories and even help her father to add up the marks of his students' test papers.

Support

In terms of support, the heterosexual fathers referred to two main groupings, these being their wife or ex-wife, and the broader heterosexual community (comprising their parents, siblings, friends, colleagues and others). The support of their wives was found to be of utmost importance. The phrases "teamwork", "team effort", "team sport" and a "50/50-relationship" came to the fore quite evidently. One respondent felt that a "joint vision" for parenting should be developed, based on "unconditional love", with primary focus on continuous communication, support and the personality and strengths of the parent, rather than a 'gendered-category'. Although three respondents still ascribe (or ascribed) to specific gendered ideals in socialising children, two of these men argued that the division of their domestic activities were negotiated, based on the strengths of each of the parties, rather than being enforced upon one another. As such, all of the respondents underscored the importance of androgynous parenting practices. In doing this, Steven believed that the partners supplement each other, share in the responsibilities, serve as soundboards and learn from each other. Without such support, several problems may arise. The father may experience forces of a "destructive" nature, a sense of demoralisation and isolation. Because of this, marital affinity, according to three respondents, is deemed of the utmost importance. Without such support, as one respondent expressed very directly, "there will be no success."

Related to the discussion of receiving **support from one's spouse**, the respondents were also asked whether they believed that a child should have *both* a mother *and* a father. Their responses were characterised by a resounding 'yes', with eight respondents accentuating the importance of gender role socialisation (the differentiated roles portrayed by each party), three expressing their desire for such an arrangement, citing it as 'ideal', whereas three of the respondents stressed the importance of their wives' role rather than their own. In terms of gender roles, Gary alluded to the differentiating 'male' and 'female' roles parents should fulfil in their children's lives, with two other respondents underlining this notion with reference to men's instrumental and women's expressive functions especially during the early years of a child's life. In providing in these needs, the child will experience, according to Steven and Winton, a "feeling of belonging". The three who thought their wives' participation as more imperative than their own, attributed it to three reasons. The first, according to John, centred around the fact that his wife displays more insight, tolerance and patience than he does, which enables her to formulate solutions to their children's possible problems, which he overlooks. Secondly, Joel referred to the

fact that, based on his ailing health (cancer), his wife had become the “rock” of the family which holds everything (and per implication, everyone) together. Christopher, finally, argued that without his wife, he would lack the necessary skills and emotional facets to raise his children.

In addition to support from one’s spouse, **support from other members of the community** was also seen as important by the heterosexual fathers. The role of the church, in-laws and friends of the family were highlighted. Barry and Joel noted that they surround themselves with social networks with similar demographics, which in turn, enables them to establish a support network with homogenous concerns and the opportunity to learn from each other’s strengths and flaws related to parenting. One cannot, as John remarked, go through life “...blinded by your own egoism”. Four other respondents however reiterated the importance of such support, but only took note of such “rules outside” their families, but ascribed more to their own individualistic and personal interpretations and expectations for raising their children.

In the section that follows, the researcher will focus on the **relationship between the heterosexual father and his children**. Here, both positive influences and obstacles faced by fathers in their parenting role will be discussed. The section will conclude with responses of the fathers on the manner in which they will deal with, as many may argue, another possible obstacle, the probability of their child being gay.

(iv) *The relationship with their children*

The relationship between the fathers and their children proved to be quite tumultuous, ranging from positive factors to obstacles that either limit or completely inhibit proactive fathering involvement.

The **positive influences** the respondents associated with their heterosexual parenting practices included the following:

- The provision of a **safe and secure** environment. The responsibility of **security** taken on financial, emotional and physical configurations.
- Serving as a **role model** for their children. In this regard, five respondents were particularly focussed on the relationship between father and son. One respondent for example said that the father should “...teach the son to be ‘a man’, how a man should act, how he should treat his girlfriend, his wife, how his family life must function, how to maintain stability...”. Another respondent

articulated the way in which a father should also provide a relationship-template for his daughter in terms of the way in which men should treat her.

- Taking on the role as **friend** to the children.
- Providing a **traditional family setting** that conforms to the expectations and norms prescribed by a '**hetero-normative**' society.
- Providing love and merely "being there" for the child.
- Serving as **natural authoritative figure**, which further reinforces the importance of traditional conceptualisations of fatherhood and masculinity, according to one respondent.

Possible **obstacles** the fathers face, or had to face to realise these positive influences, were also evident during the interviews and in the self-administered questionnaires:

- **Peer pressure** experienced by their children was heralded by seven respondents. They attributed the negative impact thereof to the **financial claims** their children make, based on what their friends get from their parents (i.e. money, clothing, computers).
- Adapting to the different **developmental phases** of the child. This was particularly evident in Sean's, George's and Gary's reference to their fear of not being "equipped" to manage the teenage years and sexual-awakening periods of their children, especially that of their daughters.
- A lack of **self-control** which also beckons the question of **disciplinary methods**.
- **Over-involvement**, forcing them very harshly not only to achieve but exceed their abilities and other people's expectations.
- **Technological developments** make it all the more difficult for the older generations to keep up with, and subsequently identify with the new forms of entertainment and 'quality time' together. Ernst for example noted that he was not able to master *playstation*-games and because of this, there were very few opportunities to identify and bond with his son.
- **Lack** of always knowing *how to* and *which advice* to provide to the child.
- The child **absorbing** all of the father's **time, emotion and energy**.
- **Selfishness** and possible **resentment** on the father's part, based on the fact that he has to *forego his own dreams, desires and needs for the sake of his child*.

An **additional obstacle** may surface if children were to disclose that they were gay or lesbian. All of the respondents said that they would not want their children to lead this lifestyle. They based their decision on the following:

- The fact that four of the respondents did not regard such a lifestyle as “**normal**”, “**natural behaviour**” or the “**norm**” in society.
- It does not conform to the laws of **God**, insofar as it was not God’s “plan” for men and women.
- It was not the **example** set by the father in socialising his children.
- It would not be an **easy** lifestyle for such individuals, based on the **homophobic** nature of a society which, in many instances, is sometimes “**gruesome**” and leaves gay individuals feeling isolated and rejected.
- As one father whose eldest son is in fact gay, noted, it is a very **sad** and **painful** road for the child to travel.

The **reactions** to such a disclosure may, according to these fathers, be divided into two distinct groups, those who **accept** it, and those who would **disapprove** of it. The latter assigned this reason to the following:

- The fact that they would accept it with great difficulty in order for them not to lose their child or seek **professional help, guidance** and **prayer** to eradicate and “cure” the child’s homosexuality.
- Ethan noted that he spoke to his children about gender roles at a very early age. He believes that “... people who are gay display a need or yearning for something, a need that is missing in their lives ...”.
- Others argued that they would be “... accommodating of *such* people” and support them if it does **not serve as obstacle** for both their child and family life.
- Joel said that with the necessary time and **pre-determined conditions**, he would accept it.

Those who were more **accepting** noted the following:

- They would accept their children for who they are, “...**they remain your children, even if they are gay**”.
- They would attempt to **understand, support** and **provide possible leadership** to their children.
- Although they would be shocked and disappointed initially, they would **not judge or banish their children**, for as one respondent noted, “...what good

would that do?" It does however, according to one respondent, remain "problematic".

Based on the foregoing discussion of the positive features and obstacles fathers face in their role as parents, the focus will progress towards the findings as it relates to **generative fathering** and the degree to which the respondents ascribed to it.

(c) ***The principles of generative fathering***

Here emphasis will firstly be placed on the findings associated with the **conditions and constraints** and interrelated **categories of generative fathering**, followed by a comprehensive overview of the manner in which fathers viewed the **components of generative fathering** (i.e. interaction, accessibility and the domains of paternal responsibility).

(i) *The conditions and constraints and related categories of generative fathering*

To avoid any ambiguity and to clarify the findings, the researcher has grouped together the **categories of generative fathering** and the **interrelated conditions and constraints** in the discussion that follows.

Ethical work

In terms of the condition of **dependence**, adhering to the expectations associated with the category of **ethical work** was regarded as imperative by all the respondents. They underscored this notion by referring to the importance of a sense of security to be provided to their children. By doing this, according to Steven, you encourage your children to take risks and explore the wider world, whereas John believed that ethical work will ensure a feeling of belonging, having the children know that they have a safe haven and an individual to turn to in time of need.

William reiterated this idea when he stated that he wanted (and still wants) to know where his daughter is, with whom, as well as why. Winton displayed such behaviour when his three daughters were still very young. It seems appropriate to quote Winton at length to emphasise his point:

Toe hulle klein was, was daar 'n parkie naby ons huis gewees.
Ek sou altyd agter 'n boom gestaan het om seker te maak dat
hulle veilig is [hulle wou nie altyd hê pa moes saamgaan nie].

Elke tien minute moes hulle kom rapporteer dat hul 'ok' was. Dit vestig daarom 'n gevoel by hulle dat hulle belangrik is en beskerm word⁴².

Joel, Kevin and Winton (as their children have grown older) however caution against too much emphasis on ethical work. They believe that paranoia and other extremities related to the safety of the children may inhibit any autonomy on their children's part. They attributed this to the fact that the children may find it difficult to move beyond their comfort zone, always depending on their parents.

Stewardship

In terms of playing their role as **steward** based on the condition of **scarcity**, varied accounts were provided by the respondents. On the one hand, there were those men who did not regard their role as provider (mostly economic, based on their responses) as problematic. They used words and phrases such as "...it's nice to spoil them", "...it's not a problem but a challenge" to "it's my duty". By providing in the economic needs of the child, Christopher believes that you prevent the child from experiencing embarrassment in relation to his or her friends, especially considering the great deal of competition in terms of material possessions in contemporary society. Respondents who shared these views believed that it is the duty of the father to provide in the needs of the child, based on several reasons. These include that such provisions serve to establish a stronger bond with the child, serve as support mechanism, furthers their emotional development and also because it was the decision of the parents to have the child, not that of the child.

Others, however, believed that with economic provision comes a great deal of responsibility – on the part of the child. By serving as steward, the impetus is on the father to establish a sense of responsibility in the children by having them acknowledge that they should use their material means in a responsible manner. The father should also, according to Joel, encourage autonomy and teach the children to use the means at their disposal to the best of their ability without squandering it.

⁴² Translation of quote: "When they were little, there was a park near our house. I would always stand behind a tree to make sure that they were safe [they did not always want dad to go along]. They had to come and report whether they were 'ok' every ten minutes. It establishes a feeling that they are important and that they are protected".

Development work

Twelve respondents highlighted the importance of being aware of such changes the child progresses through in his or her life. By performing **development work**, the father is provided with the opportunity to simply (again) “be there” when the child needs to talk about the **changes** they go through, especially during their teenage years. It is during this period that, according to two of the fathers, children are not likely to “open up” about their lives, but according to Joel and Ethan, “...any good father will know his child and pick up on the fact that they are experiencing problems”. An additional factor that may serve as hindrance was communicated by Sean. He argued that every child brings his or her own unique challenges to the forefront, with every individual child displaying their own diversity throughout their life course.

For three of the fathers such changes proved to be quite difficult. According to John, he found it extremely difficult to practice self-restraint (in terms of his temper) when it came to his sons for “...you almost crucify yourself in the process”. George also found it difficult to manage the adversity his gay son has gone through (and continues to go through) based on his sexual orientation, for “...how do you handle this?” Seven other respondents, however, celebrated the changes their children were going through. They attributed their close-knit relationship, constant monitoring, support and guidance, as well as adapting to their children’s changes, to their view of change. As Gary put it, it was a “novelty, something interesting and new”.

Relationship work

Relationship work, as evident in the views of the heterosexual fathers, involved a complete emersion in the lives of their children, necessitating a great deal of selflessness on the fathers’ part. This provided the foundation for establishing a meaningful and lasting **interdependent relationship** with the child, and furthers one of the causes of generative fathering, being the creation of a reciprocal respect and feeling of care between individuals.

All but three of the respondents regarded relationship work as an obtainable goal. John explained his view by stating that it is not always possible to act in an altruistic manner, a thought echoed by Sean, both citing the fact that fathers also have their own lives to live, regardless of taking care of their children. Ryan went as far as to argue that fathers could and should only act in a selfless manner in “extreme situations”. The other fathers ascribed a great deal of importance to relationship

work, with two respondents remarking that "...your child always comes first". Examples of this included Ernst's notion that he "...replaced my 'ego-centric' nature by 'signing' a contract" that bound him to his children. In addition, George said that he had to do things he never enjoyed for the sake of his children, and Gary reflected on the "muscle spasms" that he experiences daily in his attempt to find a balance between his and his daughter's expectations. According to one respondent, you have to be available 24/7 and maintain these support structures throughout your and their lifespan, because "...that is why you are a father", according to Ethan. "This", according to Tiaan, "...is your main purpose in life", a state of events, according to Kevin, "...as it should be". In short, by acting in a selfless manner, a father should regard relationship work as a "privilege", as was evident in the feedback of Steven.

In doing this, a **meaningful and lasting relationship** may be established between father and child. All of the respondents ascribed to this because they felt that such a relationship will also have the child return home in time of need. It also creates **extended family ties** which serve as a circle of solace and security wherein all members of a family can feel safe. These children are afforded the opportunity to return home at any given moment when they, as three respondents argued, experienced problems in their own marriages and families. In addition to these reasons, another respondent felt that by maintaining this lasting relationship, the father is, in some way, **validated** for all the sacrifices he had to make throughout his life, thus receiving a "payback". Although such validation is not a necessity, it does provide the father with a sense of accomplishment and pride.

Regarding the idea of **reciprocal respect and care** for others, the respondents again accentuated the importance of relationship work. By adhering to this principle, Ryan believed that a more "healthy community" would be established insofar as people do not live in isolation, but constantly interact with others on a daily basis. For this reason, Winton for example placed his three daughters in a primary school situated in a working class neighbourhood. By taking this purposeful step, he wanted to create awareness of the fact that there are people less fortunate than them. Ethan's selflessness also found representation in his children's treatment of him, with them exclaiming, on occasion, "...provide in your needs first, before you provide for us".

The researcher will now direct the reader's attention to findings related to the **components** of generative fathering, including **interaction**, **accessibility** and **paternal responsibility**.

(ii) *The components of generative fathering*

Research on the components of **interaction**, **accessibility** and **paternal responsibility** yielded the following findings, courtesy of the respondents.

Interaction

Interaction, as noted in the work of Palkovitz (1997), is a proximal form of fathering involvement, insofar as the father engages in a direct, one-to-one relationship with his child. Such behaviour was very evident in the responses of the heterosexual fathers. This component, according to Steven and William, is a necessity because one has to participate in the lives of your children to display support and establish and reinforce the fact that they are important individuals in your life. In-depth interaction develops the child and establishes a strong bond, trust and solidarity between father and child. Such a bond may come to the fore courtesy of a so-called "language of love" in the form of "a touch, hug and physical proximity". This prevents the child experiencing feelings of isolation and rejection.

A capability of generative fathering that is embedded in interaction is that of communication. By establishing a meaningful, interactive relationship with their children, two respondents believed that the father is able to identify possible problems in advance. An open communicative relationship creates a strong bond characterised by care and interest, which affords the father the chance to inform his child that "I'm not your enemy, I'm your friend", as noted by George. Communication may take the form of merely sending an SMS, or giving the child a 'missed call'. By having a relationship characterised by open communication, the child will request the father's input on possible problems, rather than seeking answers from other, "questionable places", according to Ethan. Although the majority of the respondents (14) believed interaction to be imperative, Ernst went as far as to state the complete opposite. He said that he and his children lived in "...different worlds, away from each other, worlds that do not overlap", and because of this, he did not deem interaction important.

Accessibility

Accessibility, as distal form of parental involvement (Palkovitz, 1997), was also regarded as important by respondents. They believed that this made the children feel that their fathers were always near to them, even, as in Ethan's and Ernst's case, their children are currently in Dubai and London. As Tiaan remarked, you have to know, "Is she [or he] ok? I need to know all the time". Being accessible for the child, provides a feeling of security, a responsibility fathers like George still regard as "...paranoia" in his life.

These components of generative fathering, coupled with categories thereof, all form part of the component of paternal responsibility.

Paternal responsibility

The researcher sought to investigate this component by providing an in-depth demarcation of its **three domains**, courtesy of the work of Palkovitz (1997)⁴³. This investigation utilised Likert type questions, which provided four categories from which the respondents could make their selection in terms of their level of involvement in each of the domains (*never involved, seldom involved, often involved* and *very often involved*). This was provided for in both the interview schedule and self-administered questionnaire. In terms of the heterosexual fathers, the following results, as indicated in Table 7⁴⁴, were accrued.

⁴³ As included in Chapter 2 under point 2.3.4(c).

⁴⁴ The numbers in each of the cells of the three domains represent the number of responses the men provided for each of the four categories (never, seldom, often and very often).

Table 7: Findings: Domains of generative fathering associated with heterosexual fathers

Activity	Level of involvement			
	Never	Seldom	Often	Very Often
Behavioural				
Feeding		3	6	5
Bathing		5	3	6
Clothing		1	7	6
Taking care of sick child			5	9
Listening to the child			4	10
Conversations with your child			6	8
Providing advice			5	9
Problem-solving			6	8
Disciplining the child		1	8	5
Developing new skills (teaching child to swim, ride a bicycle or car, etc.)			5	9
Giving child chores to do		8	4	2
Engaging with child's teachers at school		6	4	4
Driving the child around and picking up items they need		3	1	10
Shared activities with the child:				
Exercising		4	6	4
Shopping		6	5	3
Going to the movies		6	3	5
Eating meals together (breakfast, lunch, dinner)		2	5	7
Playing games together		4	6	4
Celebrating holidays			6	8
Working together		5	3	6
Emotive				
Displaying affection towards the child (kissing, hugging, smiling, etc.)		2	4	8
Displaying patience with the child		2	3	9
Praising child for accomplishments		1	3	10
Encouraging child to exceed (work harder)		1	6	7
Telling your child that you love him/her		2	4	8
Displaying interest in the life of your child (how their day was, who their friends are, what their feelings are, interests, thoughts, aspirations)		2	5	7
Cognitive				
Monitoring the child's life in terms of ...				
Who his/her friends are	1	1	4	8
Who his/her dating partners are	1	3	4	6
His/her schoolwork		3	7	4
His/her grooming		3	7	4
His/her safety and whereabouts			5	9
His/her choice of magazines, television shows or movie preferences	1	1	7	5
Worrying about the child		2	2	10
Planning for the child's future		1	5	8
Planning events such as birthdays, vacations, holidays and trips	1	2	4	7
Praying for the child			4	10

An evident observation from Table 7 is that the majority of respondents were either *often* or *very often* involved in terms of the **emotive** and **cognitive** domains of

generative fathering, whereas somewhat of a variance existed in terms of the **behavioural domain**.

The behavioural domain

In terms of this dimension, the majority of men opted for the *often* and *very often* level of involvement on the scale pertaining to the items listed. An interesting finding emerged for the items of *giving the child chores to do* and *engaging with the child's teachers at school*. Here the majority selected the option of *seldom*. Related to the item of *chores*, the two divorced fathers, Ethan and Ernst, qualified their answer by stating that time spent with their children was mostly associated with a condition of visiting, rather than residing with them. As such, they spoiled their children during the weekends and holiday periods, not expecting them to execute chores during the few days they have together. Gary and Steven, on the other hand, labelled their wives the stronger personality in terms of the delegation of chores within the household, whereas Winton cited the degree of difficulty associated with giving his daughters chores to do. He explained his view by reflecting on the manner in which his own father spoiled him and his siblings. He still washes their cars, parks them in his garage and provides in any other conceivable need. *Engaging with the teachers at school* was again placed in the responsibility spectrum of the wife and mother, by amongst others Gary. The five teachers in the study's sample cited their extended social and professional networks with the children's teachers, as reason for not formally (but rather informally) engaging with their child's school on matters related to their child's achievement. Others pointed to their child's lack of problems and conscientious academic work as reasoning behind their choice of rarely, if ever, engaging with the teachers.

Enmeshed within the discussion of the behavioural dimension, was the reference to *shared activities* fathers and their children engaged in. The results were quite varied, with only the more traditional items such as *eating meals together* and *celebrating holidays together* displaying a greater deal of agreement between the fathers, who opted to select the categories of *often* and *very often*. The other items, however, painted a completely different picture. The majority of respondents (six in both cases), indicated that they did not go *shopping* or attended *movie screenings* with their children, with a significant number noting that they *seldom exercised* (4), *played games* (4) or *worked together on projects* (5) with their children. In terms of *playing games together*, five respondents noted that it was their wives who excelled in this activity, whilst the nature of a given project would determine the level of the father's

involvement of *working together* with the child. *Shopping* was mostly associated with the mother, with one respondent citing his love for it and another potentially attributing his involvement to “Dad has to pay, doesn’t he?”

Involvement during the infancy stage of the child also saw almost half of the respondents selecting the category of *often* and the other half *very often*. Those who selected either the *seldom* and *often* categories held the belief that it was the role of their wives to feed, bathe or clothe their children during their early infancy and childhood years. These wives did, however, as communicated by the respondents (and what was assumed based on their lack of indicating otherwise), not prohibit their husband’s involvement in these behavioural activities. One husband, who opted for the *very often* category for these initial phases in their child’s life, undertook this responsibility based on his wife’s own career obligations and his support thereof. In terms of the elements of *discipline* and *problem solving*, the respondents related the following information. Related to *discipline*, the majority of the fathers ascribed to strict, continuous discussions with their children on problems that arose (rather than physical punishment), an activity all of the fathers saw as a joint venture between husband and wife. With regards to *problem solving*, fathers like Ethan believed that there is no other individual that the child should (preferably) turn to in times of adversity. This is a task George regarded as a challenge, but “...we do the best we can”.

The emotive domain

Findings related to this domain, saw several fathers expressing *overt forms of affection* (eight), *being patient with the child* (nine), *praising the child for his or her accomplishment* (ten), *encouraging the child to exceed* (seven), *telling the child that he loves him or her* (eight), and *displaying a general interest in the life of their child* (seven). Gary and George regarded emotional involvement as a privilege, and both sometimes display exaggerated levels of affection, by for example “...drinking a glass of champagne” for every module passed at university level (George). Patience, according to two respondents, is sometimes very difficult to master, but Joel cautions a moderate level of patience, to avoid providing the child with too much latitude in their behaviour.

Finally, data was also collected on the involvement of fathers on a cognitive level.

The cognitive domain

As with the emotive domain, the majority of responses resided within the categories of *often involved* and *very often involved*. In terms of who *their friends are*, fathers attempted to be aware of the identity and background of these individuals, whereas Joel, with his focus on his sons' *dating partners*, would always pose three questions his sons had to answer about the possible romantic entanglement – Who are the girl's parents? What do the parents do for a living? Why do they do this? Although fathers displayed a definite interest in the scholastic performance of their children, the majority (seven) selected the option of *often* rather than *very often involved*, because they attributed the example they provided to their children as reason why most of them could work quite conscientiously and display a great deal of dedication in their schoolwork without the parents' enforcement.

Concern about their *safety and whereabouts*, *worrying about the child* and the importance of *praying for the child* was also cited by the respondents. In terms of the safety of the child, two respondents noted that they sometimes display an exaggerated level of concern, whereas praying for their children, according to two respondents, was to be viewed as a personal and individual, rather than group activity. Also quite evident was the fact that although parents attempt to, as Ernst stated, "censor" the mass media their children consume, one can only but hope that the children will not involve themselves in inadequate and pornographic material, so evident in contemporary society. Complete censoring and monitoring of the *magazines, television shows or movie preferences*, has proven to be impossible, especially during the teenage and younger adult years of the child, especially, as one respondent noted, because of increased peer-pressure.

Whether the father succeeds in displaying these principles, based on whatever factors impact on his involvement with his children, one question then remains to be asked. **How has fathering impacted on the identity of and the meanings these heterosexual men attached to life in general, and as parent in particular?**

(iii) *The impact of generative fathering on heterosexual fathers*

Some general remarks were made about this impact. Steven, for example, said that "When you become a father, everything changes", thoughts echoed by Tiaan's notion of "It changed me completely", and Ernst's idea of "You change literally, immediately..." Additional valuable insights included the following:

- Becoming a father, leads to an increase in the level of **responsibility** and subsequently feeling more **mature**.
- It serves as motivation for the men to be **more successful** in their lives, per implication mostly in their careers, to serve as example to their children.
- It brought about a greater deal of **calmness**.
- They started acting in a more **gentle** manner and had them display genuine concern, were more accommodating and acted in a more **selfless** manner towards others.
- One respondent noted that becoming a father made him more **patient**, whilst another cited the fact that his parenting responsibilities provided him with the ability to practice more **self-control** and **self-restraint** in any given situation.
- It forced one respondent to be more **perceptive** about the changing world around him, and for another to experience a heightened sense of **wisdom**.
- It leads the fathers towards a better **understanding** of the views, experiences, expectations and problems faced by their children. Listening and advising them however, still remained a problem.
- In effect, the former lead to an improved “**bonding**” experience with their children because they got more **involved in activities with their children**. Christopher remarked, “The joy of being a father...outweighs any negative things”.
- It “forced” two respondents, Ernst and John, to **view their marriages differently**, because having children impacts heavily on the original formation and nature of the marriage. If care is not taken, the marriage may disintegrate in a matter of months or years.
- Becoming a father leads to a **decrease in perfectionism** for Gary.

The section that follows will provide an in-depth analysis of the results related to gay men's views on fathering, as was just done for heterosexual fathers.

5.2.2 **Gay fathers: Towards an understanding of fathering**

As alluded to in previous sections, the researcher will complement the themes used as basis for the foregoing discussion for heterosexual fathers, with an initial focus on the **identity** of gay men – their **realisation** and ‘**causes**’, their **feelings** associated with their sexual orientation, their **disclosure to others** and these individuals’ subsequent **reactions** and finally, their personal views on homosexuality and the **gay**

sub-culture in general. This is done to establish a possible link to the manner in which their gay identity impacts (or may impact) on their parenting practices.

(a) ***The identity of gay fathers***

In terms of their initial **realisation** of being gay and the probable **causes** they associated with it, the men related the following information. All twelve of the respondents ascribed a biological 'cause' to their sexual orientation, insofar as they felt that they were born gay (God's will), with one respondent adding the role of environmental factors, such as an overly involved mother and absent father as cause. Regardless of these views, four respondents likened their gay identity to so-called "tendencies", something that was "wrong", but which was "always there ...an undeniable fact", which they could not change. One respondent cited the fact that he knew he was "different" from other young boys or men and displayed an "appreciation for men", but lacked the necessary vocabulary to fully comprehend and conceptualise his feelings. The lack of choice as it relates to being gay was cited by Anthony in reference to the fact that he was one of seven children, all of whom, other than he, are heterosexual. This thought was echoed by Clive and Gene who were both raised with four other siblings, all of whom are also heterosexual.

A plethora of **feelings associated with being gay** came to the fore during the in-depth interviews and in the self-administered questionnaires. One respondent provided an emotive account of being gay:

Ek hou van mooiheid, goed met inhoud, passie, ek kan huil, ek kan lag, kreatief wees ... Ek sal nie sê ek is 'n emosionele mens nie ...maar ek beskik oor vryer emosies⁴⁵.

Such freedom was also communicated by other respondents who used terms such as "normalcy", "acceptance", "true me" and "being myself" on the positive side of the spectrum. A sense of desperation and fear based on possible discrimination from the heterosexual community was also evident in the findings. Here words such as 'guilt', 'suicide', 'shame', 'isolation', 'anger', 'resentment' and 'difficulty' were used, whereas only one respondent referred to a sexual connotation with homosexuality, using the concept 'lust'.

⁴⁵ Translation of quote: "I like beauty, things with 'content', passion, I can cry, I can laugh, be creative ...I won't say that I'm an emotional person ...but my emotions are more free".

These feelings also impacted on the **disclosure of their sexual orientation** to friends, family and co-workers. The majority of the respondents (seven) first disclosed their sexual orientation to their best friends, followed by two who told their current life-partners, and two who told their parents after completing their high school careers. One respondent, Anthony, thought his sexual orientation to be a private matter, something that is of no concern to anyone else. If he does foresee possible problems or conflict based on his sexual orientation, he proposes a tactful and reciprocally beneficial discussion between him and the other party (or parties).

The **reactions of these individuals** also varied. Four of the respondents referred to the fact that their families “took it well”, were very “supportive” and “calm”, rather than the expected anger and resentment. Clive, however, argued that his family struggled to establish an equal acceptance of their son and brother being gay and the lifestyle they associated with homosexuality that he was about to lead. Hugh, on the other hand, did not provide his family with a “name for this condition”. Two other respondents opted to only tell their friends and cited a sense of “pride” associated with the “inner-strength” they displayed in disclosing their orientation. Hugh, John and Matthew provided counterarguments. Matthew recalled that his father “banished” him insofar as his father said that “...if I were gay he would kick me out of the house, because he believed that it was a choice I made that I could instantly change. ...Everyone ...in my family was shocked, and no-one even wanted to help or support me”. Hugh referenced the fact that his family literally “moved away from me”, whereas John found others to be very “unhappy” and wanted him to change.

Such **attempts to change** were also displayed by Anthony, Clive, Gene, Hugh and Robert, who attended sessions with psychologists and counsellors in an attempt to eradicate the “something wrong”. Adrian, Daniel and John cited the role of marriage as an attempt to eradicate their same-sex feelings, and Matthew referred to the countless number of girlfriends and the loss of his virginity at twelve years of age to a girl, as measures to change. Gene still believes that he may achieve his desire to change by engaging in heterosexual relationships (dating, marriage) with women. Only Hugh, Liam and Matthew argued that they did not attempt to change their homosexuality, with Matthew potently remarking, “I never wanted to venture back to the heterosexual lifestyle”.

As final component of the relation of information on **gay identity**, the researcher also attempted to gain insight into the manner in which the role of father **impacted upon the lives of gay men** (in terms of freedom), and how members of the **gay community or gay sub-culture** viewed gay men who were fathers, or displayed the desire to be fathers.

In terms of the first of these, none of the twelve respondents equated their role as father to having a negative influence on their existence as gay men. As Matthew noted, "It's just different [to have a child], not negative in any way. Our priorities are just different". Adrian believed that being a father made his life more meaningful and Gene felt that it made him a stronger person, whereas Anthony associated fathering with a higher degree of responsibility to be displayed by gay men. Directly aligned with these views was that of Clive who stated that it was (and still is) his Christian values that limit his behaviour within the gay community, rather than his sexual orientation. Related to the idea of **freedom**, Gene went as far as to compare certain gay men to "animals", engaging in behaviour that should be deemed inhumane (in relation to sexual proclivities gay men engage in at 'gay-only' resorts). A facet of the gay lifestyle he thought to be "the dark side". He recalled instances of humiliation and rejection from gay men at clubs, where he refused to engage in immediate and anonymous sex with other men. Ironically, directly opposing Gene's ideas were two other respondents who cited the liberation and sexual freedom associated with such resorts, which in their opinion, liven up their relationships and keeps it in tact. Associated with the idea of freedom, questions on whether gay fathers were not afforded as much freedom as childless gay men, six respondents believed that they still have as much freedom as before, whereas three respondents alluded to a lack of such freedom. A contradiction arose during one of these interviews, where one of the respondents who cited a lack of freedom and a definite commitment to keep his children away from other members of the gay community, appeared to be supportive of sexual behaviour on a public level. Although he argued that he did his utmost best to keep his children away from gay friends or other members of the gay community, based on the latter's lack of adequate behaviour and composure in the children's presence, he not only promoted sexual experimentation with other gay couples at the mentioned gay clubs, but also made sexual advances towards the researcher. He provided detailed accounts of such behaviour, following the interview.

The **reactions of members of the gay community** to gay fathers were characterised by a great deal of support, encouragement, a shared vision of the

importance of parenting and a desire to be parents themselves. They were, as one respondent phrased it, simply “wonderful” about it. Another respondent felt that it was, however, not “...their [gay community] business at all”, but a private matter. Anthony, on the other hand, noted that although he received support, some of his gay friends displayed a degree of resentment and jealousy insofar as they felt that they also wanted to be parents.

Related to the reactions of the gay community to the gay fathers, the interviews and questionnaires also focussed on the **degree to which gay men either associates or distances themselves from the gay community and sub-culture**. Interesting accounts were provided here. Five respondents ascribed to a more individualistic approach, in effect distancing themselves from a perceived homogeneous communalistic stance associated with gay individuals. Matthew argued that they did not believe in a certain “type” of gay person, and mainly had their own close-knit friendship network. This thought was highlighted by Anthony and Clive who outlined several characteristics they deemed applicable for their social networks. These included shared interests, such as groups of men who were all single, supportive and in short, as Anthony typified it, likely to engage in “superficial friendships” (non-sexual in nature) with people akin to them. Clive’s prerequisites included the importance of monogamy, Christianity and men who are cultured and urbane. Three other respondents – Hugh, Matthew and Robert emphasised the derogatory effect the annual Gay Pride Parade heralds for members of the gay community. When asked about their association with the gay community, it was evident that this external social force, rather than individual motivations, dominated their responses. Matthew believed that it provided a stereotypical depiction of gay people whilst Robert emphasised this notion by referencing the “pink feathers”, costumes and half-naked men as “negative” factors. Hugh underscored their arguments by likening the Pride Parade to a mockery which is an “exaggerated misinterpretation” of gay life. Those men, who are involved in a gay lifestyle, attributed their involvement to the sense of camaraderie achieved through clubbing, partying and embarking on vacations. Others believed it was the association with men who could identify with similar struggles and shared experiences, which served as bonding factors.

Related to these views on the gay identity of men (and per implication sexual orientation), were arguments on the nature of the ‘gendered’ categories of ‘masculinity’ and ‘femininity’.

(b) *The meaning of 'masculinity' to gay men*

This section outlines the **three** aspects related to the **conceptualisation of masculinity** utilised in the section that dealt with the views of heterosexual men. The **first** includes the specific **concepts and phrases associated with masculinity** as 'gendered' category. Anthony and Gene referred to a masculine man as "just a man", thus the manner in which he talks and presents himself to others. Clive and Hugh believed masculinity to incorporate an androgynous character, echoed in Adrian's belief that he is still masculine, regardless of the fact that he enjoys making curtains, dresses and involves himself in interior decorating. Liam, in contrast to this, believes that masculinity should be equated with heterosexuality and not homosexuality. In addition, other labels attached to masculinity include leadership, being a "gentleman", a "protector", caretaker and someone who cherishes others on both a physical and emotional level. Although Gene did not liken masculinity to external attributes, Matthew argued that masculinity should be differentiated from the femininity of women, which is seen to be more internal than the external attributes of masculinity. He illustrated his point by using concepts such as "well-built", "athletic", "rugged" and "adventurous", as attributes associated with men, with Adrian viewing drinking beer, working on cars or watching contact sports as masculine.

Secondly, questions were directed towards the respondents as to whether they regarded themselves as masculine. Based on their own criteria in the foregoing paragraph, eleven of the twelve respondents defined themselves as masculine. Liam, on the other hand, who equated masculinity with heterosexuality, provided the contrasting argument. **Thirdly**, seven of the men indicated that their parents did not expect them to act in a 'masculine' manner, attributing their answer to, amongst others, the fact they were raised similarly to their heterosexual brothers. Two referenced the fact that their fathers in particular, expected them to undertake specific activities such as working on their car, gardening or someday taking over the farming responsibilities (the latter was the case for Anthony). The remaining three respondents remained neutral on the subject matter.

The section that follows will provide a report on the findings related to the men's views on fathering practices.

(c) ***Gay men and fathering: Moving towards generative fathering***

The findings in this section will again be grouped into **four parts**. These will include the men's **definition of the concept fathering**, their **reasons for becoming fathers**, **factors** that influenced their **level of involvement** and their **relationship with their children**.

(i) *Defining the concept 'fathering'*

Consider the following description Anthony provided of fathering:

lemand wat 'n kind het, [het] leiding in sy lewe aanvaar, ten opsigte van die kind se grootword. ...As jy die kind het, demonstreer jy die behoefte om die kind te aanvaar en 'n rol aan te neem om na die kind te kyk. Jy aanvaar dus verantwoordelikheid vir die kind se fisiese, psigiese, kognitiewe en sosiale ontwikkeling. Dit is 'n persoon wat sy kinders sal ondersteun in dit wat hulle wil wees, wil word⁴⁶.

Much of the responses of the other fathers corresponded with that of Anthony. Six respondents used the concept support, four referred to a loving figure, whereas three respondents highlighted the importance of providing in the needs of the child and taking responsibility for the child's well-being. Other definitions associated with fathering included the development of the child's talents and autonomy, sharing insight, serving as educator and being unbiased and caring. Added to this were views of the father as leader, protector, moral figure and friend.

In addition to this, the men also expressed their disillusionment with the fact that many regard the concepts 'gay' and 'father' as contradictory. Robert, for example, noted that based on the fact that he was involved within this relationship with his child, he finds it difficult to comprehend any other reality. "We're also only human", Gene argued, whilst Matthew believed himself and other gay fathers to be even better parents than their heterosexual counterparts. He attributed this to the fact that gay fathers have to overcompensate for being different, based on the constant "spot

⁴⁶ Translation of quote: "Someone who has a child, has accepted leadership for raising the child ...When you have a child, you demonstrate a need to accept the child and take on a role to look after the child. You thus accept responsibility for the child's physical, psychological, cognitive and social development. It is a person that will support his children in what they want to be and will become".

light” that monitors their every move. This positions the fathers in a spectrum of increased and more meaningful involvement with their children. On the other side of the continuum, Anthony believes that one should also acknowledge the relativity of the meanings associated with the gay lifestyle. It is, according to him, the responsibility of the gay parent to lead his or her life in such a way as to prove to the heterosexual community that “... we are just like you”.

But why then, based on the constant scrutiny and possible discrimination and degradation, do gay men want to be fathers?

(ii) *Reasons for becoming a father*

Four of the men cited the so-called in-born desire to father a child, with three communicating the manner in which being a father adds meaning to your life. This leads to, as one respondent put it, the creation of an intergenerational link between father and child, a thought enmeshed within theory on *generativity*. Gene argued that the “... child loves you for who you are”, there are no additional expectations, only unconditional acceptance and love. Others wanted to be fathers because it would insure that someone will inherit your worldly possessions, whereas another expressed the hope that it would re-establish and strengthen his relationship with his own father. The impact of societal pressure also found solace in the reasons given. Here two respondents said that they had a child because it was the logical next step in the cycle of heterosexual relationships – you fall in love, get married and have a child. Matthew believed that society dictates this social responsibility in order for an individual to be regarded as normal.

(iii) *Factors that impacted on the level of fathering involvement*

Attention will now be directed towards the manner in which **motivation, skills and self-confidence, institutional practices** and **support** impact on the level of the gay fathers’ involvement in the lives of their children.

Motivation

Five fathers, Clive, Daniel, Gene, Hugh and Matthew, indicated that they do not need any form of motivation to partake in the lives of the children. As Daniel wholeheartedly put it, “I don’t need to be coerced”, whereas Clive felt that he was of the “...same fibres” as his children.

Related to the discussion on **motivation**, the men also provided an insight into their relationship with their own fathers, a facet to the study the researcher deemed as imperative, insofar as it serves as definite component of generative fathering. Their feedback will be grouped into **four sections**. The **first** will be on whether they **remained close to their father**. **Secondly**, whether they **modelled** their fathers' behaviour or attempted to **(over)compensate** for it. **Thirdly**, a reflection on specific **instances** or **memories** that **impacted** on them, as well as the **effect of the impact** and **finally** whether **their fathers' treatment of their grandchildren**, differed from the way in which they (the gay men) were raised.

Firstly then, eight respondents noted that they remained close to their father based on his parenting practices, whereas the remaining three provided the counter argument. Two of the men who reflected on the positive relationship with their father, saying that their father's desire to establish a more meaningful connection with them, only came to the fore later in his life. **Secondly**, five of the respondents noted that they **modelled** their father's behaviour. They attributed their decision to the fact that they learned a lot from him, and that he provided them with the necessary moral standards and family values for their own familial lives. Hugh, however, noted that although he too ascribes to many of these values, he acknowledges that it might be a mistake to simply mirror another parent's behaviour, rather than constructing your own system. Those who sought to **compensate** for their father's lack of parenting cited several reasons. These included that they wanted to be better fathers by rectifying their father's wrongs and substituting it with new values, including more freedom, emphasis on earned respect rather than forced respect, less physical punishment, more overt displays of emotion and affection, listening more attentively and advising them accordingly.

Thirdly, the researcher found that there were specific **instances** or **memories** these men associated with their fathers. On the **negative** side, respondents recalled instances of alcoholism, abuse, constant irritation and humiliation and selfishness, on their father's part. Such memories lead Clive to remark that he "hated" his father and "rejected him in my head" while growing up. "One time I was so scared of him, that I hid in the washing machine so that he wouldn't find me". Other evidence of such a negative impact was also provided for in Gene's remark that he has since childhood not been able to love and trust other human beings, and is in fact afraid of "needing someone". On the **positive** side, other respondents remembered a good relationship

with their fathers, characterised by a loving, gentle, responsible, fair and intellectually stimulating bond.

Finally, the question that dealt with the possible differences or similarities in terms of the way in which **grandfathers treat their grandchildren**, in relation to the way in which they raised their own sons, presented the following results. Some of the respondents, who displayed a negative inclination towards their own fathers, cited a lack of contact between their children and their grandfathers (in one instance as little as three to four hours in a few months). One argued that his daughter did not want to spend time with her grandfather because he scared her, with another respondent stating that his father knows about his grandchildren, but has never attempted to meet them. Those who painted a picture of the 'traditional grandfather', described him as being "more gentle and affectionate with them than he was with me", more patient, "a real granddad" and consistent in the good, "soft" manner in which he raised his own child.

Skills and self-confidence

Related to **skills**, several respondents (four) indicated that their abilities to parent came naturally, "from within", something that just "has to be there from the start". Others argued that they developed their skills through conversations with other parents (whether gay or heterosexual), attending seminars and reading literature on parenting. Anthony however noted that "...new rules develop that 'drive you' to be more involved as your child grows older".

In terms of **self-esteem**, one respondent believed that being a father made him feel more "...like a man", and in effect overshadows his guilt for being attracted to men. Matthew said that his role as good father increases his self-esteem insofar as it affords him the validation of his children who regard him and his husband as "cool dads".

Institutional practices

The careers of six of the respondents, according to them, did not impact on their relationship with their children. This was attributed to the fact that it provided, as in the case of Hugh, the necessary financial means to support his children. Gene and Patrick have the opportunity to work flexi-time (both are self-employed), whereas Matthew's employer was very lenient when it came to the needs of his employees' children.

Adrian, Clive and Robert took a different stance. Adrian's working hours do not afford him the opportunity to spend as much time with his daughter as he wants to, and Clive referenced his position as pastor as limiting factor in his relationship with his daughter, insofar as it lead to an unceasingly difficult inner struggle, resulting in his ex-wife being "more hands-on" with the child. Robert recalled giving up on his own career prospects and "settling down" for the sake of his children.

Support

Three support networks were identified, these being the **ex-wife, current partner or husband** and the **broader community** (family, friends and colleagues).

Pertaining to their **ex-wives**, Gene and Robert provided negative accounts of the manner in which their wives limited their interaction with their children. Gene recalled that his wife prohibited his participation with their child for the first five to six years of the child's life, whereas an earlier account of the legal battles and one-sided accusations between Robert and his ex-wife, serve as proof of a lack of support and understanding.

On the other side of the spectrum, Hugh indicated that his wife never prohibited him to interact with his children, but rather encouraged his so-called "paternal instinct", a thought echoed in the words of Clive who expressed a great deal of appreciation for having had the opportunity to portray a primary role after the birth of his daughter, since his wife had to work and he was a full-time theology student. Seven respondents deemed this relationship as important, due to the fact that they believe that a child should have *both* a mother and a father, in whatever configuration. Such a configuration may, according to one respondent, take the form of female friends or family members of two gay men, who should still occupy male roles. This argument is echoed by Gene and Robert who refer to the role of "modelling" one's behaviour based on one's parents.

Support from the gay men's current **partners** or **husbands** was deemed far more imperative than that of the ex-wives. Eight of the respondents underlined the importance of teamwork between the two gay men, rather than adhering to gender-specific roles in their endeavour to parent adequately. "We do what is necessary, regardless of our sex or sexual orientation", Hugh remarked. Emphasis should rather be placed on the role of parent, than on the specific gender roles according to

Anthony. The men perform activities based on their strengths and do not act as either a man or a woman, but as a father, although some effeminate subtleties may arise. Such support was evident in the accounts of ten respondents. In this regard, Clive argued that his partner's support of his daughter "affirms" her importance in their lives. Although not having formally adopted Matthew's children, Patrick reinforces Clive's notion when stating, "I am very blessed to have been given the opportunity to be more involved with the children, they are my babies".

Views on the support of the **broader community** mainly centred around the gay men's parents, siblings and friends. Here Clive and Gene referred to the positive affirmations their close friends and family members made towards them. What was evident however, was the fact that they ascribed to an individual approach in terms of their relationship with their children. Those who did not support them, for example Clive's in-laws, played a minimal if any role. Matthew's father aligned his notions with that of Clive's in-laws, insofar as he thought his son's position as father as "...not healthy", leading to Matthew and Patrick working extremely hard to contradict the broader society's misinterpretation of them.

Although Daniel and John did not regard the support from the heterosexual community as important, others painted a different picture. Six of the respondents believed that support was imperative, especially on professional level, in terms of counselling, psychological services and workshops. This would assist, lead and "coax" gay fathers towards improved fathering practices. In addition, it may also alleviate and discard several misconceptions and myths held about homosexuality, such as the sex-fiend myth, according to Hugh. For, as Matthew noted, "There are good and bad boys in the gay community".

Based on the impact of these factors, the relationship of the gay father with his children may take on varied configurations, manifesting in their decision to either tell or refrain from informing their children about their sexual orientation. In addition, the fathers also provided views on the unique positive influences and obstacles fathers bring to the fore or have to face.

(iv) *The relationship with their children*

In deciding whether to reveal or bury the truth about their sexual orientation, gay fathers provided different insights.

Asked whether their sexual orientation was **revealed** (or whether they were planning to reveal) to their children, nine respondents acknowledged that their children knew. Reasons for this ranged from establishing a truthful relationship without secrecy with the child, to the creation of a bond based on reciprocal respect. Five of these men did not tell the children directly because they felt somewhat shameful about it on the one hand, whilst on the other they heard accounts from family members and friends that their children already knew. In two of these cases, other family members had told the children in an attempt to humiliate and discredit the gay father. Despite this, these fathers still managed to establish a trusting and accepting relationship with their children. The remaining three respondents described their disclosure on a gradual basis to avoid any unnecessary ambiguity and pain. The other three fathers opted to abstain from telling their children insofar as they wanted to protect their own privacy, and felt that their sexual lives, just as that of their children, did not concern anyone. In the cases of Adrian and Liam, their children are still too young (three and nine years old, respectively) to fully comprehend the situation.

The researcher also reflected on the manner in which these gay men would react if their children were also gay. Ten of the twelve respondents unanimously agreed that they did not want their children to be gay for a variety of reasons, whereas the other two believed that it was their children's own choice. They attributed their views to the fact that it was a very **difficult life to lead based on the norm of heterosexuality, that "being different was still very difficult"**, and in the case of two respondents, still cherished the hope that they would one day be able to **change their sexual orientation to that of heterosexuality**. Regardless of such views, they noted that they would accept, guide, support and love their children through such a life.

Behaviour like this, courtesy of the gay father, may be embedded within several **positive influences** associated with gay fathering in relation to their heterosexual counterparts. The respondents identified the following probabilities:

- The gay father's ability to emphasise a greater deal of **acceptance** and/or **tolerance for diversity** (in terms of ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation and race).
- A more **open relationship** with their children in terms of **communication**.
- A more **open relationship** as it relates to questions and issues that relate to **sex and sexual orientation**.

- A better **insight** into the complexities of life, based on the adversity they themselves had to face.
- A higher degree of **sensitivity** and **emotional involvement** with their children, an attribute one respondent believes is inherent in the more (perceived) effeminate nature of gay men.
- A greater degree of **support** for their children through possible adversity.
- More emphasis on **perfection** and **neatness**.

On the other side of the coin, respondents also outlined several **obstacles** associated with gay fathering:

- **Discrimination** and **subsequent** shame for both the fathers and their children.
- **Ignorance** of uninformed individuals who equate homosexuality with cross-dressing or the fact that all gay men are so-called “screaming queens”.
- **Avoiding open invitations** of their children’s school friends to spend an evening or weekend at their home to avoid unnecessary innuendos. This fills the children with a great deal of distress.
- Possible problems associated with meeting a **future husband or wife** of their children based on prejudiced notions and stereotypes.
- **Institutionalised prejudice** in the school system. As Matthew remarked, “We ...had an experience at a private Christian school. ...The principal came chasing after us when he found out that we were a gay couple. He said that they would propagate the Christian value of heterosexuality and the unacceptability of homosexuality. ...Needless to say, we didn’t enrol our kids there...”.
- **Overcompensation** in parenting practices based on intense scrutiny from the heterosexual community.
- The **child’s personal fears of being gay or lesbian**.
- The fear that the child will **alienate** his father based on the discrimination and prejudice he or she has to face in society.
- The **shift in roles for the father** following the heterosexual divorce, from father-figure and disciplinarian to “nice dad” or entertainer, due to the fact that he wants to alleviate any additional hardship for the child.
- A **lack of role modelling**, whether this involves the lack of a mother-figure, father-figure or attempts to educate the children how to interact with and treat other men and women (differentially), how to be a parent to their own children, and how to establish and maintain their own family life.

Now the focus will progress towards the findings as they relate to **generative fathering**.

(d) ***The principles of generative fathering***

Here emphasis will firstly be placed on the findings associated with the **conditions and constraints** and interrelated **categories of generative fathering**, followed by a comprehensive overview of the manner in which fathers viewed the **components of generative fathering**, including focus on interaction, accessibility and the domains of paternal responsibility.

(i) ***The conditions and constraints and related categories of generative fathering***

To avoid any ambiguity and to clarify the findings, the researcher has grouped together the **categories of generative fathering** and the **interrelated conditions and constraints** in the discussion that follows.

Ethical work

Related to the condition (or constraint) of **dependence**, is **ethical work**, and respondents noted the following in this regard. All of the respondents emphasised the importance of this category of generative fathering, arguing that it was their responsibility to safeguard their children in a secure environment. Although it may not always be possible to, as Anthony remarked, "wrap them in cotton", it was however the father's responsibility to provide a safe foundation that would lead to an inner coherence which moulds the children for their future endeavours. Several struggles do arise (usually monetary in nature), but regardless, six respondents underscored the idea that it was *their* decision to have the children, not that of the children, and as such it was the main responsibility of the father to always have the child experience a sense of safety and security in their household.

Stewardship

To provide in the **material and emotional needs** of the child was typified as a responsibility of any father, rather than a mere burden. By acting as a **steward**, the father attempts to go "...out of his way to provide them [the children] with whatever they need", according to Gene. Anthony reiterated this point by stating that "I'm a father, I have to do this ...I have to make sacrifices ...but I'm aware of the peer pressure children face in terms of [amongst others] clothing standards..." Providing in the material needs of the child, according to Robert, "is a given". Although three

respondents recalled the difficulty of providing economically, Hugh believed that it serves as motivating factor for him to work even harder to provide for his child. Yet, Hugh cautions moderation in such provision by warning against over-indulging children, an evident feature of stewardship. In terms of the father's role as steward, it was interesting to note that only two respondents cited the nature of scarcity of human resources on an emotional level.

Development work

Attempting to persevere through the different developmental stages of the child and providing in their **changing psychological, emotional and physical needs**, proved quite daunting for several respondents. This may be because the children are not living with the gay father on a permanent basis, or due to a lack of comprehension of the varied developmental stages of the child. Despite such challenges, they agreed with the importance of a father's capacity to pick up on any problems or changes that the child may be experiencing. Patrick reiterated this point by stating that any "... good parent [is] always aware of such situations". Such awareness may arise by 'reading it' in the child's eyes, listening to his or her voice or studying their body language. Such experiences, although difficult, may prove to be an adventure, according to one respondent, insofar as it is nice to experience these changes, journeys and developmental stages the child is progressing through.

Relationship work

Although Adrian, Patrick and John did not ascribe to the importance of **relationship work**, based on the possible resentment and unhappiness that may ensue in time, the remaining eight respondents felt differently. In highlighting the importance of merely "**being there**" for the child and establishing an **interdependent** relationship, the respondents believed that this role was the responsibility of any father, "a given", "it's just there", "definitely ... permanently" in order to keep the relationship as strong as possible. By portraying this role, Matthew, Gene and Clive felt that a definite intergenerational link, as well as a history could be established between father and child.

Several examples of selflessness were also provided for. The first of these included a respondent who refrained from entering into any romantic relationship with another man, for the sake of the child, and another who initially wanted to remain in his heterosexual marriage, to avoid causing additional pain and hardship for his daughter. In addition, as alluded to in an earlier discussion, Hugh again noted that he

did not want his daughter to associate with his gay friends, insofar as these men do not know how to act in a respectable manner in the company of heterosexual individuals.

Finally, relationship work further entails the establishment of reciprocal respect between diverse individuals in society. Six respondents believed this to be of importance. It was, according to them, the main responsibility of a father to educate children to respect others, regardless of their culture or sexual orientation. Such an example came to the fore in a relationship between a gay father and his two children, due to the fact that the father obligated his children to respect him as their father, despite his being gay. In adhering to such an approach, as one respondent remarked, one could establish certain behavioural patterns that could filter through several generations and reinforce values associated with respect, sacrifice and selflessness.

In addition to the categories of generative fathering, questions were also asked about the **components** of generative fathering, including **interaction**, **accessibility** and **paternal responsibility**.

(ii) *The components of generative fathering*

The following data was collected on the components of generative fathering.

Interaction

Closely related to the foregoing discussion of the categories of generative fathering, several respondents associated the component of **interaction** with a “bonding experience” between father and child. By interacting with the child, the child may be validated insofar as he or she felt that the parent is involved in their lives, that they are loved, belong to, and are accepted within their familial setting. By spending time together, provision is made for **role modelling**, with the father providing the necessary norms and values deemed important in contemporary society. An imperative capability of generative fathers that underscores the nature of interaction is **communication**. By establishing a mutually beneficial communicative relationship, the children are afforded the opportunity to talk about anything and everything with their father, to relate their emotional experiences and fears, to feel at ease in their relationship with their father whilst he is given a glimpse into his children’s lives.

Accessibility, as distal form of parental involvement (Palkovitz, 1997), was met with a greater deal of ambivalence by the respondents.

Accessibility

Although some, like Clive, recalled the joy his daughter experienced to be in close proximity of her father whilst playing, others only thought it to be of importance if it was physically possible for fathers or viable for the children. The latter found representation in two respondents' accounts of their sons' lack of desire to be in close proximity of their fathers, whereas their daughters were far more welcoming of such involvement.

Paternal responsibility

Incorporating all the preceding principles of generative fathering, **paternal responsibility** was again investigated by emphasising its three domains as evident in Table 8⁴⁷.

⁴⁷ The numbers in each of the cells of the three domains represent the number of responses the men provided for each of the four categories (never, seldom, often and very often).

Table 8: Findings: Domains of generative fathering associated with gay fathers

Activity	Level of involvement			
	Never	Seldom	Often	Very Often
Behavioural				
Feeding			6	5
Bathing		2	2	7
Clothing		2	1	8
Taking care of sick child			4	7
Listening to the child			3	8
Conversations with your child			4	7
Providing advice		2	3	6
Problem-solving		1	1	9
Disciplining the child		1	1	9
Developing new skills (teaching child to swim, ride a bicycle or car, etc.)	1	1	1	8
Giving child chores to do	1		6	4
Engaging with child's teachers at school	1	4	2	4
Driving the child around and picking up items they need			4	7
Shared activities with the child:				
Exercising	2	2	3	4
Shopping		3	3	5
Going to the movies		2	4	5
Eating meals together (breakfast, lunch, dinner)			3	8
Playing games together	1	1	6	3
Celebrating holidays			6	5
Working together	1	2	4	4
Emotive				
Displaying affection towards the child (kissing, hugging, smiling, etc.)		1	1	9
Displaying patience with the child			4	7
Praising child for accomplishments			4	7
Encouraging child to exceed (work harder)			2	9
Telling your child that you love him/her			1	10
Displaying interest in the life of your child (how their day was, who their friends are, what their feelings, interests, thoughts, aspirations are)		2	2	7
Cognitive				
Monitoring the child's life in terms of ...				
Who his/her friends are		3	4	4
Who his/her dating partners are		2	7	2
His/her schoolwork	1	1	4	5
His/her grooming	1	1	4	5
His/her safety and whereabouts		1	4	6
His/her choice of magazines, television shows or movie preferences	1	3	4	3
Worrying about the child		3	3	5
Planning for the child's future			2	9
Planning events such as birthdays, vacations, holidays and trips		1	5	5
Praying for the child			1	10

Evident from Table 8 is the fact that the majority of respondents were either *often* or *very often involved* in the **behavioural**, **emotive** and **cognitive** domains of generative fathering.

The behavioural domain

A closer examination of the **behavioural domain** revealed that these fathers were either *often* or *very often involved* during the infancy and early childhood-stages of the psychosocial development of their children, as evident in their primary or secondary participation in the feeding, bathing and clothing of their child. In addition, they also portrayed an involved role in terms of the *conversing with the child, listening* and subsequently *advising, disciplining, problem-solving, skills development* and 'chauffeur' of the child. In terms of providing advice, one father asked, "Does it ever stop?", citing the continuous advising role of a father. Discipline was mostly associated with raising one's voice rather than physical punishment, whereas two other respondents believed the mother to be the stricter of the two. In terms of problem-solving, Clive highlighted the importance of open and continuous communication with his daughter, to immediately identify and proactively act on problems she may face. The lack of their involvement with the children's *teachers*, according to the fathers, was ascribed to the fact that they only got involved if it was necessary, if there were problems. In addition, two respondents noted that it was their (ex-)wife who usually performed this task, and that their child's upbringing prevented unnecessary problems and visits.

In terms of their *shared activities* with their child(ren), they were especially inclined to emphasise the importance of having at least one meal together per day, spending holidays together and engaging in specific card or board games. A greater deal of variance, in terms of the fathers' responses was noted in terms of exercising, shopping, going to the movies and working on projects together. Respondents attributed this to the fact that their children rather opted to engage in the first three activities with their peer group, whereas fathers noted that it was either the mother and the child or the child individually, who would undertake school projects, or that time constraints limited their participation in this regard.

The emotive domain

Related to the **emotive domain**, the majority of the fathers display an intense involvement with their children in terms of *displays of affection, patience, praise, encouragement* and *verbalising their love* for their children. A variance, although minimal, existed in terms of the fathers' interest in aspects related to their children's lives (friends, feelings, thoughts). Two respondents, however, directed the

researcher's attention to the fact that it was especially their daughters who welcomed such displays of affection, whereas the sons sought to limit it.

The cognitive domain

The **cognitive domain** was characterised by a greater deal of variance in terms of the responses, insofar as only two of the items on the scale were indicative of *very often*, these being *planning for the child's future* and *praying for the child*. In addition, importance was also ascribed to the monitoring of the child's *dating partners, schoolwork, grooming, safety and whereabouts* and *planning of celebratory events or vacations*. Although it may be quite difficult to monitor the child in terms of his or her *media intake*, it was very interesting that a variance related to *worrying about the child*, existed. Those who opted for the *seldom* category, argued that they regarded their children as autonomous, independent, responsible and well-taught in terms of their decision-making capabilities and to tell right from wrong.

The question then remains to be asked as to **how their positions as fathers impacted on the gay men's own** 'sense of self', their identity and the meanings they attached to life in general (and as parent, specifically).

(iii) *The impact of generative fathering on gay fathers*

The gay respondents listed a number of **changes** that came to the fore based on their position as father:

- Five respondents cited that they became all the **more responsible** in their lives.
- They learned to become **more selfless**, insofar as they were originally more selfish, and became aware of how it was their responsibility to adapt *their* lives and *their* working arrangements to suit their family, rather than *vice versa*.
- They found themselves to be **more vulnerable**, because it became all the more difficult to see and process the adversities their children have to weather.
- This vulnerability made them **more paranoid** about the well-being of their children.
- Their position as father taught them **greater insight** into the issues of life in general, and children in particular.

- They experienced a **greater sense of pride** in themselves in the event of their children's achievements.
- It motivated them to, on the one hand **work harder** to be a "great father" (as one respondent noted) and on the other hand, to be **more career-driven**, in order for them to provide in the **physical needs** of their children.
- Finally, it taught them to be **more patient**.

Based on the foregoing comprehensive report of the findings, the reader will now be provided with an in-depth analytical and interpretive thematic discussion of these findings, with reference to the academic literature cited in Chapter Two and Chapter Three.

5.3 FINDINGS RELATED TO THE STUDY: A COMPARISON BETWEEN HETEROSEXUAL AND GAY FATHERS IN SOUTH AFRICA

The discussion that follows will be guided by the themes used in all the foregoing chapters and the stated general and specific objectives. In this section the researcher will **integrate the theoretical work and research** of the noted academics in the field of fathering, as well as those cited with regard to views on generative fathering and gay fathering. In doing this, a re-contextualisation of the study will be sought insofar as emphasis will be placed on the probability of originating new interpretations within the field of fathering (cf. Babbie & Mouton, 2004:273).

The first part of the discussion will be devoted to a focus on the way in which both the heterosexual and gay fathers conceptualised fathering. This will be followed by an in-depth look at the manner in which they described their relationship with their children, with primary emphasis on the positive features they bring to their position as father, as well as the obstacles they face. This will be complemented with a comparison between the ways in which the men believed that their roles as fathers have changed them, and how parenting practices, per implication, may also have changed. This will be done to provide a foundation for a thorough examination of the degree to which these heterosexual and gay fathers differ or display similarities in terms of the principles of generative fathering. In other words, do they ascribe to the importance of paternal responsibility in terms of its three domains? How do they differ in their enactment of the components of interaction and accessibility? Do they display significant differences or similarities in their views of the categories of generative fathering?

In obtaining answers to these questions, the discussion will conclude with a focus on the specific factors that may have influenced the fathers' responses to the questions posed. These will range from their initial reasons for becoming fathers, their understanding of masculinity and their level of motivation, to their skills and self-confidence and support structures (cf. Lamb, 1997).

5.3.1 Defining 'fathering'

Quite evident from the foregoing section were several similarities in terms of the concepts used by heterosexual and gay fathers in their conceptualisation of fathering. Four heterosexual and two gay respondents referred to a father as a **leader**, one heterosexual and four gay fathers cited the importance of a **loving figure**, and in terms of **economic provision**, four heterosexual fathers and three gay men ascribed to this description of a father (cf. Chapman, 2004:55; Halford, 2006:386; Lamb, 1995:20; McBride, 1989:15; Pruett, 2000). Other similar concepts used to define fathers included that of **friend**, **responsible figure** and someone who establishes and maintains a **sustainable relationship** with his child, thus establishing an **intergenerational link** (cf. Brotherson, 2007a:116). In addition to these views, heterosexual fathers also cited the importance of an **educator** and **moral figure**, adhering to the so-called first phase through which fathering formations started to progress. In addition, the heterosexual fathers also highlighted the role of **protector** (cf. Pleban & Diez, 2007). Seen as the leader, moral figure and protector, the work of Brotherson and White (2007:15) and Seidler (2006:81) becomes all the more evident in their reference to the father as "stern patriarch" which displays a "...good moral character, rationality, self-control...". In displaying a greater deal of self-control, the fathers need not exude their authority through physical punishment or raising his voice, but through an encouragement of communication and continuous interaction with the child (Palm, 2007:169), a thought echoed by the respondents.

What did however become very apparent during the discussions, was the fact that both heterosexual and gay fathers focussed strongly on their roles as **being calm** (Pruett, 2000), "**being there**" (Dollahite et al., 1997a), occupying the **advisory** role. A gay respondent referred to a father as someone who shares **insight** with his children, and heterosexual fathers referring to the importance of **listening** to your children and adequately **advising** them (cf. Palkovitz, 1997). The only evident differences, though minimal in nature, was the gay fathers' reference to a father as

an **unbiased** individual, and the heterosexual men's ideas of fathers as serving as a **compass** and **primary decision maker** (cf. Palm, 2007:173). As such, the father also serves as **emotional** (Palm, 2007:168) and **spiritual caretaker** (Marks & Dollahite, 2007:349; Williams, 2007:114) for the child, through amongst others prayer and loving nurturing towards their adulthood.

It is to be expected then, that these conceptualisations of fathering would impact on the relationship between father and child, accordingly.

5.3.2 The relationship between fathers and their children

Related to the discussion on the relationship between fathers and their children, focus will firstly be placed on the positive features associated with the father as parent. This will be followed by an overview of the obstacles fathers had to face (or are still facing) in their capacity as socialisation agent.

(a) *Positive features associated with fathering: A comparison*

A very potent observation in terms of these positive features was the fact that the heterosexual and gay fathers ascribed to very few similar ideas on the topic. **Heterosexual fathers** placed a great deal of emphasis on the fathers' capacity to provide safety and security for their family (Lamb, 1982), as positive feature. In this regard, none of the gay fathers referred to their role as protector, leaving the researcher to consider the probability that these fathers, themselves, do not feel safe or protected in a seemingly dominant hetero-normative and homophobic society (cf. Bilton et al., 2002:154; Connell, 1987; 1992; 2005; Downs, 2006:63; Thio, 1998:220), regardless of democracy and other equal rights (De Vos, 2008; South Africa, 2005). In addition, heterosexual fathers thought role modelling, according to five respondents, to be of utmost importance for their sons (Lamb, 1986:6), with one citing the provision of a relationship template for their daughters as necessary (Barclay & Lupton, 1999:1014; Hall & Tift, 2007:84). Heterosexual fathers also noted the opportunity to serve as friend (Cottle & Dixon, 2007:254; Pruett, 2000:116), thus a so-called 'hosting' or 'playful role' and the chance to provide the foundation for the traditional setting and values associated with family and marriage (cf. Murdock, 1968).

Gay fathers, on the other hand, were more focussed on the importance of the attributes of sensitivity and emotional involvement with the child. In addition, they

cited the provision of a family milieu in which acceptance and tolerance for diversity (Allen, 1997:197; Bozett, 1987b:51; Garner, 2005:33; Johnson & O'Connor, 2002:128; Meezan & Rauch, 2005:98; Voeller & Walters, 1978:150) would serve as positive attribute. These fathers also believed that they could provide a home for the child where egalitarianism and androgyny are evident, rather than a gendered-based division of labour, a notion evident in the work of Allen (1997:214), Bigner and Jacobsen (1989b:184), Garner (2005:33), Johnson & O'Connor (2002:170) and Kurdek (1995:248). They also reflected on the fact that the child will have a father who would devote most of his time and energy to his children, sometimes over-compensating (in emotional and material terms). They attributed such over-compensation to the fact that they deem themselves as more appreciative parents, based on the intense levels of adversity, prejudice and scrutiny they have to weather (cf. Johnson & O'Connor, 2002:129).

They also underlined the role of establishing an open communication relationship with their children (cf. Bigner & Bozett, 1990:163; Johnson & O'Connor, 2002:170; Meezan & Rauch, 2005), which, based on their insight into life, would aid them in guiding their children through adversity and complexities they may face. The researcher regards this 'stronger sense of self' (Patterson & Chan, 1997:252) as a factor that may help the gay father to disclose his sexual orientation to his children, if he so chooses. Although all twelve of the gay men attributed their homosexuality to a biological origin, in effect contradicting Paglia's (1994:72) argument, only one made provision for environmental influences as contributing factor, referring to the "triangular" patterns of the familial setting, thus overly-involved mother and absent father (Stanton & Maier, 2005:136). As recommended by Schulenberg (1985:29), gay men should first come to terms with their own "gayness" before disclosure to their children.

Additional positive views associated with homosexuality, included the following. Here the researcher found respondents who had progressed through several stages and mastered the authentication of their gay identity (Benkov, 1992; Downs, 2006), describing their orientation as something associated with "normalcy", "acceptance", the "true me" and just "being myself". As such, nine respondents noted that their children knew of their sexual orientation. In five of these cases the fathers told their children directly, three of them knew that family members and acquaintances related the information, two of the fathers felt that their children were too young to understand (three and nine years old), whereas one opted not to disclose it. For

those men whose children knew, whether directly or indirectly, seven fathers established positive relationships with their children, echoing the work of Garner (2005:42) who highlights the importance of establishing a truthful relationship characterised by integrity. These fathers also adhered to Miller (1987) and Schulenberg's (1985) recommendations to plan their disclosures, to undertake it before other individuals do so, and to insure the child that their relationship remains intact. The cases of two respondents, however, found representation in the work of Bozett (1981b:98), Drucker (1998:123) and Schulenberg (1995:29), who cited the possible animosity and negativity that may arise if such a revelation is made by someone other than the father, as evident in the cases of Hugh and Robert. The two fathers, Adrian and Liam, who believed that their children were still too young to comprehend what is meant by homosexuality, contradicts research undertaken by Drucker (1998:117) in the United States, who believes that disclosure to children of a younger age may result in a more positive reaction than older children. To attain a more positive relationship with the child, one would hope that they will decide on such a disclosure in the early teenage years of their child.

In addition to these positive features associated with fathering, the respondents also outlined a number of **obstacles** that may impact on their parenting practices.

(b) ***Obstacles associated with fathering: A comparison***

As was evident from the foregoing discussion, several differences between the heterosexual and gay fathers existed in terms of this section.

The **heterosexual fathers** identified the following obstacles. Although identified as a possible positive feature of fathering, the researcher deemed it appropriate to include the reference to the father as natural authoritative figure in his discussion on obstacles. This is attributed to the fact that an overemphasis on this role would reinforce notions associated with the deficit paradigm in general, and the moral father figure exclusively, overshadowing principles associated with *generativity*. In addition, these fathers cited the problems associated with the different developmental phases through which their children progress, especially related to the period where the child experiences his or her sexual awakening (cf. Dollahite et al., 1997a:26). Fathers also highlighted their lack of self-control, possible over-involvement in the lives of their children, and a lack of skills pertaining to adequately advising their children when needed (cf. Barclay & Lupton, 1999:1019; Lamb, 1997:7). A very potent obstacle,

embedded in Erikson's (1984:240) distinction between *generativity* and stagnation, came to the fore based on the feedback of the respondents. In this regard, they noted that they sometimes felt that the children absorbed their time, energy and emotions, which made it all the more difficult to adopt the principles of univocal reciprocity (Marsiglio, 1995b:83), consecration and selflessness (Erikson, 1984:24) in their interaction with their children. A respondent stated that this may even result in possible resentment towards the child, on the father's part, for not affording the father the opportunity to fully realise his own dreams and desires.

The only similarity between heterosexual and gay fathers emerged with both groupings underlining the problems associated with a factor not discussed in the literature – peer pressure experienced by their children in contemporary society. Such pressure is particularly potent in terms of economic demands of their children. To avoid their children experiencing humiliation in relation to their friends in terms of material possessions such as clothing, some heterosexual fathers referenced notions such as "...it's nice to spoil them..." and "it's my duty" to provide in my children's material needs. Gene, a gay father, also noted that he would go "...out of his way to provide [his children] with whatever they need", whereas Anthony underscored "...the peer pressure children face in terms of clothing standards...". One could attribute this to the fact that their children had to face a great deal of emotional changes based on the father's sexual orientation, with no reason to exacerbate pressure on or expectations from the child.

In addition to this, it was evident that the obstacles listed by **gay fathers**, did not centre around parenting practices as such, but rather external influences and pressure from the heterosexual community. They feared the great deal of discrimination and shame that they and their children had to face, based on their sexual orientation, an occurrence documented in the work of Baptiste (1987:127), Lorde (1984:116), Meezan and Rauch (2005:103) and Voeller and Walters (1978:156). Such discrimination would result from ignorance which may "spill-over" to other domains in which the child is present, such as their schools. This idea was articulated by Gutierrez (2002:23) who recalled "...the shift in the air, the defiance of my father and his lover, the disdain of the other parents", when his father and his father's lover attended an open house day at his elementary school. This thought was highlighted by Matthew who was informed by the principal of a private Christian school, that the teachers would "...propagate the Christian value of heterosexuality and the unacceptability of homosexuality". Based on this ignorance, some of the

respondents, themselves, on occasion associated their sexual orientation with concepts such as “guilt”, “shame”, “isolation”, “anger”, “resentment” and “difficulty”, all of which would align with Herdt’s (1992) reference to homosexuality as a “condition” or “disease”. One of these accounts underscored the work of Cass (1990:248) and Downs (2006:46) who noted that during the initial stages of realisation of ‘being different’, gay men may reject and dismiss their same-sex feelings as undesirable and subsequently isolate themselves from the gay community. Such was the case for Gene, who still desires a heterosexual lifestyle and opted not to disclose his sexual orientation to his children and extended family.

This non-disclosure was also cited by other gay fathers, who expressed the fear that their children would alienate themselves from their fathers, be ashamed of their father’s sexual orientation and also avoid bringing friends or future fiancées home to meet them (cf. Bozett, 1987b:41). In adopting these social control strategies (cf. Bozett, 1987b:41), Patrick noted that they also abstain from inviting friends of their children to their home, to avoid any unnecessary or false accusations and misconceptions (cf. Barret & Robinson, 2000). In addition to these obstacles, the children communicated their fears that, by having a gay father, they would eventually also be gay, a thought noted in Barret and Robinson’s (2000:38) discussion of the ‘germ myth’ and Goffman’s (1963) reference to the “with”-relationship. Both of these views argue that if the child associates with a specific type of person, in this case a gay individual, homosexuality will automatically be passed on to them.

A question that remains to be asked and answered, subsequently, is the manner in which an involved relationship with their children, may **impact** on the lives of the heterosexual and gay fathers.

(c) ***The impact of generative fathering on heterosexual and gay men***

Corresponding with the work of, amongst others, Pruett (2000), both heterosexual and gay fathers reflected on a number of changes fathering brought about in their lives. This included an increase in the levels of responsibility (cf. Pruett, 2000:172; Snarey, 1993), compassion, concern and selflessness (Barclay & Lupton, 1999; Dollahite et al., 1997a; Palkovitz, 1997; Palm, 2007; Pruett, 2000:173; Snarey, 1993), a need for bonding (Barclay & Lupton, 1999:1016; Palm, 2007:164), a need to work harder in order to provide in the needs of others, and greater insight and wisdom about the life-experiences of their children (Pruett, 2000:176).

Additional changes cited by heterosexual fathers included a decrease in focus on perfectionism, an increase in the levels of calmness (cf. Pruett, 2000:180) and a tendency to view their marriages differently. The latter is attributed to the fact that having children, brings about definite changes in the nature of the marriage and without due concern, this institution may start disintegrating (cf. Smit, 2001). Gay fathers added that they became all the more vulnerable, paranoid about the safety of their children, and experienced a greater sense of pride because of their position as father.

The section that follows will provide an in-depth discussion on further differences and similarities between heterosexual and gay fathers associated with the degree to which they display the **principles of generative fathering**.

5.3.3 **The realisation of generative fathering: From components to categories**

The discussion will commence with a focus on the component of **paternal responsibility**, which the researcher regards as the so-called 'convening' component in which all the principles of generative fathering are embedded. Here emphasis will be placed on the **three domains** and the remaining **two components** of generative fathering, being interaction and accessibility. This will be followed by a complete demarcation of the responses of heterosexual and gay fathers in terms of the **categories** of generative fathering.

(a) ***Paternal responsibility as convening component of generativity***

Based on the work of Palkovitz (1997), respondents were provided with a number of activities associated with the **three domains** of generative fathering, being behavioural, emotive and cognitive. In light of the results accrued, the following differences and similarities came to the fore between heterosexual and gay fathers.

(i) ***The behavioural domain: A comparison***

Related to the behavioural domain in its entirety, the responses of the 14 heterosexual and 11 gay fathers⁴⁸ were converted to percentages to gain insight into their levels of involvement.

⁴⁸ It should be noted that one heterosexual and one gay respondent did not complete the section of the questionnaire that dealt with the domains of generative fathering. The heterosexual father based his decision on the fact that his daughter was only six months old and that he could not provide insight into

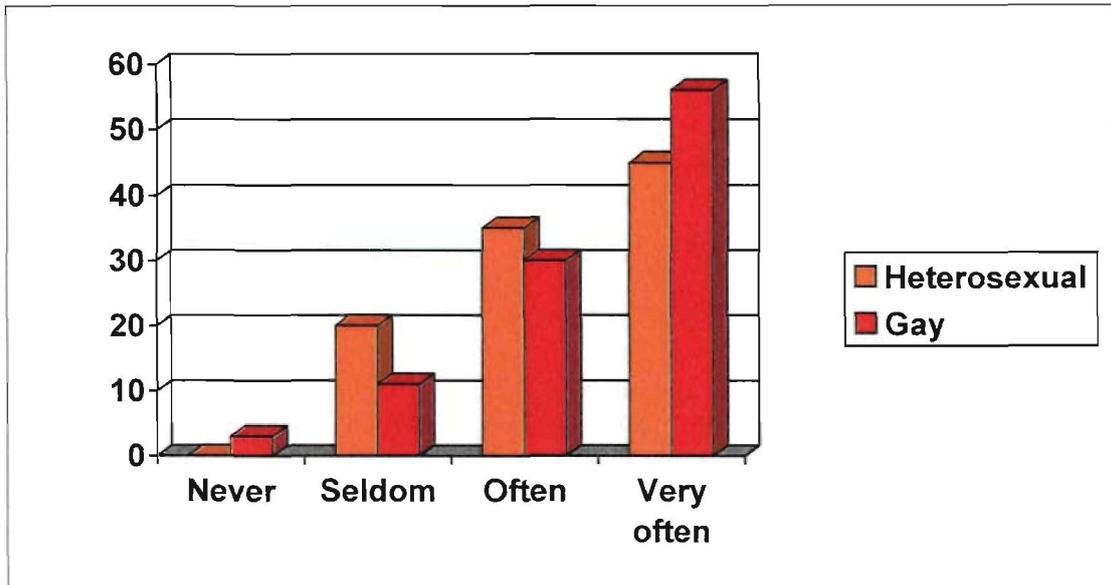


Figure 2
The behavioural domain of generative fathering: A comparison between heterosexual and gay fathers

Based on Figure 2, it is evident that very little difference exists in the responses of the heterosexual and gay fathers. In both cases, the majority of respondents were either *often involved* or *very often involved* in the lives of their children. In terms of the heterosexual fathers, 20 percent (54 responses) was *seldom involved*, 35 percent (98 responses) was *often involved* and 45 percent (128 responses) was *very often involved*. In comparison, gay fathers displayed three percent in terms of *never being involved* (7 responses) and eleven percent (23 responses), 30 percent (67 responses) and 56 percent (123 responses) pertaining to the remaining three categories of involvement.

Both groups cited the importance and the desire, on their part, to partake in the lives of their children during the latter's infancy stage (cf. Barclay & Lupton, 1999:1017; Erikson, 1984:222), a thought the researcher linked to a subtle attempt to establish a relationship of trust, rather than mistrust. In so doing, the child is provided with the inner certainty and external predictability that his or her parents will take care of him or her (cf. Erikson, 1984:222). Those heterosexual men, who selected the level of *seldom*, attributed their reason to the fact that they deemed it their wife's responsibility. It should be noted however, that for all of the heterosexual men, their wives were extremely accommodating in terms of their participation.

the majority of the activities listed. The gay father is a stepfather (Patrick), and provided Matthew (his husband) the opportunity to answer this section.

Both heterosexual and gay men highlighted the importance of establishing respect through discipline in their family settings. Discipline should, according to both, be exerted through conversations (a raised voice) with the child, rather than physical punishment. Providing advice and solving possible problems the children might face, were also seen as important by both groupings, but with both arguing that they sometimes feel that they lack the necessary skills to do so. Regardless, they do believe that the child should turn to his or her parents for advice, in times of need, to avoid any unforeseen problems.

The heterosexual and gay fathers also displayed similarities in the lack of importance they ascribed to the elements of the *delegation of chores* and the *interaction with their children's teachers*. Reasons centred around the fact that they thought it their wives' or ex-wives' responsibility (in both cases), whereas heterosexual fathers attributed their response to their occupation as teachers and corresponding social networks, as well as the lack of problems they experienced with their children during their school years, as reasons.

Related to *shared activities* such as *exercising together*, *shopping*, *going to the movies*, *playing games together* and *working together*, gay fathers were slightly more involved than their heterosexual counterparts. Both attributed their lower levels of involvement in these activities to the role of their wives or ex-wives in terms of shopping, playing games or working on projects. In addition, they also believed that their children mainly partook in several of these activities with their peer-group and that they as fathers, experienced a great deal of time constraints that inhibited their involvement (as noted by a heterosexual father). Yet, both were very adamant to establish and maintain family traditions such as *eating meals together* (at least one a day) and *celebrating holidays* together, which corresponds with Brotherson's (2007a:115) notion that family traditions are "built-in opportunities for parent-child connection" and "...strengthen[s] and reinforce[s] parent-child connections in the present".

Views on the emotive domain will be communicated under the next point.

(ii) *The emotive domain: A comparison*

Based on the discussion of the findings on the emotive domain under Points 5.2.1 and 5.2.2 for the heterosexual and gay fathers, respectively, the following differences and similarities, as evident in Figure 3, came to the fore:

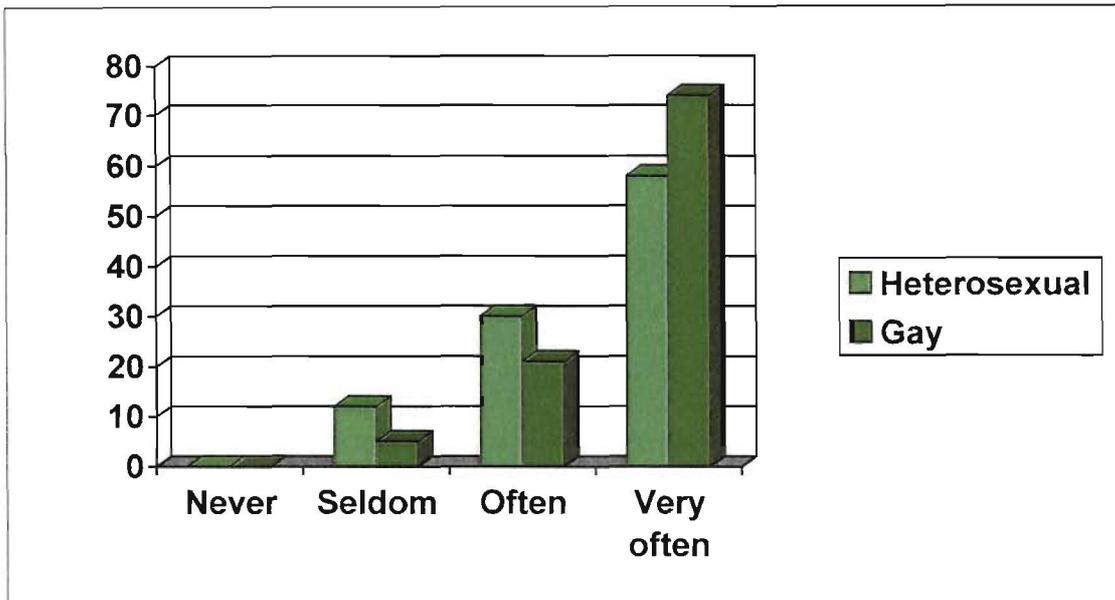


Figure 3
The emotive domain of generative fathering: A comparison between heterosexual and gay fathers

In addition to the foregoing discussion on the behavioural domain, Figure 3 should serve as definite example of shared views held by heterosexual and gay fathers on the emotional component of their involvement, based on even higher percentages related to the category of *very often* involved. Here 74 percent (49 responses) and 58 percent (49 responses) of gay and heterosexual fathers, respectively, indicated that they were *very often* involved in their children’s emotional domain. In addition, 30 percent (25 responses) of heterosexual fathers and 21 percent (14 responses) of gay fathers figured in the category of *often involved*, whereas the remaining twelve (10 responses) and five percent (3 responses) of respondents selected the category of *seldom* respectively.

Both groupings emphasised the importance of *overt forms of affection*, a thought shared by Brotherson (2007a:114), Palm (2007:168) and Richter and Smith (2006:161). These academics cite examples such as laughter, hugging, snuggling and saying “I love you”. Although all of the respondents echoed the importance thereof, a gay father, however, stated that it was especially his daughter who welcomed such affection, rather than his son. Such emotional support for the daughter, according to Snarey (1993:181), has proven to increase her educational mobility, self-esteem and life satisfaction. Heterosexual and gay fathers also underlined the importance of *displaying patience with the child, praising the child for his or her accomplishments, encouraging them to succeed, and displaying an interest in their children’s lives*. Such high levels of involvement were even regarded as

“exaggerated” by one respondent, with Palkovitz (1997:204) cautioning against inappropriate involvement that may be ill timed or ill motivated.

Consideration will now be directed towards these fathers’ displays of cognitive involvement.

(iii) *The cognitive domain: A comparison*

Results for the cognitive domain, presented the following in Figure 4:

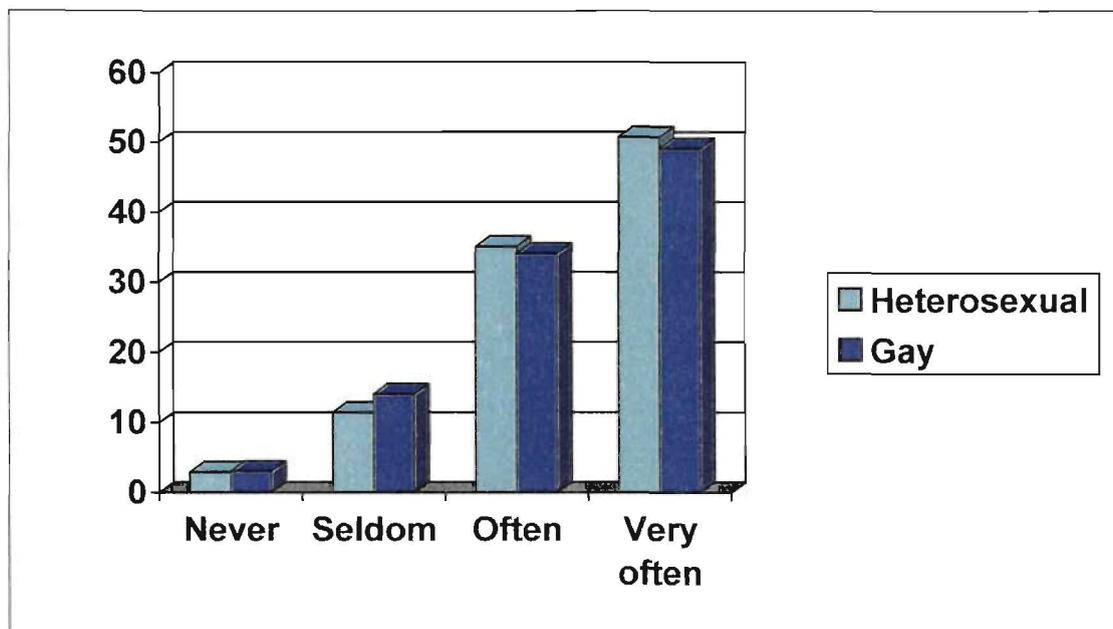


Figure 4
The cognitive domain of generative fathering: A comparison between heterosexual and gay fathers

The percentages in Figure 4 indicate a close-knit relationship between the views of heterosexual and gay fathers on the cognitive domain of generative fathering. It was clear that a close to similar percentage of heterosexual and gay fathers were *never involved* and *seldom involved*. In terms of the level of *often involved*, 35 percent (49 responses) of heterosexual men and 34 percent (38 responses) of gay fathers positioned themselves in this category, with 50.7 percent (71 responses) of heterosexual fathers and 49 percent (54 responses) of gay men indicating a high level of involvement. Both heterosexual and gay fathers placed a great deal of emphasis on the importance of monitoring the child in terms of their *dating partners, schoolwork, grooming, safety and whereabouts, planning for the child’s future and praying for the child* (cf. Dollahite et al., 1997a; Marks & Dollahite, 2007:114; Palkovitz, 1997; Williams, 2007:114).

Embedded in all three of these domains, in addition to the convening component of **paternal responsibility**, are the remaining two components of generative fathering, **interaction** and **accessibility**.

(iv) *The components of generative fathering*

The importance of the component of **interaction** (cf. Brandth & Kvande, 1998:301; Lamb, 1995:23; Richter & Smith, 2006:161; Smit, 2004:110) was communicated by several respondents. With only one heterosexual father noting that interaction may be improbable, based on the fact that the parent and child live in "... different worlds, away from each other, worlds that do not overlap", all the remaining fathers believed that interaction should be seen as important. Their **shared vision** was attributed to **four reasons**. **Firstly**, they felt that it served as a "bonding experience", which results in high levels of solidarity and trust (cf. Barclay & Lupton, 1999; Brotherson, 2007a:112; Palm, 2007). **Secondly**, in providing this bond, fathers establish and reinforce the idea that their children are important in their lives, thus validating the child and providing a sense of 'belonging' and avoiding feelings of isolation and rejection (Doherty et al., 1998:283; Marsiglio, 1995a:7; Pruett, 1993:47). **Thirdly**, the father's behaviour may serve as role modelling exercise for the children who identify with him, whereas **finally**, an open communicative relationship between father and child is established. This insures that the child, according to one heterosexual respondent, avoids "questionable places" for advice, turning to the father to relate "anything and everything" in terms of their emotions, experiences and fears, with ease (cf. Dollahite et al., 1997a:32). Such communication, according to Gary for example, may include a so-called "language of love ...a touch, hug...", elements that were evident in the findings of the emotive domain.

Accessibility which is regarded as an imperative 'secondary' form of distal involvement (LaRossa, 1988:454; McBride, 1989:15; Palkovitz, 1997:212; Smit, 2004:110), also found representation in the feedback of both heterosexual and gay respondents. Although some of the heterosexual fathers expressed the desire to always be near their children, with Ethan and Ernst noting that they have to know that their children are safe, gay fathers displayed varied views. One of the gay fathers, Clive, recalled the joy associated with having his daughter near to him while he was working, whereas others emphasised its desirability, in those instances where it was possible. Another of the gay fathers again directed the researcher's attention to the

fact that his daughter was more welcoming for the father's closeness in terms of proximity, whilst his son did not desire it as much.

Based on the foregoing discussion of the findings related to heterosexual and gay fathers' adherence to the three domains and two components of generative fathering, it should be quite clear that both groups display **biological** and **parental generativity** in their approaches to parenting.

Biological generativity was displayed in the respondents' feedback of partaking in the infancy stage of the child, by *feeding, bathing, clothing and taking care of them* (cf. Barclay & Lupton, 1999:1019; Erikson, 1984:222; Snarey, 1993:20). By adhering to **parental generativity**, on the other hand, fathers are afforded the opportunity to guide their children through their different developmental phases such as autonomy creation (early adulthood), realisation of initiative (play age), identity formation (adolescence) and provision of intimacy (young adulthood). Because of the high levels of involvement in each of the three domains, it is clear that these fathers, despite the few who found it difficult to always act selflessly, displayed a great deal of **univocal reciprocity** and **fatherwork** in their parenting behaviour (Dollahite et al., 1997a; Marsiglio, 1995b:83).

(v) *Examples of fatherwork: The categories of generative fathering*

Eradicating images of fathers who adhere to so-called "parenting scripts" that render men passive and distinct from their wives (rather than establishing an amalgam of strengths), both heterosexual and gay fathers emphasised their participation in four forms of **fatherwork** (cf. Hawkins & Dollahite, 1997:15). These four forms manifest in the **categories** of generative fathering, and the following differences and similarities were found.

In terms of **ethical work**, which centres around the provision of a safe and secure environment for dependent children (cf. Dollahite et al., 1997a:27; Smit, 2004:108), several similarities came to the fore courtesy of the respondents. Both groups underscored the necessity for the provision of a sense of security for their children, a safe environment and haven they can turn to in times of need. In establishing such a milieu, both heterosexual and gay fathers believed that children will experience and display a feeling of belonging and inner coherence, something heterosexual fathers equate with the ability to explore and take risks in their lives. Three heterosexual

respondents, however, reiterated Lee's (1976, cited in Dollahite et al., 1997a:28) cautioning to avoid extremities in this regard. By performing too much ethical work, children may not want to move beyond the safe haven created by their father, inhibiting the realisation of autonomy and *generativity*.

Closely related to ethical work and the idea of autonomy, is **stewardship**, where fathers seek not only to provide the necessary material and human resources for their children, but wisely allocate it as well (Dollahite et al., 1997a:25). Both groups noted that they did not regard the economic dependence of their children as a burden, but rather a "challenge". They made comments such as "... it's nice to spoil them", material provision "is a given" and "it's my duty" as father. By fulfilling this responsibility (as termed by both groups), one gay father (as alluded to earlier), said that he would "go out of his way" to provide for the child, which according to a heterosexual respondent, strengthens the bond between father and child. A factor that complements existing literature on the category of stewardship, was the heterosexual and gay fathers' reference to the insurmountable peer pressure experienced by their children in terms of material possessions. Based on such increased competition amongst children and to prevent any embarrassment for the child, fathers felt it was their responsibility to provide in these needs of the child. To encourage fathers "...to become good stewards..." (Dollahite et al., 1997a:25), however, moderation was again recommended to encourage autonomy and responsible use of resources, on their children's part.

The third category of generative fathering, **development work**, involves guiding the child through several individual and structural changes in society, but also stimulating them on a physical, psychological, cognitive and social level (Dollahite et al., 1997a:26). All of the fathers acknowledged the importance of being aware of changes and possible problems associated with this. Both groups felt it necessary for "... any good father [to] know his child and pick up on the fact that they are experiencing problems". This may be done by, according to a gay respondent, looking into their eyes, listening to their voice or studying their body language. In doing this, Gary thought the experience of the different phases to be "...a novelty, something interesting and new", corresponding with views on fatherwork as being a "joyous labour" and "... 'labour of love...'" (cf. Bellah et al., 1985, cited in Dollahite et al., 1997a:21). Although a necessity, several fathers cited the difficulty related to development work, which was threefold. Firstly, one heterosexual father found it difficult to always practice self-restraint during his sons' teenage years. Secondly,

gay fathers noted that it was not always possible to be close to their children, following the divorce from their wives. Thirdly, both groups lacked the ability to always comprehend the nature of each developmental phase children went through, particularly as it relates to their sexuality.

In this regard, the researcher also posed the question to the respondents on whether they would want their child to be gay. All 15 of the heterosexual fathers and ten of the twelve gay fathers noted that they did not want their child to be gay⁴⁹. Similarities that arose in the responses of the gay and heterosexual fathers were centred on the fact that it was not deemed “normal” in society, on the one hand, whilst another response pointed to the degree of difficulty, “gruesome”, “sad” and “painful” road such an individual would have to walk (cf. Bradley, 2007; Connell, 1987; 1992; 2005; Walby, 1990). Regardless of such views, each of the fathers stated that they would attempt to understand and support their child because “...they remain your children, even if they are gay”, “...what good would [it] do...” to judge or banish them? Such responses, based on the theoretical basis of Chapter Two and the researcher’s own interpretation, are undeniable examples of development work.

Finally, the respondents also displayed principles associated with **relationship work**. This category of generative fathering posits fathers as socialisation agents who emphasise selflessness rather than self-centredness, thus highlighting the interdependency between individuals in terms of their social and emotional needs, in short, a “...need to be needed” (cf. Dollahite et al., 1997a:25; Erikson, 1964:130). Twelve heterosexual and eight gay fathers displayed the affinity to perform this particular form of fatherwork. They attributed their belief to notions that “your child always comes first”, it is “a given”, “it’s just there”, “definitely ...permanently” and “a privilege”. One respondent noted that this was your “main purpose in life”, and another that “...this is why you are a father”. By ascribing to this, fathers are forced to leave their egoism behind and selflessly establish, as one father noted, a “contract” with the child. These ideas of the respondents found solace in the work of amongst others Dollahite et al. (1997a:27), who argued that selflessness not only involves taking others into account, but also childcare, love, communication and attachment to another human being (cf. Marsiglio, 1995b; Snarey, 1993).

⁴⁹ The other two gay fathers regarded their child’s sexual orientation as the child’s own private matter to be dealt with as they saw appropriate.

By performing this form of *generativity*, both heterosexual and gay respondents felt that it would establish an intergenerational link (cf. Palm, 2007), a so-called history with their children and extended family ties. In so doing, according to one heterosexual father, the children will always return home in times of need, which in turn provides for a feeling of validation and “payback” for the sacrifices made by the father. Examples of such sacrifices amongst the gay fathers were twofold. Firstly, two of these men accentuated their selflessness by not entering into a relationship with another man, to avoid any pain for the children. Secondly, another father noted that he does not visit or socialise with his gay friends when the child is with him, based on the lack of self-control, according to them, of their friends. Both groups thus act as so-called ‘servant leaders’ (cf. Galbraith & Wall, 2007:356), displaying the “willingness” to sacrifice for the sake of their children.

Inherent in the category of relationship work is the third form of generativity, **societal generativity**, which, as evident from the foregoing, several fathers ascribe to. Gay fathers argued that by performing relationship work, fathers establish the idea of reciprocal respect between people, regardless of their culture or sexual orientation. In so doing, according to a heterosexual respondent, a healthy community is established. Respondents shared the hope that this might filter through several generations and reinforce values associated with respect, sacrifice and selflessness.

Many of the responses associated with the domains, components and categories of generative fathering, were influenced by several independent **factors** associated with, amongst others, biographical and opinion-related variables.

5.3.4 **Factors which have impacted on the realisation of generative fathering**

Based on studies undertaken by, amongst others Lamb (1997:5), the researcher deemed it appropriate to provide an overview of several factors that may have influenced the foregoing views of heterosexual and gay fathers. In addition to the groundbreaking contributions made by Lamb (1997) in terms of factors that influence the levels of fathering involvement in the form of **motivation, skills and self-confidence, institutional practices** and **support structures**, the researcher will commence the discussion with an additional factor. This factor will centre around the **reasons for becoming a father**.

(a) ***The reasons for becoming fathers***

A very interesting finding originated from the analysis and subsequent comparison of heterosexual and gay fathers. Despite the fact that both heterosexual and gay fathers cited the expectations of the seemingly dominant heterosexual as reason for having children, the foregoing discussion of their definitions of fathering, their relationship with their children and adherence to generative fathering, proved that they were just as involved as those who attributed an "in-born desire" and free will to have children, rather than merely going through the motions as coerced individuals may often do (cf. Gerson, 1997b:38). Both groups acknowledged that the dominant consideration to have children was based on thoughts like "[it's a] normal manifestation", a "logical next step" or that they were "overwhelmed" by the cycle of heterosexual romantic love (cf. Bigner & Bozett, 1990:158). Heterosexual respondents felt that by having children, they would experience a greater degree of acceptance within a larger society, and that their marriage and family life would be enriched, based on a heightened level of status (cf. Patterson & Chan, 1997:252). These thoughts also manifested in the views of gay men who felt that society dictated this social responsibility, after they were married to their now ex-wives. Their arguments found representation in the work of Bigner and Jacobsen (1989a:165) who outlined two reasons why gay men enter into a heterosexual union. These included beliefs that it would cure them and that they displayed a lack of satisfaction with their less-rooted gay lifestyle.

On the other side of the spectrum, however, fathers emphasised the fact that they had children based on a "deep yearning" and "in-born desire" within them, without which they would be unable to fill a "gap" in their lives. Having children, as three gay fathers said, adds meaning to your life, provides you with an initial experience of unconditional love from your child, and establishes the aforementioned intergenerational link (cf. Palm, 2007). This leads, according to Barret and Robinson (2000:6), to an increase in life satisfaction. By accepting their responsibility as involved father, as argued by Gerson (1997b:39), Lamb (1997:6) and Pleck (1997:83), the heterosexual and gay fathers have proven that they are willing to act on their decision and establish egalitarian and androgynous parenting practices, associated with generative fathering. Such views contradict notions of proponents of the deficit paradigm, who argue that men only become fathers in an attempt to find their "lost selves" (Corneau, 1991, cited in Hawkins & Dollahite, 1997:5).

In addition to this factor, the researcher will now turn the reader's attention to Michael Lamb's (1997) typology of factors that influence the levels of fathering involvement. The first of these is **motivation**.

(b) **Motivation**

Related to the levels of motivation fathers may ascribe to, is the **developmental history** of the father and his **personal characteristics**.

(i) *Developmental history*

Here focus will be placed on whether heterosexual and gay fathers **modelled** or **compensated** for their own fathers' parenting practices.

Fathers who modelled their own fathers' behaviour

Here seven heterosexual and five gay men indicated that they modelled their own fathers' parenting practices (cf. Brotherson, 2007b:399; LaRossa, 1988:451; Snarey, 1993:304). One father articulated his reason by saying, "I wanted my child to feel the same way my father had me feel – it was a purposeful attempt". His quote was emphasised by other heterosexual and gay men alike, who recalled their fathers' provision of a Christian foundation and exemplary standards and family values as motivating factors to succeed as fathers. Others did, however, attempt to improve on their father's positive influence, by placing more emphasis on intense involvement, more open communication and emotive support. One father cited his uncle's (who served as father-figure) educational background as reason for him to emulate the uncle's attention, nurturing and caring nature, reflecting the findings of studies by Snarey (1993:305).

Other positive recollections and memories of their fathers included the following. Both heterosexual and gay men described their fathers as being "gentle", with heterosexual fathers adding the dimensions of support, of "being there" and steadfastness. Gay fathers typified their fathers as "loving", "responsible", "fair" and providers of intellectual stimulation. The heterosexual respondents believed that this provided them with a more stable self-image, liberal outlook on life, respect for others, sensitivity and gentleness. Other fathers heralded a different view.

Fathers who compensated for their own fathers' behaviour

Eight heterosexual and seven gay respondents attempted to compensate for their father's lack of nurture, involvement and interaction (cf. Lamb, 1997:6; Pleck, 1997:80; Snarey, 1993:204). As such, they attempt to rectify the wrongs of their own fathers, a reason provided for in the work of Daly (1993, cited in Pleck, 1997:81). Based on the lack of any supervision or threat of (or actual) physical punishment (cf. Snarey, 1993:305), Tiaan noted that he made "...an effort to do exactly the opposite" of what his father did. Other accounts, courtesy of both heterosexual and gay fathers, typified their fathers as "...negative, indecisive, ...overly critical", "bombastic", associated with constant irritation and humiliation. One gay father even went as far to proclaim that he "hated" his father and "rejected him in [his] head" whilst another blamed his father for his fear of establishing a meaningful, lasting and trusting relationship with others.

Based on such negative memories, several gay fathers wanted to establish new values in their relationship with their children. These included freedom, reciprocal respect, no physical punishment, more overt displays of affection and a definite advisory role. All of these were very evident in the feedback the fathers provided in terms of the domains, components and categories of generative fathering.

In addition to the developmental history of the father, the discussion will also afford attention to the **personal characteristics** of fathers, and how these impact on the levels of fathering involvement. Here provision will be made for the **age, educational and occupational levels** and **beliefs on gender role orientation**.

(ii) *Personal characteristics*

Pertaining to the **age** of the respondents, the average age of the fathers when they had their first child was 28 years for heterosexual, and 25 years for gay fathers, respectively. The youngest of the heterosexual men was 20 years of age and the oldest 34, when they became fathers, whereas 21 years was the youngest, and 28 years the oldest for gay men. Based on their feedback in terms of generative fathering, several of these men in fact contradicted the findings of Coltrane (1990, cited in Pleck, 1997:81) and Smit (2008:65) insofar as they displayed their *generativity* at an early age. Although the majority of heterosexual and gay respondents were in their forties, fifties and sixties (with only three in their early thirties), most of their accounts were based on their parenting practices as younger

fathers. Age, in this study, according to the researcher, does in fact not play as evident a role as other studies have proven.

A personal characteristic that did, however, provide interesting insights, was that of **educational and occupational levels**. Here the responses of especially heterosexual fathers reflected the findings of the South African study of Smit (2008:65). This study indicated that men with post-graduate degrees are prone to be more involved in their children's lives. Six respondents cited their occupations as teachers and lecturers for their improved comprehension of the problems and developmental phases of their children. One respondent even noted that his daughter became all the more analytical and critical, based on her participation in her father's work activities (adding marks for papers assessed) (cf. Brotherson, 2007a:113).

The final personal characteristic was that of the **gender role orientation** of the respondent. In terms of this, emphasis was placed on the views of the respondents on the gender-category of **masculinity**. Evident from the responses of the heterosexual and gay fathers, was the fact that they used homogeneous concepts to that of their view of fathering, to define masculinity. Some of these traditional concepts associated with masculinity included leadership, protection ("the strong one"), purposive decision making, economic and emotional caretaking (cf. Connell, 1987; 2005:77), being a "gentleman" and Biblical interpretations of men being a king, priest and prophet. An interesting account was provided for by one heterosexual man and a few gay men on the external nature of masculinity, thus masculinity associated with a "well-built", "athletic", "rugged" and "adventurous" man. Much of this may be associated with the fact that ten of the heterosexual and two of the gay men were raised based on Ann Oakley's (1974, cited in Haralambos & Holborn, 2008:98) typology of gender role socialisation, including the processes of manipulation, canalisation, verbal appellations and direction towards specific activities. They were expected to work on the farm, partake in sporting activities like rugby, to "stand their own ground", be a "man's man" and to not act "...like a sissy".

In contrast to this, three gay men equated masculinity with an androgynous character, and four heterosexual men wanted to establish a link between physical and intellectual attributes to be defined as a man. One gay man opted for the easiest definition of all, equating masculinity with heterosexuality and as such not regarding himself as masculine (cf. Herek, 1986, in Connell, 1992:736). Although concepts

associated with the traditional views of masculinity were used, these men still ascribed to the “new man” approach of parenting (cf. Moen, 1992; Smit, 2008:70). Radin (1982:197) argued that these men are not necessarily more effeminate and less masculine, but display a greater degree of certainty and security about their own masculinity and sexuality. These fathers are expected to be and have (in this study) proven to be very responsive, involved, nurturing and caring with high levels of participation in terms of *generativity* (cf. Brotherson & White, 2007:9; Gerson, 1997b:39; Lamb, 1997:6; Matta & Knudson-Martin, 2006:33; Pleck, 1997; Volling & Belsky, 1991:462). In doing this, these men transcended the traditional expectations associated with masculinity (cf. Bradley, 2007; Connell, 1987; 1995; Ritzer & Goodman, 2003; Walby, 1990), and reduce the distance brought about what Jacques Derrida (cited in Bradley, 2007:65) termed as binary categorisation.

The second factor identified by Lamb (1997) was the **skills** and corresponding **self-confidence** of the respondents.

(c) ***Skills and self-confidence***

Related to skills, Sean noted the importance of a father to be “effective” in his parenting endeavours. Two heterosexual and four gay respondents stated that their skills were a “...natural process ... a pleasure”, a process that comes naturally “from within” that had “...to be there from the start”. Both groupings recommended the books on parenting, as well as parenting courses and seminars to improve their skills. Such views corresponded with references to formal skills and educational programmes discussed in the work of Brotherson (2007b:396), Lamb (1997:7) and Moen (1992:129). Such initiatives may provide guidance to those fathers who lack the experience, rules and regulations (cf. Barclay & Lupton, 1999:1019; Lamb, 1997:7).

Related to the idea of rules and regulations, may be certain **institutional practices** to aid parents in balancing their private and public responsibilities.

(d) ***Institutional practices***

All of the heterosexual fathers formed part of dual-earner couples, with eight afforded the opportunity to work flexitime. In contrast, only two gay men were provided with the same opportunity (cf. Cook, 1992:206; Sekaran, 1986:128). This was based on the importance to provide in the economic needs and basic survival of a family (cf.

Coltrane, 1995:266; Newman, 1999:216; Schoeman, 2008:1). Especially the heterosexual men in the educational occupation were provided the opportunity to spend time with their children. This usually occurred after school, as well as during holidays and sabbaticals, whereas another had to use child-care facilities based on the schedules and time constraints the couple faced (cf. Harker, 1995:102). In contrast to this, six gay fathers noted that their occupation had no impact on their relationship with their children, and that they only sought to provide in the needs of their children.

Regardless of flexitime, no other family-friendly policies were identified by the respondents. As such, additional **support structures** were deemed as imperative.

(e) ***Support structures***

Two support structures were investigated, these being the support courtesy of the men's **wives, ex-wives** or **current life-partners** or **husbands** and that of the **broader heterosexual community**.

All but two of the heterosexual and gay respondents maintained a positive relationship with their **wives** or **ex-wives**. The two gay respondents, who cited a negative relationship, attributed their reasons to the wife's prohibition of their participation in the child's life during the first five to six years, whereas the other still finds himself embroiled in custody battles. In the case of the latter, his wife even attempted to use his sexual orientation as "weapon" to gain sole custody of their children (cf. Barret & Robinson, 2000:136; Gochros, 1989:84).

The others, who described their relationship as more positive, ascribed to an androgynous and egalitarian approach (cf. Edwards et al., 1992:59; Greenstein, 1990:657), as alluded to earlier. The support of their wives was regarded as imperative, reinforced by concepts such as "teamwork", "team effort", a "joint vision" and a wife encouraging her husband's "paternal instinct", which serves to contradict Delphy's (2002:56) reference to a gender hierarchy which subordinates women to being "...soft, submissive ...concerned with domesticity" (Bradley, 2007:48). The fathers' participation in domestic activities further disproves research of Newman (1999:213) who focussed on the manner in which individuals construct so-called 'gender ideologies' which argue that "breadwinning is 'men's work', and housework is 'women's work'...". The men's feedback also provided contradictory accounts to

other studies (cf. Aldous et al., 1998:818; Maconachie, 1992:115; Smit, 2000:83), that referenced the incongruence between the division of household tasks. Although three respondents still ascribed to traditional roles, these roles were negotiated with their wives (cf. Aldous et al., 1998:810; Coltrane, 1995:266; Russell, 1983).

In terms of the gay individuals' **husbands** or **life-partners**, eight respondents referred to the importance of "teamwork" and a focus on strengths rather than 'gendered-ideas' in performing their tasks. By including the stepfather or life-partner in the lives of their children, Clive noted that this would in fact "affirm" the importance of the child, which may result in a higher self-esteem and a positive sense of well-being within the child (cf. Garner, 2005:85; Patterson, 2000:1061; Patterson & Chan, 1997:252).

The final support structure, the **broader heterosexual community**, also provided for a number of similarities between heterosexual and gay fathers. Although both groupings acknowledged positive affirmations from closer family, friends and in-laws, four heterosexual and two gay fathers argued that they may take note of and ascribe to several principles of other parents, but they follow their own individualistic approach to parenting, based on their personal interpretations of their unique situations. Support from the broader heterosexual community should, according to six gay respondents, be seen as imperative insofar as it may assist, lead and even "coax" gay fathers to improve their parenting. Two heterosexual fathers referred to the fact that they surround themselves with similar social networks of friends. One could interpret this as a more informal version of the support groups prescribed by Canfield (2007:385), insofar as it may also result in parents sharing advice and holding each other accountable for efficient parenting. In contrast to the support from individuals and structures within the heterosexual community, gay fathers noted that they did not require support from the broader **gay community**.

Five gay men explained their views by arguing that they decided on a more individualistic approach to both their gay identity and parenting practices, because a certain "type" of gay-image they wanted to ascribe to, did not exist. They rather chose to surround themselves with social networks akin to them in terms of, amongst others, relationship status or shared interests (cf. Crosbie-Burnett & Helmbrecht, 1993:256; Drucker, 1998:162; Meyer, 1990:72). Some of the respondents described the responses of other gay men to their decision to become parents (or the fact that they already had children) as simply "wonderful". Others recalled a degree of

jealousy and resentment on the part of the childless gay men, who wanted children of their own (cf. Baptiste, 1987:124; Bigner & Bozett, 1990:159). In addition to their individualistic approach, gay fathers also cited the nature of the gay community as additional reason for not accepting assistance from certain of its members. Three respondents highlighted the annual Gay Pride Parade as an “exaggerated misinterpretation” of the gay community, which in the researcher’s opinion, may reinforce negative stereotypes held about the gay community (cf. Barret & Robinson, 2000). Such stereotypes found representation in one respondent’s reference to certain sectors of the gay lifestyle as the “dark side” and several gay men as “animals”. This was because he was rejected by several of his former acquaintances and friends because he refused to engage in anonymous sexual activities in clubs and bars (cf. Barret & Robinson, 2000; Bech, 1997:11; Benne & McDormatt, 2004; Besner & Spungin, 1995:17; Downs, 2006:94; Du Plessis, 1999:70; Esterberg, 1996:383). In addition to this respondent, the researcher’s reference to sexual advances made towards him, following one of his interviews, had him consider the following. There need not necessarily exist a contradiction between the concepts ‘gay’ and ‘father’, but rather, in certain circumstances, a contradiction between ‘gay father’ and the presumed, stereotypical ‘gay lifestyle’. As such, it becomes apparent, that for those gay men who display the desire to become parents, or those who already are parents and want to increase their levels of involvement, that a movement towards the George Herbert Mead’s (1962:175) ‘I’-category of the self, rather than the ‘me’, is needed. In so doing, the gay man is afforded the opportunity to redefine his own identity, based on both his sexual orientation and position as father in a unique, novel and unstructured way, rather than conforming to a stereotypical belief (the ‘me’-component) about what a gay man (and father) should be.

5.4 CONCLUSION

Chapter Five provided an in-depth account of the findings the researcher accrued during his fieldwork. In the interest of providing the reader with this detailed discussion of the views and opinions of the heterosexual and gay fathers, it was deemed appropriate to divide the discussion into two distinct sections.

The first section, under points 5.2.1 and 5.2.2 provided a comprehensive overview of the **responses of the heterosexual and gay men**, respectively. Specific themes were used to guide the discussion under both points. These included the

respondents' views of masculinity, their definition of fathering, reasons for becoming a father and factors that impacted on their levels of involvement with their children. This was complemented by a focus on their relationship with their children, with primary emphasis on the positive features, obstacles and subsequent impact they associated with being a father. Both discussions (under points 5.2.1 and 5.2.2) concluded with a thorough insight into the ideas fathers displayed in terms of the components, categories and domains of generative fathering.

Under point 5.3, the researcher established an integration of the **findings and the theoretical background** provided in Chapters Two and Three within a thematic discussion. This was done to distinguish between the possible differences and similarities heterosexual and gay men displayed in their parenting practices. The section commenced with the manner in which men conceptualised fathering, followed by an overview of their relationship with their children. These preceding points provided the foundation for the comparison of the contrasting and similar views of heterosexual and gay men on generative fathering. Finally, an outline of five overarching factors that may have impacted on the views of the respondents, was provided.

In the concluding Chapter Six that follows, the eight specific research objectives and their corresponding research questions will be incorporated to determine whether each of these have been realised.

CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 CONCLUDING REMARKS: THE REALISATION OF THE RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

In Chapter One (page 6), the researcher indicated the necessity to provide an inductive and balanced theoretical framework on the roles of men in their families, based on the so-called "...multilayered fatherhood terrain ...[with its] wide range of issues..." (Marsiglio et al., 2000:1173). These issues included, amongst others, as the general objective noted, to **compare heterosexual and gay men, to determine whether the fatherhood-related experiences and practices of heterosexual and gay fathers manifest the principles of generative fathering in South Africa** and answer its corresponding research question, **Which principles of generative fathering (if any) do heterosexual and gay men in South Africa display in their fathering practices?**

To do this, the researcher ascribed to the epistemological approach of interpretivism and its corresponding ontological counterpart, constructionism. This was done to underscore the necessity to challenge existing debates that seek to maintain traditional conceptualisations of the family and, per implication, excluding a number of new diverse forms that seek equal recognition. In addition to the general objective stated above, eight specific objectives were formulated. This concluding chapter will be structured in terms of each of these **eight specific objectives**.

The **first** focussed on the provision of a **theoretical overview of fatherhood and generativity fathering** in Chapter Two. In this chapter, a concise overview of two juxtaposed conceptualisations associated with fathering in contemporary society was provided. The first of these focussed on the nature of the deficit paradigm which manifests in the so-called role-inadequacy perspective. This perspective takes a pathological stance on fathering, viewing fathers as uninvolved, uncaring and uninterested in the lives of their children, based on the fact that they were either seen as incompetent or unwilling to do so (cf. Hawkins & Dollahite, 1997). The researcher referred to three mutually exclusive phases through which men progressed in terms of their fathering role, including the **moral caregiver, traditional breadwinner and gender role model**. The section was concluded with a comprehensive critique of this paradigm, including its overemphasis of the inadequacies of fathers, its non-

developmental nature, the fact that it misconstrues the motives and desires of fathers and its inability to fully conceptualise the concept of 'care' (Hawkins & Dollahite, 1997).

In addition to this, focus was next placed on certain factors that serve to increase the levels of fathering involvement. These included motivation, skills and self-confidence, institutional practices and support. Following this, the theme of *generativity* was afforded a great deal of attention. Here the researcher discussed its origin by focussing on the psychosocial developmental phases of Erik H. Erikson (1984; 1997). This was followed by an overview of its principles, which included the different conditions within which the generative father has to function and the related forms of 'work' he has to perform, including ethical work, stewardship, development work and relationship work (Dollahite et al., 1997a). The components of generative fathering also came to the fore in the form of interaction, accessibility and the 'convening' principle of paternal responsibility (Dollahite et al., 1997a). The latter shed light on three domains fathers have to partake in to insure a generative approach to parenting, namely the cognitive, affective and behavioural domains (Palkovitz, 1997). In concluding this chapter, insight was provided into academic notions of the impact that the principles of generative fathering may have on men (Barclay & Lupton, 1999; Hall & Tift, 2007; Phares & Clay, 2007; Popenoe, 1996; Pruett, 2000; Radin, 1982; Rhoden & Robinson, 1997; Snarey, 1993; Williams, 2007).

Chapter Three served as result of the **second** specific objective of giving a **theoretical overview of gay fathering**. In an attempt to underscore the difficulties gay fathers may face, the chapter commenced with a thorough discussion of the different developmental phases gay men progress through to fully realise their gay identity. These ranged from the acknowledgement of same-sex attraction, marginal involvement, comparison, tolerance and compensation, and finally accepting and authenticating the gay identity (Bech, 1997; Blumstein & Schwartz, 1990; Cass, 1990; Connell, 1992; Downs, 2006; Gonsiorek, 1995; Miller, 1998; Thio, 1998). With this necessary foundation, the chapter progressed towards the section that dealt with gay fathering. Here attention was paid to the different avenues in becoming a gay father, reasons for wanting to be a father and different gay family formations (such as adoptive families and gay stepfamilies) (Baptiste, 1987; Barret & Robinson, 2000; Bozett, 1987a; Gochros, 1989; Johnson & O'Connor, 2002; Lev, 2004; Mallon, 2004; Martin, 1993; Miller, 1978; 1979; Patterson, 2000; Patterson & Chan, 1997; Ross, 1990; Sember, 2006). This was complemented by views on the relationship between

gay men and their children, with primary focus on positive features and limitations and obstacles associated with gay fathering, in both the heterosexual and gay communities (Allen, 1997; Benkov, 1994; Bigner & Bozett, 1990; Bozett, 1981b; Bozett, 1984; Bozett, 1987a; Bozett, 1987b; Crosbie-Burnett & Helmbrecht, 1993; Drucker, 1998; Garner, 2005; Gutierrez, 2002; Lorde, 1984; Lubbe, 2007; Mallon, 2004; Meezan & Rauch, 2005:98; Miller, 1987; Schulenberg, 1985; Voeller & Walters, 1978). The chapter was concluded with a focus on three polarised categories that have created a great deal of complexity for gay fathers. These included the polarisation between 'gay' and 'homosexual', 'gay/homosexuality' versus 'heterosexuality' and 'gay/homosexuality' versus 'fathering' (Mead, 1962).

Evident from both of these theoretical chapters, was the fact that the majority of studies took place in the United States, with only that of Smit (2000; 2004; 2008) providing invaluable insights into contemporary fathering amongst Caucasian men in South Africa. There were no or very few references to generative fathering and gay fathering in the South African context, with no studies having focussed on the relationship between generative fathering and different forms of fathering. This may make the findings of this study, although not as extensive in nature, quite invaluable for future studies on the subject matter.

As prelude to the research findings, Chapter Four focussed on the **qualitative research design** used by the researcher. This chapter provided the reasoning behind the importance of this design for the study, stages associated with it, as well as the research methodology used. In-depth interviews and self-administered questionnaires served as the two methods used. In total, 16 interviews were conducted and ten self-administered questionnaires were received from respondents who could not partake in the interviews. The chapter related information on the nature of the data collection, including the biographical descriptives of the respondents, and concluded with a discussion of the data analysis and ethical considerations associated with the study.

Chapter Five provided the basis for communicating objectives three to eight. The **third** specific objective focussed on determining the manner in which heterosexual and gay fathers **define fathering and fathering practices**. This was clearly articulated under Points 5.2.1(b) and 5.2.2(c) of Chapter Five. Concepts used by heterosexual men to define fathering ranged from leader, decision-maker, protector and caretaker, to simply "being there", being a friend, someone who listens and loves

their children. In addition to their views, gay fathers also equated fathering with notions such as support, responsibility, development, education, caring and being unbiased.

The **fourth** objective was closely related to the foregoing one. Here the researcher wanted to explore the possible **differences** and **similarities** of the manner in which heterosexual and gay men **define fathering**. As with objective three, a concise discussion of these aspects was provided for under Points 5.3.1 and 5.3.2 of Chapter Five. Although a few similarities arose between gay and heterosexual fathers, heterosexual respondents were more prone to emphasise the father's capacity to provide safety and security to his family (Lamb, 1982), to serve as friend (Cottle & Dixon, 2007:254; Pruett, 2000:116) and to provide the foundation for the traditional setting and values associated with family and marriage (cf. Murdock, 1968). Gay fathers, on the other hand, focussed more on attributes related to sensitivity and emotional involvement with the child. A very potent finding was the idea of acceptance and tolerance of others and for respecting the diverse nature of human beings (Allen, 1997:197; Bozett, 1987b:51; Garner, 2005:33; Johnson & O'Connor, 2002:128; Meezan & Rauch, 2005:98; Voeller & Walters, 1978:150). Gay fathers were also more willing to overcompensate in their relationship with their children to disprove those individuals who deem gay fathering as a contradiction in terms (cf. Patterson & Chan, 1997), or that they only father to achieve acceptance and status in the dominant heterosexual society (cf. Bigner & Bozett, 1990:158; Patterson & Chan, 1997:252). Such overcompensation, according to one gay father, should be attributed to the high levels of adversity, prejudice and scrutiny they have to sometimes face in contemporary society (cf. Johnson & O'Connor, 2002:129).

The **fifth** specific objective sought to investigate the degree to which the **principles of generative fathering** were exhibited by heterosexual and gay men. It was evident that both groupings knowingly, or even unknowingly, displayed the principles of generative fathering in their parenting practices. This is credited to the fact that these fathers underlined the importance of the components, the categories and domains associated with generative fathering (cf. Palkovitz, 1997). The researcher identified paternal responsibility as the so-called 'convening' component of all the principles associated with generative fathering. Emphasis was firstly placed on the three domains associated with generative fathering, these being behavioural, emotive and cognitive. Based on the results obtained from the use of the Likert type questions which made provision for four categories of involvement, ranging from *never involved*

to *very involved*, it was apparent that the majority of the heterosexual *and* gay fathers opted for the latter level in their responses. In terms of the behavioural domain, 45 percent (128 responses) of heterosexual and 56 percent (123 responses) of gay fathers selected the level of *very often*, respectively. The emotive domain mirrored and even exceeded these percentages, with 58 percent (49 responses) of heterosexual and 74 percent (49 responses) of gay fathers opting for the highest **level of involvement**, whereas the cognitive domain saw nearly 51 percent of the heterosexual fathers (61 responses), and 49 percent (54 responses) of gay fathers underscoring the importance of monitoring the child on a cognitive level.

In terms of the remaining two components, heterosexual respondents noted that **interaction** (cf. Brandth & Kvande, 1998; Lamb, 1995; Richter & Smith, 2006:161; Smit, 2004) was imperative because it serves as validation for the child's importance to the father, by having the father and child display a "language of love" in the form of "a touch, hug and physical proximity". Other responses from both heterosexual and gay fathers also displayed an affinity for interaction by stating that it leads to a "bonding experience" with the child, establishes open communication and provides the opportunity for fathers to act as role models. Related to **accessibility** (LaRossa, 1988; McBride, 1989; Palkovitz, 1997; Smit, 2004), both heterosexual and gay respondents regarded it as an important form of distal involvement.

The importance of biological, parental and societal generativity was also underlined. **Ethical work** saw respondents emphasising the importance of a safe and secure family milieu, whereas views on **stewardship** had the men verbalise statements such as "it's my duty" to provide in the economic and emotional needs of their children and "it's nice to spoil them". Related to **development work**, both groups felt that it was necessary for "...any good father [to] know his child and pick up on the fact that they are experiencing problems" whilst they were progressing through their different developmental phases. By reinforcing the idea of a "...need to be needed" (cf. Dollahite et al., 1997a:25; Erikson, 1964:130), both heterosexual and gay fathers felt themselves obligated to perform **relationship work**. They do this by leaving their egoism behind and replacing it with a sense of selflessness to display high levels of childcare, love, communication and attachment to others (cf. Marsiglio, 1995b; Snarey, 1993).

The **sixth** specific objective explored the **influence of these principles on the parenting practices** of heterosexual and gay fathers. Both heterosexual and gay

fathers indicated that a number of changes were brought to the fore based on principles associated with more involved fathering and *generativity*. This included higher levels of responsibility, calmness, compassion, concern and selflessness. They communicated the importance to establish a stronger intergenerational bond, history and meaningful and lasting relationship with their children. Ascribing to fatherwork, they found themselves to be more career-driven in order to provide in the needs of others. Generative fathering also generated more insight and wisdom in terms of the life-experiences of their children, based on the increased levels of interaction and accessibility the fathers displayed. Gay fathers also argued that *generativity* made them more vulnerable, paranoid about the safety and whereabouts of their children, and also filled them with a greater sense of pride because of their position as caring, nurturing and involved father, thus, "the new man" (cf. Moen, 1992).

In terms of the **seventh** specific objective, the researcher wanted to determine the **influence** of these principles on the **definitions of fathering**. **Three implications** were heralded. The **first** of the **implications** was based on the minimal differences displayed by heterosexual and gay fathers in their parenting practices. Thus, the fact that the sexual orientation of an individual does not play an imperative role in the effectiveness and per implication, the definition of what a father should be. The conceptualisation of fathering, parenting and its related practices are determined by the manner in which these fathers approach their relationship with their children. This thought thus disproves ideas that underscore the contradiction between the concepts 'gay' and 'father'. As alluded to in Chapter Five, the researcher believes that a distinction should rather be made between the lives of 'gay fathers' and the seemingly stereotypical 'nature of the gay lifestyle'. Such a belief was underlined by the feedback of one respondent and the behaviour of another. The first came courtesy of a respondent who referred to the "dark side" of the gay community where gay men act like "animals", in terms of sexual perversions and the exclusion of those who do not conform to such expectations. The second was the unfortunate occurrence of sexual advances made towards the researcher by a gay man directly following the interview on his relationship with his child. Based on this, the researcher believes that a gay father should attempt to fully realise the 'I'-component of Mead's concept of 'the self' and by so doing establish a novel, unparalleled and pure model for gay parenting, rather than conforming to the stereotypical conceptualisations of what it means to be gay (as was evident in the foregoing two occurrences). In achieving this, the polarisation between 'gay/homosexuality' and 'heterosexuality'

may either be reduced or eradicated, insofar as several individuals in each of the distinct communities, share values and principles that complement proactive parenting.

Secondly, a number of independent factors were in fact associated with the levels of fathering involvement, which per implication, further impacted on the realisation of generative fathering. Significant influences were found to be associated with the factors of motivation, skills and self-confidence and support structures.

The discussion of motivation was sub-divided into the categories of developmental history, the educational and occupational levels and gender role orientation of the respondents (cf. Lamb, 1997:5). In terms of the developmental history of the men, it was evident that men who lacked involved and nurturing care from their own fathers as children, sought to compensate for their fathers' wrongs. Others, who cited the positive influences of their fathers, attempted to model the principles (and even improve on them) of their fathers. It should be noted, however, that regardless of whether they modelled or compensated for their fathers' mistakes, both groupings attempted to redefine their fathering work to correspond with generative fathering. The findings courtesy of Lamb's (1997) and Smit's (2008) previous studies were again reiterated in relation to the educational and occupational levels of respondents. The researcher found that those fathers who had postgraduate degrees and who were either teachers or lecturers, displayed high levels of paternal involvement. Six heterosexual respondents, for example, noted that their occupations improved their understanding and subsequent treating of problems associated with the developmental phases of their children. Associated with their gender role orientation, both the heterosexual and gay fathers displayed an affinity for a more androgynous and egalitarian approach to the parenting practices. As such, they eradicated the so-called gender hierarchies (cf. Delphy, 2002) and binary categories (cf. Bradley, 2007) which dictated what masculinity or femininity (cf. Connell, 1987; 2005; Walby, 1990) entailed, and what the exclusive tasks of fathers and mothers should be. They opted for the negotiation of the allocation of household tasks (cf. Aldous et al., 1998:810; Coltrane, 1995:266; Russell, 1983), whether it was a heterosexual or gay couple, based on their strengths and mutual support, rather than the gender of the individual.

Skills were also regarded as necessary to insure "effective" fathering, as noted by one respondent. Some felt that skills were a "...natural process" that comes "from within", whereas other believed that increased emphasis should be placed on

parenting courses, seminars and reading materials to aid the father in his task. Three support structures were evident in the feedback of respondents. These included the wives or ex-wives, the gay men's husbands or life-partners, and the broader heterosexual and gay communities. The support of the former two, the wives or ex-wives and husbands or life-partners, was deemed imperative. This was ascribed to the importance of "teamwork", a "joint vision" and the encouragement of the "paternal instinct" of the father, rather than merely underscoring the aforementioned traditional gender ideals. Support from professional structures within the heterosexual community was welcomed by especially gay fathers, who thought that such support would assist and "coax" fathers towards improved paternity.

The **third and final implication** serves to directly align with those who have critiqued the deficit paradigm. It should be evident from the theoretical discussions and the beliefs of respondents, that fathers are not merely looking for their "lost selves" or are *not* "... willingly uninvolved with their children and unmotivated to change". In contrast to the negative labels used to describe fathers such as "... incompetent, unaware, ... distant, infantile, ... emotionally constricted, ... hypermasculine, ... narcissistic, abusive, oppressive" (cf. Hawkins & Dollahite, 1997), the research has proven that men are willing to partake in the lives of the children based on their "deep yearning", as noted by one respondent, to do so. By acknowledging the importance of *generativity* rather than stagnation (cf. Erikson, 1984; 1997), fathers are given the opportunity to transcend the traditional "either-or"-approach of either being a moral caregiver *or* a traditional breadwinner *or* a gender role model. These fathers are afforded the chance to establish a synergy between these different roles and even transcend them by adding a more nurturing, caring, involved, interactive and accessible dimension to it.

Based on the discussion of each of the specific objectives, it should seem clear that the general objective was reached and the research question was answered. What should have been evident, is the fact that fathers who ascribe to the principles of generative fathering, regardless of their sexual orientation, displayed higher levels of amongst others, responsibility, compassion, concern for others, selflessness, a need for bonding and to provide in the emotional and economic needs of their children. As such, they displayed, though in differential degrees, proof of transcending the traditional ideologies associated with gender and parenting, and welcomed changing views on the institution of family.

Against the background of the foregoing discussion, the researcher will conclude with the following recommendations.

6.2 RECOMMENDATIONS

Provision for the **eighth** specific objective will be made in the form of **recommendations for further studies** and **recommendations for practical initiatives in society**, as it relates to fathering.

6.2.1 Recommendations for further studies

Based on the content of the dissertation, the researcher wishes to recommend the following possible themes for future investigations in social research.

Firstly, it would be commendable to undertake a **quantitative and qualitative study**, again using triangulation of method (cf. Neuman, 2003), on the changing nature of fathering in South Africa. In addition to interviews with respondents (which may include fathers, their wives or partners, their children), surveys could also be disseminated amongst the general population to gain insight into their opinions and attitudes of such changes. Such studies may be spearheaded by the National Research Foundation (NRF) and the Human Sciences Resource Council (HSRC) in South Africa.

Secondly, comparative studies between heterosexual and lesbian mothers, heterosexual mothers and gay fathers, as well as heterosexual couples, with *generativity* as basis, may also prove to be an adequate bookend to this study.

Thirdly, related to the sub theme of the **gay identity**, a qualitative study on the perceived promiscuous nature of gay men may be undertaken in South Africa. Interviews, focus groups, as well as participant observation could be used as methods to gather data on this topic. Both gay men and other members of society may be invited to partake to determine the closest possible approximation of the truth of assumptions held by, amongst others, various conservative groupings in the heterosexual community (and as was evident in this study, members of the gay community itself).

A **fourth** recommendation is to undertake an in-depth qualitative study to provide a thorough conceptualisation of the concept **homophobia**. During the fieldwork,

heterosexual and gay men ascribed to contrasting ideas on the nature of homosexuality and the identity of gay men. Such a study may then shed light on the degree to which misconceptions on these themes reinforce homophobia, or any form of prejudice and discrimination associated with it. In doing this, opinions of both the heterosexual and gay communities may be studied to provide a balanced account of what the concept entails.

In addition to the foregoing, the dissertation will conclude with recommendations for possible practical initiatives to be taken in society (as it relates to fathering, *generativity* and homosexuality).

6.2.2 Recommendations for practical initiatives in society

It became apparent during the fieldwork that several gay and heterosexual fathers were unaware of the principles of generative fathering, although they were, unknowingly, engaged in them already. As such, the researcher deems it appropriate to recommend, **firstly**, that pre-primary, primary and secondary schools should make provision for workshops, educational programmes and reading material on parenting. Such courses should be made compulsory for at least one parent at the beginning of the school year, in order for professionals to inform and equip parents with the necessary skills to raise their children. Fees for such initiatives may be included as part of the tuition fee at the beginning of the year. In addition to this, the broadcast media may also serve as positive medium to provide information on fathering to its mass audiences. Of particular value might be the role of talk shows on both radio and television, as well as daily or weekly columns and articles in newspapers.

Secondly, aligned with the first recommendation, sources on generative fathering should be integrated into tertiary level courses for pastors, social workers, nursing students and psychology majors. This may serve to inform them on the intricate nature of *generativity* in terms of parenting practices. A practical example for such an initiative has already been provided for in Dollahite et al.'s (1997b) chapter entitled, *Questions and Activities for Teaching about Generative Fathering in University Courses*. In this chapter, they argued that discussions, debates and course structures should be "Chapter-Focused", in reference to each of the chapters in Hawkins and Dollahite's (1997) book, *Generative Fathering: Beyond Deficit Paradigms*.

Thirdly, closely related to the overarching theme of fathering, information sessions on homosexuality, the nature of the gay identity and gay parenting, should also be provided for on all levels of education. Such an initiative may discourage a great deal of ignorance on the subject matter and encourage debates, guidance and ultimately, one would hope, a reciprocal respect between individuals who exhibit different sexual orientations.

In conclusion, the foregoing discussion of each of the research objectives and the recommendations, reiterated the importance of the research undertaken. The nature of fathering has seen a definite shift from its original form of moral role to its current state characterised by increased involvement, nurture and care, as was evident from the findings of this study. It highlighted the fact that there are far more similarities than differences between heterosexual and gay fathers than one may have expected. Acknowledging these similarities, may serve as first step towards the realisation of improved fathering practices characterised by the principles of *generativity*, regardless of factors such as sexual orientation. To quote Yentl, "What's wrong with wanting more? If you can fly – then soar! With all there is – why settle for just a piece of sky?"

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Annexure A
The Informed Consent Statement

**INFORMED CONSENT STATEMENT
 MASTERS DISSERTATION: COMPARISON OF GAY AND HETEROSEXUAL
 FATHERHOOD IN SOUTH AFRICA
 FIELD OF STUDY: SOCIOLOGY
 NORTH-WEST UNIVERSITY**

RESEARCHER: MR. J. ROTHMANN
Tel.: 018 299 1595
21081719@nwu.ac.za

Dear respondent,

This **Informed Consent Statement** serves to confirm the following information as it relates to the Sociological Masters Dissertation on gay and heterosexual fatherhood in South Africa:

- 1 The main purpose of this study centres on obtaining information from both gay and heterosexual fathers, in an attempt to determine the nature of their parenting principles.
- 2 The procedure to be followed is a qualitative research design, which includes open-ended questions and the completion of self-administered questionnaires, whereby respondents are given the opportunities to communicate their subjective views on the noted topic during either a face-to-face in-depth interview or by completing the questionnaire themselves. Basic background information related to the name of the respondent, age, occupation, current relationship and academic qualifications will be asked. Interviews will be recorded on a tape recorder, to insure sufficient transcription of information communicated by the respondent. If, at any time during the interview the respondent feels that it should be switched off, the researcher will oblige.
- 3 The duration of the interview will be no longer than two hours at most.
- 4 If at any point during the interview the respondent should feel uncomfortable, he will be given the opportunity to either make his discomfort known, or immediately end the interview.
- 5 It should also be emphasised that participation takes place on a voluntary basis, with the consent of the respondent without any form of coercion.
- 6 The confidentiality, anonymity and privacy of respondents are guaranteed. Fictitious names will be utilised when quoting statements in the dissertation, communicated by the respondents.
- 7 If a respondent regards any information as confidential in nature, and wishes to prohibit the researchers to publish it in the final dissertation, he should make this known during the interview. This will be adhered to by the researcher.
- 8 A list of the questions to be asked during the interview will be made available to the respondent before the commencement of the interview on request. This will be done to ensure mutual understanding of what has been asked to avoid discrepancies during the interview.
- 9 A summarised copy of the final dissertation will be made available to respondents on request.

I, (name and surname), hereby declare that I have read and understand the contents of the Informed Consent Statement, and give my full consent to Mr. J. Rothmann to progress with the interview on(date) and use information communicated by myself to him in his Masters Dissertation.

Name and Designation	Date	Signature
Prof JF Cronjé Supervisor		
Mr J Rothmann Student		
Respondent		

Annexure B
Heterosexual Fathers Questionnaire

**MASTERS DISSERTATION:
COMPARISON OF GAY AND HETEROSEXUAL FATHERHOOD
IN SOUTH AFRICA
FIELD OF STUDY: SOCIOLOGY
NORTH-WEST UNIVERSITY**

**RESEARCHER: MR. J. ROTHMANN
Tel.: 018 299 1595
21081719@nwu.ac.za**

1. BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

Name and Surname	
Age	
Occupation	
Current Province & City	
Academic Qualifications	
Current Relationship Status	
Number of children	
Sex of children (male/female)	
Ages of children	
How long have children been in the household?	
Type of fatherhood	<i>Please select the applicable category(ies) and answer related questions</i>
	Biological father
	Current marriage
	Divorced biological father
	Stepfather

Respondents are requested to answer the questions that correspond with the selections made above:

SINGLE BIOLOGICAL FATHER - DIVORCED FATHER	
1	How long have you been divorced?
2	Did the divorce influence your relationship with your children?
3	If yes, please explain.
4	Did or does there exist a supportive relationship between you and your ex-wife?

STEPFATHER	
1	Do your own children (if you have any) live with you and your wife and her children?
2	If yes, what is the nature of the family set-up and interaction between family members (i.e. positive relationships or hostility)?
2	What is the nature of his interaction and involvement with your wife's children?
3	Does there exist any strain between you and your wife's children? Please explain.

OPINION-RELATED QUESTIONS

Respondents are requested to answer ALL questions

2. **Fatherhood**

2.1 What (or who), in your opinion, is a father?

2.2 Why did you want to become a father?

2.3 Which of the following factors influence your involvement with your children?

Factor	X	Reason?
Motivation to do so		
Increased self-esteem & skills		
Support from your partner/husband/wife		
Support from your parents, siblings and other members of the community		

2.4 The father and his children

2.4.1 Please explain possible *problems* or *obstacles* you face (or had to face) based on your role as father?

2.4.2 What possible *advantages* may fathers provide for their children?

2.4.3 In what way do you believe children may be *disadvantaged* by either an (a) overly-involved father or (b) absent father?

(a)

(b)

2.4.4 Would you want your child to be gay? Please explain.

2.4.5 If your child is gay, how would you react?

2.4.6 How does your career/occupation influence your relationship with your child?

2.4.7 From the table below, indicate your level of involvement as father in terms of the following activities by using an (x):

Activity	Level of involvement			
	Never	Seldom	Often	Very Often
Behavioural				
Feeding				
Bathing				
Clothing				
Taking care of sick child				
Listening to the child				
Conversations with your child				
Providing advice				
Problem-solving				
Disciplining the child				
Developing new skills (teaching child to swim, ride a bicycle or car, etc.)				
Giving child chores to do				
Engaging with child's teachers at school				
Driving the child around and picking up items they need				
Shared activities with the child:				
Exercising				
Shopping				
Going to the movies				
Eating meals together (breakfast, lunch, dinner)				
Playing games together				
Celebrating holidays				
Working together				
Emotive				
Displaying affection towards the child (kissing, hugging, smiling, etc.)				
Displaying patience with the child				
Praising child for accomplishments				
Encouraging child to exceed (work harder)				
Telling your child that you love him/her				
Displaying interest in the life of your child (how their day was, who their friends are, what their feelings, interests, thoughts, aspirations are)				
Cognitive				
Monitoring the child's life (in terms of ...)				
Who his/her friends are				
Who his/her dating partners are				
His/her schoolwork				
His/her grooming				
His/her safety and whereabouts				
His/her choice of magazines, television shows or movie preferences				
Worrying about the child				
Planning for the child's future				

Activity	Level of involvement			
	Never	Seldom	Often	Very Often
Planning events such as birthdays, vacations, holidays and trips				
Praying for the child				

2.4.8 Do you regard the following as **important**? Please explain:

(a) Taking part in activities with your child

(b) Close proximity to the child while you are at home

(c) Creation of a safe environment for the child

(d) Communication with the child

(e) Provision of the necessary material and emotional support for the child

(f) Being able to determine the specific needs (whether physical or emotional) of the child at any given moment of his or her life

(g) Sacrificing your own personal happiness for that of the child

- (h) Establishing a meaningful and lasting relationship with the child, even when the child leaves your home

- (i) Establishing the idea of respect, assistance and care between people.

2.4.9 Do you regard the following as **problems** in raising your child?

- (a) Dependence (whether emotional or financial) of the child on the father

- (b) Provision of resources (food, clothes, luxuries) provided to the child

- (c) The different stages the child goes through (e.g. adolescence)

- (d) "Being there" when the child needs you

2.4.10 Did you raise your child(ren) based on the manner in which you were raised by **your father**? Please explain.

- (a) Refer to one or more instances that characterise your relationship with your father.

- (b) How did this instance (or instances) impact on you in a physical or emotional way?

- (c) How did this influence the way in which you interact with your child(ren)?

- (d) Have you remained close to your father?

- (e) Does your father's treatment of your children differ from the way in which he treated you? If yes, how does it differ?

2.4.11 In what way has your role as father change you on a personal level?

2.5 *The couple*

2.5.1 Are the roles you and your wife (ex-wife) portray gender-specific? (a distinction between what a father or mother should do). Please explain.

2.5.2 Are both of you working parents? How does this influence the child(ren)?

2.5.3 Do you believe that a child needs *both a mother and a father*?

2.5.4 Do you regard the support of your (ex)-wife as important in raising your children? Please explain.

2.6 *The father and his gender identity*

2.6.1 How would you define the concept 'masculinity'?

2.6.2 Do you regard yourself as masculine? Please explain.

2.6.3 Did your parents expect you to act in a more 'masculine' way as child? Please explain.

***Thank you for answering the questions!
Your participation is appreciated!***

Annexure C
Gay Fathers Questionnaire

**MASTERS DISSERTATION:
COMPARISON OF GAY AND HETEROSEXUAL FATHERHOOD
IN SOUTH AFRICA
FIELD OF STUDY: SOCIOLOGY
NORTH-WEST UNIVERSITY**

**RESEARCHER: MR. J. ROTHMANN
Tel.: 018 299 1595
21081719@nwu.ac.za**

1. BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

Name and Surname	
Age	
Occupation	
Income bracket (per annum)	
Current Province & City	
Academic Qualifications	
Current Relationship Status	
Number of children	
Ages of children	
How long have children been in the household?	
Type of fatherhood	<i>Please select the applicable category(ies) and answer related questions</i>
	Current heterosexual marriage
	Previous heterosexual marriage
	Gay father Adoption
	Gay father Surrogacy (and co-parenting)
	Gay Stepfamily (Divorced and living with or married to gay partner)

Respondents are requested to answer the questions that correspond with the selections made above:

CURRENT OR PREVIOUS HETEROSEXUAL MARRIAGE

1	Why did you choose to enter into a heterosexual marriage?
2	How did you deal with your realisation of being gay?
3	Does your wife/ex-wife know that you are gay?
4	If yes, what was her reaction to the news?
5	Are you divorced?
6	Did your 'coming-out' impact on your involvement with your children? In what way?

GAY-STEPFAMILY

1	Are you and your partner married, or planning to marry? Please explain.
2	Does he have children from a previous relationship/marriage?
3	What is the nature of his interaction and involvement with your children?
4	Does there exist any strain between him and your children? Please explain.

ADOPTION

1	Did you have access to a gay-friendly adoption network?
2	Did you opt for a domestic or international adoption?
3	What are the sex, ethnicity and race of the child? Were these determining factors? Please explain.
4	Did you face any problems during the adoption process? Please elaborate.
5	Do you regard the identity of the biological family of the adopted children as important to both you and your child(ren)?

SURROGACY

1	What was the reason for choosing this option?
2	Was the surrogate known to you (i.e. friend, co-worker) or unknown?
3	Would you consider co-parenting the child with the surrogate, or does she relinquish any rights after the birth of the child? Please elaborate.
4	Did you have access to a gay-friendly surrogacy network?

OPINION-RELATED QUESTIONS

Respondents are requested to answer ALL questions (thus, questions 2 and 3) related to GAY IDENTITY and GAY FATHERHOOD.

2. Gay Identity

2.1 When did you know that you were gay?

2.2 What do you think is the cause of your sexual orientation?

2.3 What feelings do you associate with being gay?

2.4 When did you first disclose your sexual orientation? To whom?

2.5 Shortly describe the reactions of your family members and friends upon telling them.

2.6 Did you attempt to change your homosexuality? Please elaborate.

2.7 How would you define the concept 'masculinity'?

2.7.1 Do you regard yourself as masculine? Please explain.

2.7.2 Did your parents expect you to act in a more 'masculine' way as child? Please explain.

2.8 *The academic Gilbert Herdt (1992) refers to a distinction between the words 'homosexual' and 'gay'. The former refers to something associated with illness or a condition that needs to be cured. The latter refers to freedom, associated with, amongst others, the Gay Liberation Movement.*

2.8.1 With which of the two do you identify most?

2.8.2 What is your reason for this?

2.8.3 Do you identify with other gay men or a 'gay-culture'? Please explain.

2.8.4 Does there exist any reason(s) why heterosexual people should fear or be negative towards gay people? Please elaborate.

2.8.5 Have people ever discriminated against you because you are gay? Please explain.

3. Gay Fatherhood

3.1 Why did you want to become a father?

3.1.1 Which of the following factors influenced you to become a more involved father?

Factor	X	Reason?
Motivation to do so		
Increased self-esteem & skills		
Support from your partner/husband/wife		
Support from your organisation/employer (paternity leave, flexible work hours, etc.)		

3.2 Should the concepts 'gay' and 'father' be regarded as complete opposites? Please explain.

3.3 What (or who), in your opinion, is a father?

3.4 The gay father(s) and his (their) child (children)

3.4.1 Does your child know about your sexual orientation? Please provide a reason for the given answer.

(a) If yes, how did you tell him/her?

(b) If yes, what were their reactions to the news?

3.4.2 Please explain possible *problems* you had to face based on your role as gay father?

3.4.4 What possible *advantages* may gay fathers provide for their children?

3.4.5 What possible *disadvantages* may be associated with gay fathering?

3.4.6 Would you want your child to be gay? Please explain.

3.4.7 If your child is gay, how would you react?

3.4.8 How does your career/occupation influence your relationship with your child?

3.4.9 From the table below, indicate your level of involvement as father in terms of the following activities by using an (x):

Activity	Level of involvement			
	Never	Seldom	Often	Very Often
Behavioural				
Feeding				
Bathing				
Clothing				
Taking care of sick child				
Listening to the child				
Conversations with your child				
Providing advice				
Problem-solving				
Disciplining the child				
Developing new skills (teaching child to swim, ride a bicycle or car, etc.)				
Giving child chores to do				
Engaging with child's teachers at school				
Driving the child around and picking up items they need				
Shared activities with the child:				
Exercising				
Shopping				
Going to the movies				
Eating meals together (breakfast, lunch, dinner)				
Playing games together				
Celebrating holidays				
Working together				
Emotive				
Displaying affection towards the child (kissing, hugging, smiling, etc.)				
Displaying patience with the child				
Praising child for accomplishments				
Encouraging child to exceed (work harder)				
Telling your child that you love him/her				

Activity	Level of involvement			
	Never	Seldom	Often	Very Often
Displaying interest in the life of your child (how their day was, who their friends are, what their feelings, interests, thoughts, aspirations are)				
Cognitive				
<i>Monitoring the child's life (in terms of ...)</i>				
Who his/her friends are				
Who his/her dating partners are				
His/her schoolwork				
His/her grooming				
His/her safety and whereabouts				
His/her choice of magazines, television shows or movie preferences				
Worrying about the child				
Planning for the child's future				
Planning events such as birthdays, vacations, holidays and trips				
Praying for the child				

3.4.10 Do you regard the following as **important**? Please explain:

(a) Taking part in activities with your child

(b) Close proximity to the child while you are working

(c) Creation of a safe environment for the child

(d) Communication with the child

(e) Provision of the necessary material and emotional support for the child

- (f) Being able to determine the specific needs (whether physical or emotional) of the child at any given moment of his or her life

- (g) Sacrificing your own personal happiness for that of the child

- (h) Establishing a meaningful and lasting relationship with the child, even when the child leaves your house

- (i) Establishing the idea of respect, assistance and care between people.

3.4.11 Do you regard the following as **problems** in raising your child?

- (a) Dependence (whether emotional or financial) of the child on the father

- (b) Provision of resources (food, clothes, luxuries) provided to the child

- (c) The different stages the child goes through (e.g. adolescence)

- (d) "Being there" when the child needs you

3.4.12 Did you raise your child(ren) based on the manner in which you were raised by **your father**? Please explain.

(a) Refer to one or more instances that characterise your relationship with your father.

(b) How did this instance (or instances) impact on you in a physical or emotional way?

(c) How did this influence the way in which you interact with your child(ren)?

(d) Have you remained close to your father?

(e) Does your father's treatment of your children differ from the way in which he treated you? If yes, how does it differ?

3.4.13 In what way has your role as father change you on a personal level?

3.5 The gay couple

3.5.1 Are the roles you and your partner (or husband) portray gender-specific? (a distinction between what a father or mother should do). Please explain.

3.5.2 Are both of you working parents? How does this influence the child(ren)?

3.5.3 Do you believe that a child needs *both a mother and a father*?

3.5.4 Do you regard the support of your partner (or husband) as important in raising your children? Please explain.

3.6 The heterosexual community

3.6.1 Explain the reactions of your parents, siblings and co-workers of you wanting to become a father.

3.6.2 Did these reactions encourage or discourage your need to become a parent?

3.6.3 Do you think the heterosexual community should support gay fathers? Why?

3.7 The gay community

3.7.1 Does your role as father negatively influence your role as gay man?

3.7.2 Do you still have freedom (personal time with friends for example) as a father?

3.7.3 How did other members of the gay community respond to your decision to parent?

3.7.4 Does there exist a need for support from within the gay community of fathers (and gay parents)? Please explain.

***Thank you for answering the questions!
Your participation is appreciated!***