

Work-family balance in narrative premarital counselling: A postfoundational practical theological approach

PJ VISSER

 **orcid.org/ 0000-0002-5821-3143**

Thesis submitted for the degree *Doctor of Philosophy* in
Pastoral Studies at the North-West University

Promoter: Dr HE Pienaar
Co-promoter: Prof dr FP Kruger

Graduation May 2018
26328348



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to express my appreciation and thanks to my promoters Dr. H.E. Pienaar and Prof. F.P. Kruger. This thesis would not have been possible without your advice and encouragement.

To my heavenly Father thank you for the opportunity to share Your love and grace through full-time ministry. Your grace has guided me through trying times and made the joys and successes even greater. It is a privilege to be invited into the narratives of others.

Especially I would like to thank my wife, (Dr.) Jeané Visser, for her encouragement, care and support throughout this process. Your understanding and advice on this journey: in life and the process of writing a PhD is of unmeasurable value. I am eternally grateful to God for allowing us to share our lives with each other and look forward celebrating our mutual successes.

I am grateful to my child, Dandr , who added to my work-family balance story and helped me in reaffirming my life values. I am looking forward to fun and exciting times spent together.

Prof. D.J. Human and Prof. E. van Eck, from the Biblical studies departments of the University of Pretoria, and Dr. J. Meyer, from the Practical Theology department of the University of the Free State, thank you very much for your advice, it is of inestimable value.

To my mother; Marietjie Visser, in-laws; Andr  and Jeanette Olivier and friends: your support through the process of our studies and understanding of our absence at gatherings are greatly appreciated. We love you so much and look forward to spending more time together.

Thank you to the congregation of NG Wierdapark for your support and encouragement with this study.

To the couples and interdisciplinary team that were willing to share their insights and stories with us, I am incredibly grateful for your openness and willingness to take part in the journey of this study. I have learned so much from you and I am certain so will others.

ABSTRACT

This study aimed at addressing the research gap found between the combination of premarital counselling, work-family balance and narrative therapy. The central research problem addressed considered the contribution narrative counselling can make towards work-family balance for premarital couples who have the intention of getting married.

This study employed research methods from the qualitative research design, and more specifically from the pastoral care division of practical theology and narrative therapy, in exploring the above issues. The epistemologies of social constructionism, postfoundational practical theology and the narrative approach guided the research in creating a route for premarital narrative counselling.

The primary researcher utilised the transversal space allowed by postfoundational practical theology to include the voices of various fields of study, which included a Biblical social-science background, business science, the narratives of premarital couples and an interdisciplinary team that reflected on those narratives.

With the use of metaphors that co-researchers created themselves, through the course of narrative counselling, the primary researcher embarked on a journey with the co-researchers in the construction of a preferred alternative narrative.¹ The metaphors which the couples created incorporated both the realities of work expectations and relationship values chosen by them. The metaphors that couples chose guided them towards a co-created future to live their lives in a preferred and satisfying manner that they agreed on. This narrative process constituted an aid in couples' communication through the values chosen by premarital narrative counselling and extended the conversation by creating an approach for pastoral counsellors in facilitating conversations with premarital couples on work and family life.

Keywords: Narrative Premarital Counselling, Postfoundational Notion of Practical Theology, Postfoundationalism, Practical Theology, Premarital Counselling, Social Constructionism, Work-Family Balance

¹ It is for relational-ethical reasons that postmodern narrative researchers do not refer to people's lives, their stories, as data unless for the purpose of relating (translating) the concepts back for a dominant potentially modernistic audience. This will be discussed in more detail in the thesis.

OPSOMMING

Hierdie studie het ten doel om die navorsingsgaping in die kombinasie van voorhuwelikseberading, werk-gesinsbalans en narratiewe terapie aan te spreek. Die sentrale navorsingsprobleem spreek die bydrae wat narratiewe berading kan maak ten opsigte van die werk-gesinsbalans vir paartjies wat die behoefte van 'n huweliksverhouding uitspreek.

Die studie maak van die navorsingsmetodes van kwalitatiewe navorsingsontwerp gebruik, meer spesifiek: die pastorale sorg afdeling van praktiese teologie, om bogenoemde sake na te vors. Die epistemologië van sosiale konstruktivisme, postfondamentele praktiese teologie en die narratiewe benadering lei die navorsing om 'n roete vir voorhuwelikse-, narratiewe berading te skep.

Die primêre navorser maak gebruik van die transversale ruimte wat die postfondamentele benadering tot praktiese teologie toelaat om die stemme van verskeie navorsingsgebiede in te sluit, nl. Bybelse sosio-historiese agtergrond, besigheidswetenskap, die verhale van voorhuweliksepaartjies en van die interdisiplinêre span wat op die paartjies se narratiewe reflekteer het.

Die gebruik van metafore, wat die paartjies self vir hulle verhoudings (deur middel van narratiewe berading) geskep het, het die primêre navorser toegelaat om op reis te gaan met mede-navorsers in die samestelling van verkose alternatiewe verhoudingsverhale.² Hierdie metafore wat paartjies geskep het, het die realiteit van hulle werksverwagtings sowel as verhoudingswaardes, wat die paartjies gekies het, ingesluit. Die metafore het paartjies begelei tot 'n toekomsnarratief wat deur beide saamgestel is om hulle lewe saam in te rig dat beide daardeur bevredig sal word. Hierdie narratiewe proses het voordele vir paartjies se kommunikasievaardighede aangedui, as gevolg van die gemeenskaplike verhoudingswaardes wat deur hulle gekies is. Dit het ook die gesprek oopgemaak deur 'n benadering daar te stel vir pastorale beraders en versorgers om voorhuwelikse paartjies se gesprekke oor hulle werks- en gesinslewe te fassiliteer.

Sleuteltermes: Narratiewe Voorhuwelikse Berading, Postfondamentele Beweging in Praktiese Teologie, Postfondamentalisme, Praktiese Teologie, Sosiale Konstruktivisme, Voorhuwelikse Berading, Werk-Gesinsbalans

² Om verhoudings-etiese redes verwys postmoderne narratiewe navorsers nie na mense se lewens en hulle verhale as data nie, tensy dit vir "vertaal" word om 'n beskrywing te bied aan 'n dominant modernistiese of empiriese gehoor. Hierdie beginsel word verder in die proefskrif omskryf.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Acknowledgements.....	i
Abstract.....	ii
Opsomming.....	iii
List of Figures.....	x
1.1 Background and problem statement.....	1
1.1.1 Background or context	1
1.1.2 Problem statement	14
1.2 Preliminary literature study and state of research	20
1.2.1 Preliminary literature study and contextualisation	20
1.2.2 Status of research	25
1.2.3 Contribution of the study	26
1.3 Research problem, aim and objectives.....	26
1.3.1 Research question	26
1.3.2 Research aim and objectives	27
1.4 Central theoretical argument	29
1.5 Research design and methodology.....	29
1.5.1 Research design	29
1.5.2 Research methods	31
1.6 Ethical considerations	40
1.6.1 Risk level	41
1.6.2 What was expected of participants during data gathering?	41
1.6.3 Probable experience of the participants	41

1.6.4	Risks and precautions	41
1.6.5	Benefits for participants	42
1.6.6	Risk/benefit ratio analysis	42
1.6.7	Expertise, skills and legal competencies	42
1.6.8	Facilities	42
1.6.9	Goodwill permission/consent	43
1.6.10	Criteria for participant selection and recruitment.....	43
1.6.11	Participant recruitment	43
1.6.12	Informed consent (consent, permission, assent and dissent)	43
1.6.13	Incentives and/or remuneration of participants	44
1.6.14	Announcement/dissemination of study results to participants	44
1.6.15	Privacy and confidentiality	45
1.6.16	Management, storage and destruction of data.....	45
1.6.17	Monitoring of research	45
1.6.18	Justification of sample size	45
1.6.19	Method of randomisation.....	46
2.1	Social constructionism.....	47
2.1.1	Social construction of knowledge	51
2.1.2	Language	51
2.1.3	Discourse	52
2.2	PESTLE analysis as literature review	53
2.2.1	Political	54
2.2.2	Economic	55

2.2.3	Social	56
2.2.4	Technological	57
2.2.5	Legal	58
2.2.6	Environmental	59
2.2.7	Opening up to further exploration.....	60
2.3	In search of balance.....	60
2.3.1	An evolving definition of work-family balance	60
2.3.2	Discourses of “five-step plans” for achieving work-family balance.....	62
2.3.3	“Work/life harmony”	65
2.4	Social-science background on marriage and its effect on work in Biblical times	67
2.4.1	Theological background of social-science	67
2.4.2	Marriage strategy	68
2.4.3	The Greek and Roman influence on marriage	71
2.4.4	Marriage in the first-century Mediterranean world.....	74
2.4.5	Biblical values for marriage and work	78
2.5	Introducing narrative research to the stories of premarital couples	79
2.5.1	Narrative research.....	79
2.5.2	Narrative therapy.....	83
2.5.3	Narrative counselling with premarital couples.....	85
2.6	The narratives of premarital couples, focused on their work-family balance	95
2.6.1	Ridge and Beth	95
2.6.2	James and Alice	100

2.6.3	Edward and Candice	103
2.6.4	Claude and Jade	107
2.6.5	Luke and Alexis	110
2.7	Autoethnographic reflection	114
2.7.1	Autoethnography	114
2.7.2	Biography as theology.....	115
2.7.3	Autoethnography as part of social construction	116
2.7.4	The primary researcher's reflection on a route for narrative premarital counselling	117
3.1	Postfoundational practical theology	119
3.1.1	Postfoundationalism	120
3.1.2	Transversal rationality	121
3.1.3	Practical theology that creates transversal space	122
3.2	Benefits of the interdisciplinary process.....	123
3.2.1	Creating open dialogue	124
3.2.2	Opening up the research process	124
3.3	The interdisciplinary process	125
3.3.1	Identifying the interdisciplinary team	125
3.3.2	Interdisciplinary research method	125
3.3.3	The interdisciplinary team	126
3.3.4	Interdisciplinary questions formulated for all the couples.....	126
3.3.5	Interdisciplinary questions formulated to specific couples	129
3.3.6	Interdisciplinary team's perspective on concerns.....	133
3.3.7	Participants' unique interdisciplinary contributions.....	139

3.3.8	Concerns of a failed interdisciplinary discussion.....	142
3.4	Couples' reflection on interdisciplinary process	144
3.4.1	Ridge and Beth's reflection	144
3.4.2	James and Alice's reflection.....	147
3.4.3	Edward and Candice's reflection.....	150
3.4.4	Claude and Jade's reflection	154
3.4.5	Luke and Alexis' reflection	158
3.5	Autoethnographic reflection	160
4.1	Discourse analysis in a socially constructed reality	162
4.1.1	Discourse analysis methodology.....	163
4.1.2	Deconstruction of power	163
4.1.3	Themes of work-family balance in couples' narratives.....	165
4.1.4	Themes of work-family balance in interdisciplinary team's reaction	166
4.1.5	Couples' and interdisciplinary team's work-family balance themes found in traditions of interpretation.....	169
4.1.6	Reflection on themes of identified discourses.....	174
4.2	Getting couples ready for the journey ahead	176
5.1	Stories of clergy	178
5.1.1	Rev Francois Cilliers	178
5.1.2	Rev Samuel Heine	179
5.1.3	Rev Braam Smith	181
5.1.4	Dr Dewyk Ungerer.....	182
5.1.5	Rev Fay van Eeden.....	183
5.2	Helping couples find their work-family balance.....	183

5.3	Adding a route for premarital counselling to the field of narrative therapy	184
5.3.1	Packing the bags (exploring individual values and significant patterns)	184
5.3.2	Setting course (establishing the couple's relationship values).....	184
5.3.3	Packing the car (creating a metaphor for the relationship)	185
5.3.4	Safety checks and filling up (strengthening of the relationship metaphor).....	185
5.3.5	On the open road (using the relationship metaphor to extend beyond the local community)	186
5.4	Extending the conversation in interdisciplinary study.....	187
5.5	Autoethnographic reflection	187
6.1	Revisiting aim and objectives	189
6.1.1	Aim	189
6.1.2	Objectives	190
6.2	Revisiting assumptions	193
6.3	Autoethnographic reflection on research.....	194
6.3.1	The approach	194
6.3.2	My position as narrative researcher and -counsellor	195
6.3.3	Joys and sorrows	195
6.3.4	Personal growth	196
6.3.5	Future research.....	196
	REFERENCES.....	197

LIST OF FIGURES

Diagram 2.1: Work/life harmony model of McMillan <i>et al.</i>	66
---	----

CHAPTER 1 ORIENTATION AND PROBLEM STATEMENT

1.1 Background and problem statement

1.1.1 Background or context

Within a postfoundational approach to practical theology³ (where narratives are emphasised), the background is referred to as the context of a certain problem or phenomenon (Müller, 2011b:2; Park, 2010:1). The context of the research is set against the background of the interplay between personal and work lives. Literature refers to this interplay as work-life balance (Soni, 2013:35; Waumsley, *et al.*, 2010:2). Postfoundational practical theology is serious about practical theology being a contextual theology (Müller, 2005:75; Müller, 2004:294). This study focused on how couples tell and live their stories – how they integrate their family stories in their relationship and how they combine work and family narratives.

In pastoral care people are helped to create meaning or make sense of their lives. The pastoral narrative therapist could help through assisting in creating narratives and helping others to communicate them (Menken-Bekius, 2016:81). Nullens (2015:50-51) emphasises the role of communication in pastoral care. Pembroke (2013:25) in turn noticed that the narrative approach to counselling has been underplayed in the past and that the hermeneutical possibilities in creating meaning or sense of one's life could lead conversation partners⁴ to new perspectives. Narrative therapy, as it is explored in this study, finds itself in the postfoundational approach to practical theology (Müller, 2004:293).

Postfoundational practical theology is an epistemological paradigm created by Julian Müller (2004:279) that is based on Van Huyssteen's (1997:4) application of postfoundationalism to theology. Müller (2005:73) postulates that practical theology is something that happens where there is a reflection on practice, within the consciousness of God's presence. It needs to stay connected to the basic forms of theological reflection, but at the same time move beyond the rationalistic and modernistic boundaries of its past. He, therefore, sees postfoundationalist practical theology as a necessary contribution to the understanding of practical theology (Müller, 2005:73), and in this context particularly the discipline of pastoral care and counselling.

³ "Postfoundational practical theology", "a postfoundational approach to practical theology" and "postfoundational notion to practical theology" are used interchangeably by Müller (2011b), Meylahn (2014), Park (2010), Pienaar (2014), van der Westhuizen (2010), Meyer (2010) and Richter (2010). The use of either implies the other throughout.

⁴ In narrative therapy the term "conversation partners" are used to emphasize the destigmatisation of therapy and add that the "client" should be empowered (Müller 1996).

Context, as described in postfoundational practical theology, requires specific people whose lives and relationships are honoured by a well-suited narrative approach for a proper description in the process of knowledge creation (Müller, 2004:295). A narrative paradigm (as part of a postfoundational notion of practical theology) is therefore intimately part of the context. The stories of specific lives become the context. Furthermore, the research is informed by the notion of Christian marriage in the Dutch Reformed Church.

1.1.1.1 Epistemology

This section explores the transition to the hermeneutical and practical theological understanding of hermeneutics as a matter of epistemological understanding. It is, therefore, imperative to investigate this hermeneutical evolution in the field of practical theology.

Epistemology relates to how we acquire knowledge, how we understand it, what we know about knowledge and how we interpret the knowledge. As such the epistemology acts as legitimisation of the problem statement, setting the background in which it will be explored. Epistemology also asks who is knowledgeable and who creates knowledge (Van Der Westhuizen, 2008:13). It investigates how we know what we claim to know and how we regard it as truthful (Richter, 2010:9). The first chapter, concerned with background, positioning, research design and methodology could be described as the suburb in which the house of this study resides (positioning) and the building plan (research design and methodology). In this chapter the first movement (“A specific context is described”) of a postfoundational notion of practical theology is used to introduce the research topic and explain the epistemology that will be used throughout this study (cf. Müller, 2004:300). This is an important focal point as it indicates the style in which this “house of enquiry” will be built. When designing a house, the style in which it is built leads the overall “feel” of how the house will be perceived and lived in. Certain stylistic features complement each other and others do not. These stylistic elements will be referred to and explained in the different chapters where their influence is mostly visible: social constructionism and narrative approach (Chapter 2) and postfoundational practical theology (Chapter 3).

Alcoff (1998:preface) described epistemology as a philosophical enquiry into knowledge’s nature, what we mean when we claim something to be true and how we justify belief. Elgin (1998:28) in turn describes epistemology as “the study of nature, scope and the utility of knowledge”. Audi (2010:1) links epistemology and the creation of knowledge with the theory of justification, which is in turn connected to perception, memory and other elements of human life.

To form a knowledge base within a study like this, epistemology and an explicit exploration of the theoretical points of departure should be clearly defined. The theoretical paradigms used

within this study will inevitably influence the method of research: how data is collected and analysed or interpreted (Meyer, 2010:40).

Within the type of investigation that I am conducting, namely postfoundational narrative research, an important influence as to where I arrived at such a research topic as work-family balance within the context of narrative premarital counselling, needs to be presented. This has a direct influence as to where I draw my concept of knowledge from.

In narrative research as well as in narrative therapy the primary researcher should be aware of his or her own stories and how these influence the stories they choose to tell. A narrative researcher should be aware of their own context and knowledge, and that it differs from the context of their co-researchers (Müller, 2004:301). It is accepted in narrative research to include the reference to the researcher in the first person, as an acknowledgement of the influence the researcher has in the context of research (Van Der Westhuizen, 2008:12; Müller, 2011a:58; Pienaar, 2015:153). I, therefore, find it relevant to include part of my own story (as I did earlier and will do in the autoethnographic reflections on the different chapters) and interest in this study in this field of premarital counselling and work-family balance.

In this narrative study, I utilised the insights of Müller (1996:22), by which our lives and identities are constructed and interpreted through the stories we choose to tell about our lives. It is therefore explored how the work and family stories of premarital couples have an impact on their relationships. According to Demasure and Müller's (2006:412) hermeneutic interpretation of Ricœur, couples' interpretation of their stories of the past will influence how they see their future together (Müller, 1996:111). This study focuses on how couples tell and live their stories – how they integrate their family stories in their relationship – how they combine work and family narratives.

Osmer (2008:4) describes four core tasks of practical theology:

1. *The descriptive-empirical task.* Focused on gathering information that helps the practical theologian to recognise patterns or certain dynamics in a situation or context.
2. *The interpretive task.* Relying on theories of the arts and sciences to explain why this pattern or dynamics are occurring.
3. *The normative task.* Making use of theological concepts of above-mentioned patterns and dynamics to guide responses and learn from good practice.
4. *The pragmatic task.* Planning action strategy and the desirable way to enter reflective conversation.

Within the sphere of a postfoundational practical theology study, relying on the concepts of social constructionism, Osmer's four core tasks are limiting as they do not take the epistemology of social constructionism and postfoundationalism (that knowledge is created socially, relying on all partners of the research conversation equally and that social context, discourse and the role of power involved in the creation of knowledge) into consideration (Van Der Westhuizen, 2008:29-31). Furthermore Osmer's (2008:4) four questions: "What is going on?", "Why is this going on?", "What ought to be going on?" and "How might we respond?" are limiting to postfoundational practical theology study, when compared to Julian Müller's (2004:300) seven movements for research in postfoundational practical theology.

Müller (2004:300-304) has identified seven movements to be used within the sphere of postfoundational practical theology that will be utilised as a guide in this study:

1. A specific context is described.
2. In-context experiences are listened to and described.
3. Interpretations of experiences are made, described and developed in collaboration with co-researchers.
4. A description of experiences is made as it is continually informed by theological and other traditions of interpretation.
5. The religious and spiritual aspects – experiences of the presence of God – are reflected on.
6. A description of experience is thickened through interdisciplinary investigation.
7. Alternative interpretations are developed that point beyond the local community.

The seven movements for postfoundational practical theology study developed by Müller (2004:302-304) will be used as a guideline for the methodology of this study. Pienaar (2012:242) describes the effect of the development of practical theology as an ideal space and discipline for fostering interdisciplinary participation.

1.1.1.1.1 Hermeneutic evolution in practical theology

Osmer (2008:20) explains the hermeneutic approach to practical theology as one that was initially focused on the interpretation of ancient texts. Because of the increasing gap between the cultural and historical eras of the past and present (especially realised in the scientific and industrial ages), the differences and a need for understanding increased with the gap. He also

explained how the field of hermeneutics expanded: from the interpretation of ancient texts, to people in everyday life, to a dimension in different areas of study.

Osmer (2008:21) explains that Heidegger “portrayed this interpretive activity as grounded in the already interpreted world into which human beings are born and socialized”. Considering the hermeneutical dimension of scholarship, Osmer (2008:22) explains how Gadamer (a student of Heidegger) argued that “all interpretation begins in already interpreted world.” Gadamer (1975) therefore questioned the preconceived ideas and limitations of modern science since the Enlightenment prescribed to scientists – compromising their objectivity. Osmer (2008:22) elaborates that in scientific enquiry research traditions dictates that a scientist use the particular language, conceptual framework and research practices in his or her inquiry. It is imperative that the researchers acknowledge their interpretive point of departure, as dictated by the tradition of research. Osmer (2008:22), therefore, criticised the Enlightenment’s “prejudice against prejudice” that denied the contributive role of “preunder-standing” (sic).

Gadamer (1975:310-325) created a hermeneutical circle of interpretation for academic study, comprising the following five movements:

1. Pre-understanding;
2. The experience of being brought up short;
3. Dialogical interplay;
4. Fusion of horizons; and
5. Application.

The influence of Van Huyssteen’s (1997; 2000) work on postfoundational theology and practical theology has opened up new avenues for interpretation in practical theology. Julian Müller (2004) found inspiration in the work of Van Huyssteen and chose to move beyond the hermeneutical work of Gadamer (1975) and Heidegger (1988).

Müller (2004:294; 2005:74-75) finds the hermeneutical approach to practical theology limiting and problematic, he motivates the following reasons:

- Like Bleicher (1980:191), Müller (2004:294) finds the hermeneutical approach inadequate in situations where a continued distortion of communication through the use of language is taking place.
- It negates the socially construed nature of knowledge and knowledge systems (Freedman & Combs, 1996b:3-5, 20, 22).

- It lacks the ability to provide Practical Theology with contextual outcomes and creates “theories for praxis” that are “distant from the real world” (Müller, 2005:75). Müller (2004:294) states that a hermeneutical approach to practical theology that negates context leaves theology with mere “theoretical abstractions”.
- The hermeneutical approach to practical theology is rooted in and mainly influenced by Dutch and German scholars and is estranged from the South African context and history with the struggle against apartheid. A more contextual and holistic approach is needed (Müller, 2004:294).

Cain, Holland, Lachicotte and Skinner (1998:52) emphasise the importance of acknowledging social construction that determines knowledge within a specific context. Wilson (2015:894) argues that this is a hermeneutically influenced perspective of culture, as meaning and knowledge is created socially. She states: “People interpret and come to understandings within a set of meanings, rather than a fixed body of meanings existing somewhere outside of people.”

A choice is therefore rather made for a postfoundational, narrative approach for Practical Theology as it acknowledges the importance of context within the construction of knowledge (Müller, 2004:295). The hermeneutical or interpretive ability that the narrative approach brings to the table respects the voice of participants, as narrative enquiry is a process of co-creation between the primary researcher and participants (Wiklund, 2010:67). As will be described the narrative approach finds itself embedded within the worldview of social constructionism. This is an ideal fit within the scope of postfoundational practical theology (Dreyer, 2014:2-3), as will be described. In line with how Gräb (2005:182) explained Schleiermacher’s influence on modern practical theology, it opens this field of study to explore the praxis of human life from a perspective of Christian religion.

The key elements such as the narrative approach, social constructionism (see 2.1.1) and postfoundational practical theology (see 1.1.1.2.4 and 3.1), therefore, need to be described to understand how qualitative research fits within this theoretical framework within the seven movements that Müller (2004:302-304) suggests, as it in this case applies to premarital counselling.

1.1.1.1.2 Narrative approach

Meyer (2010:93) explains narrative as a frame of reference which we use to organise our life experiences. Stories, parables and legends have been used for ages to communicate important life lessons, values and information (Burns, 2005:3). Burns (2005:4) further explains that we as a species use stories to explain our world and origin. This helps us in the process of defining our world – shaping our identity. This is underlined by Wiklund-Gustin (2010:32) who describes

the narrative approach as an epistemology which has ontological outcomes. She emphasises that the narrative approach should not be reduced to a mere methodology, although it certainly has methodological implications, but should be seen as an epistemology in its own right (Wiklund-Gustin, 2010:32).

Lena Wiklund (2010:61) explained narrative hermeneutics as an interpretive approach that focuses on a person's understanding of being in the world. This incorporates meanings that are designated to life events and includes the narrative process of conveying these meanings to others.

Francois Lyotard (1984:29f) described a symbiotic relationship between the use of narrative and so-called scientific knowledge, wherein narrative creates a space that the description of absolutes is not required, like in the case of positivistic and modernistic knowledge (cf. Meyer, 2010:93). The narrative approach, as an alternative construction of epistemology, can be seen as a liminal space in the creation of a holistic understanding of knowledge and the description of reality (Meyer, 2010:93).

From Ricœur's (1984; 1988) writings, Wilson (2015:888-893) highlighted how cultural narratives and narrative identity are enriched. In using narratives as data, she has identified the following influence from Ricœur's *preunderstandings* (1984) as a heuristic:

1. to identify cultural meanings that become resources for participants' positioning work;
2. to ground the identified cultural meanings in participants' experiences; and
3. to understand participants' interpretations of constraint and agency within that context.

Ricœur's main research on fictive text and literature does not exclude using his research and theories of interpretation on qualitative data or life history. His interest in personal identity surpasses theory that is only limited to the interpretation of texts and literature, but through interpreting texts and the questioning of one's narrative identity as an understanding of the self or self-knowledge can lead to self-interpretation (Wiklund-Gustin, 2010:32-33). Wilson (2015:892) explains that people's identity is communicated through narrative, when people communicate their interpretation of experiences and their identity (how they perceive themselves). This is done either in congruence with or with resistance to the way other people perceive one's identity. This process of "storying" one's identity is, therefore, one of convincing oneself and the listener of your story of one's evaluation of your identity.

Demasure and Müller (2006:412) also linked story or narrative to the construction of someone's identity. People create meaning through the stories they tell about the experiences they have

had (Van der Westhuizen, 2008:20). This underlines Ricœur's (1984) theory of configuration or memesis, where events are strung together in the formation of narrative, as an act of hermeneutics. Ganzevoort (2012:216) emphasises the influence of Ricœur's hermeneutical philosophy on practical theology, in the sense that it takes the narrative structure of how we understand our lives into account and additionally regards meaningful action and identity as "text". In order to configure these narratives, the elements of structure, symbolism and temporality are used (Wilson, 2015:889-891). Michael White (1993:36) originally linked narrative and identity by stating that stories provide structure to people's lives. Freedman and Combs (1996b:268) stress the importance of narrative by stating that the story of "self" is constructed socially – in relationship with other people (cf. Van Der Westhuizen, 2008:20).

This identity or description of a narrative is not only limited to a single person but is used for groups as well. Demasure and Müller (2006:412) use the example of Jewish people's identity, which is closely linked to the description they find in texts they have created, to describe themselves as a people. Ganzevoort (2012:214) elucidate how ritual and liturgy form part of the narrative that shapes identity within a congregational setting. Meyer (2010:94) explains that identity is, therefore, constructed by the dominant discourses of one's society or social group and that people construct stories about themselves and their experiences, including their interpretation of those experiences, in a specific context that is influenced by different traditions. People understand their life as if it were a story (Ganzevoort, 2012:216).

The narrative approach focuses on the meaning people assign to stories or life events (Mills & Sprenkle, 1995:373). The nuance in how people choose to tell their stories is the concern of the narrative therapist, as identity is shaped by the dominant stories (Morgan, 2000:7). It is through stories that people can re-author their lives (Freedman & Combs, 1996b:11). People or groups could also become entrenched in the dominant story of problem or loss, particularly when knowledge or beliefs are taken for granted (Swart, 2013:3). Particular meaning is formed by the use of certain and specific narratives people present of a certain given situation. Wilson (2015:889) explains that in the construction of a narrative, the conversation partner adds meaning through describing why events happened, are happening or will happen.

Meyer (2010:94) continues by saying that people's narrative identity is used as a template or a resource centre from which they will interpret events that happened in the past or will occur in the future. The importance of narrative or stories should therefore not be underestimated as a platform of change, because the sharing of stories is linked to the creation of relationships, changing of ideas and future behaviour as well as having an influence in understanding (Burns, 2005:4).

Within the narrative approach, certain key concepts are vital and will be explained as part of the positioning for this study. Anderson and Goolishian's (1992:26) reference to a "not-knowing position" underlines the inquisitiveness required for a narrative study. Interdisciplinarity or transversality (Müller, 2009a:204) aids the narrative approach in taking hands with other fields of study in search of liminal spaces to make changes within a system practically viable. The search for stories of meaning (Morgan, 2000:6) aids people within these liminal spaces to create new stories and possibilities for the future.

The narrative approach is positioned within a postfoundational framework and broadly within a postmodern frame of reference. Freedman and Combs (1996b) have further placed the narrative approach within the sphere of social constructionism and Grimell (2017:97) acknowledged the liminal space the narrative approach opens for discussion between the fields of psychology and theology (both will be explored later in this chapter). The collection and evaluation of research data, therefore, should be done with the intent of being socially constructed.

My research participants (in the narrative approach called co-researchers) are considered as experts on their own stories and the primary interpreters of the relationships they engage in. They are not seen as "objects of research" or simply respondents but rather co-creators or co-researchers, whose understanding of their own stories is as important as other voices in my research. Van den Berg (2010:18) acknowledges a symbiotic relationship between the primary researcher and co-researchers in a narrative enquiry. Co-researchers, therefore, should not be pathologised or victimised, as they are an integral part of the research and should be respected as such (Graham, 2000:112). In this study the conversation and research partners' stories will be used in a process of co-creation, to add meaning to the way they understand their relationship and work-family balance.

1.1.1.1.3 Pastoral narrative approach

Brunsdon (2010:16) argues for a Biblically inspired narrative approach that stays true to the epistemology of practical theology. Ganzevoort (2012:214) finds three dimensions in narrative approaches that emphasise their use in a theological setting: their use in practical ministry and religious communication (preaching and pastoral care), empirical analysis and deconstruction of religious subjectivity and the empowering of marginalised voices. To the latter Louw (2012:5) stresses the liberating function of pastoral care, helping to free people from "slavery", situations of victimhood and aiding in the facilitation of change. Brunsdon (2009:3) adds that the Biblical Text aids the narrative pastor, as the Biblical frame of reference is part of the conversation he or she brings to the table. Ganzevoort (2012:215) states that the use of narrative aids the practical theologian in creating an understanding of the particular and local, since it contextualises the

Bible. Through narrative, people's sense of lifelikeness is addressed by creating specific real-life scenarios, which are not always addressed through the absolute or generality of something like commandments or prohibitions. Graham (2006:860) emphasises the added need for faith formation in the Church that could be addressed through the formation of identity; in this sense the narrative approach should be able to aid local congregations. This adds to Gräb's (2006:52) understanding of religion as a process of finding meaning and self-understanding. In this study the co-researchers' stories of God and religion became clearly visible in the couples' narratives of their relationships. The primary researcher, in facilitating the conversations, brought his expertise, as congregational minister, to the conversations in opening the couples' relationship metaphors to Biblical narratives that were used in their wedding sermons.

The narrative approach should not only be used to analyse and interpret verbal forms of narrative, like life stories, sermons and Biblical Text, but also rituals and congregational exchanges, among others (Ganzevoort, 2012:216). To this Graham (2006:859) adds the positive influence that corporate practice, in the form of ritual and liturgy, has on the processes of healing, reconciliation, support and induction. Ganzevoort (2012:223) introduces other possibilities opened through the narrative approach, which includes the interaction it provides with Biblical theology, seeing people as "living human documents", accentuating the internalised narratives of people and God. Additionally, it aids the discussion between Biblical science and social science. In this sense Graham (2006:860) emphasised the social responsibility of the Christian Church by strengthening congregants' identity through faithful vocational work in their everyday life.

Brunsdon (2010:15) finds the encounter between God and man imperative in the pastoral space. To this Ganzevoort (2012:220) adds the human nature of stories between God and men as they are found in the Bible; this adds to the reader's experience of living before God (*coram Deo*). Furthermore, Biblical narratives could confront the narratives of readers, challenging us to reconsider or reframe our own stories. Louw (2012:5) adds that the hermeneutical perspective pastoral counsellors could add to the pastoral discussion could aid people's concepts and perceptions about God. Scholars like H. Richard Niebuhr, Hans W. Frei and George Lindbeck brought attention to the narrative nature of Biblical stories over the tendency to reduce Biblical narratives to mere generalisations of morality. Shillebeeckx and Brueggeman also introduced the narrative approach to their scholarly work (Ganzevoort, 2012:217-218). Brunsdon (2009:4) adds that a pastoral narrative approach is less concerned with human potential as a change agent and allows the God narrative as found in Scripture as an important conversation partner. This does not use Scripture in the sense that it dictates a modernistic and linear view of using the Bible, but that it is invited into conversation in the process of meaning making.

1.1.1.1.4 Narrative research

Although the general expectation of therapy would be the creation of change, this study is focused on narrative therapy with premarital couples; therefore, the goal would instead be to listen to their stories, so as to allow change to emerge rather than creating change. Listening and retelling of stories will create a space for stories and their interpretation to evolve. Change happens through co-creation and is not a one-sided decision. Where the “action-research model” is focused on bringing forth change from the context of the researcher, narrative research sees such an intervention as a discourse of power, which should be avoided (Human, 2003:41).

The “not-knowing position” (Anderson & Goolishian, 1992:28) is an integral stance in the narrative approach. It allows the researcher to a true social-constructionist understanding of the co-researchers’ stories. The co-researchers enable the researcher to gain insight into their life stories, and the researcher is invited to see how these stories form part of the co-researcher’s reality. The danger in research as well as in therapy could be that the researcher may decide which stories are relevant and should be told. Within the narrative approach, co-researchers are invited to tell their own stories and take a decision on the relevance of their stories for their situation. The primary researcher becomes a facilitator of the space where these stories are told (Human, 2003:42).

Conclusions made in narrative research and within narrative therapy should also be done from a stance of social constructionism as it reveals discourses and power relations (Demasure & Müller, 2006:413). Conversation with different co-researchers and conversational partners were sought after before conclusions were made.

It is important that the researcher handles the couples’ narratives in a responsible and respectful way, trying to keep interpretation as close as possible to how couples experience their relationship and work (Wiklund, 2010:66). The co-researchers’ interpretation of their stories of work and family life should be respected.

Wiklund (2010:66) acknowledges that narratives lend themselves to different interpretations, with a hermeneutic tradition this is however considered a strength: confronting different meanings and creating new understanding. Narratives were reflected back towards the co-researchers, in order to fully understand what they originally intended with what was said, and to give them the opportunity of a re-imagined future story. The conclusions they made will, therefore, influence the path they choose in their relationship metaphors.

1.1.1.2 Concept clarification

The term epistemology describes how knowledge is created or which opinions are valued. In the process of an academic study this is an important aspect, especially for me as the primary researcher, to explain how I see the construction of knowledge. The different concepts that are imperative to this study are briefly explained:

1.1.1.2.1 Narrative Therapy

The narrative approach to therapy, as field of study, has an integral role in the epistemology as well as the methodology of this research. Our lives and identities are made up through stories (Müller, 1999). It is in finding the connection between these stories that we find meaning in our lives. The pastoral process, therefore, would be in facilitating the search for meaning within these stories of which our lives comprises (Müller, 1996:14).

Within our stories, some are more prominent than others. The more prominent stories form our belief system about ourselves (Morgan, 2000:5-10). Through the facilitation of these stories, people are helped to find new meaning and new identity.

The process of the pastoral family counselling course I⁵ did under the supervision of Prof. Müller and especially learning the skill of counselling from a narrative perspective had a serious impact on how I see reality. The influence of social constructionism played a significant role in my understanding of the concept of knowledge. Social constructionism insists on a critical stance towards ways of understanding the world that are taken for granted. Vivien Burr (2003:2-5) sees social constructionism as the critical questioning of perceived objective truths. Knowledge is seen as historically, culturally, as well as socially defined. Knowledge is, according to the social-constructionist framework, something that goes hand-in-hand with social action and bound by power relations.

I now understand the concept of knowledge as something gathered within conversation (Fagan, 2010:95). Knowledge is something that depends on a certain place in time as agreed upon by a certain group of people. Knowledge could be different within another setting as the factors involved differ (Peterson, 2012:467).

⁵ In narrative research as well as in narrative therapy the primary researcher should be aware of his or her own stories, and how that influences the stories conversation partners choose to tell. As narrative therapists, we should allow our conversation partners to take responsibility for their own lives. Narrative counsellors have the role of inviting their conversation partners to explore new horizons (Müller & Stone, 1998:331). It is therefore generally accepted to include the reference to the researcher in the first person, as an acknowledgement of the influence the researcher has on the context of research (Müller, 2011a:58; Pienaar, 2015:153; Van der Westhuizen, 2008:12). The narrative researcher should be aware of their own context and that it differs from the context of their co-researchers (Müller, 2004:301).

This legitimises people's stories, however small or seemingly insignificant. Within the framework of qualitative research small stories may have significance, especially when those stories help us understand a specific context (Müller, 2004:301; Struwig & Stead, 2007:12-13). Narrative research would be able to give a voice to that small story that is true for a small group of people within a certain setting (Müller, 1996:15).

1.1.1.2.2 Work-family balance

The understanding of work-family balance evolved over time. The first impression when talking about work-family balance is that work might be seen in a negative light and therefore less time should be spent at work and more time at home (Soni, 2013:36). Jain and Nair (2013:44) compares this definition to that of work-family conflict in the research of Greenhaus and Beutell (1985) that stated conflict arose when work interfered with family. Gordon (2012:7) in turn places the focus on allowing enough time for other responsibilities and thereby ensuring that work does not engulf one's whole life. This places an emphasis on work and life functioning separately like the "separate-spheres model" of Chow and Berheide (1988:27).

Waumsley *et al.*, (2010:2) defined work-life balance as "having sufficient control and autonomy over where, when and how you work to fulfil your responsibilities inside and outside paid work". Clark (2000:751), linking to the later evolution of Greenhaus and Powell, defined work-family balance as "satisfaction and good functioning at work and at home, with minimum role conflict" opening up meaning to focus on balance between work and family. In this sense "work-life balance" and "work-family balance" could be used interchangeably. With this in mind, Roy (2016:81-82) defines work-family balance as "equal time, satisfaction, and involvement in each of the work and family spheres irrespective of job demands, family demands, family structure, financial pressures".

1.1.1.2.3 Premarital counselling

Various researchers in the field of family therapy see premarital counselling as beneficial in decreasing the likelihood of marital instability and increasing marital satisfaction (Stahmann & Hiebert, 1997; Stanley, 2001; Stanley *et al.*, 2006). Tambling and Glebova (2013:331) add that couples who make use of premarital counselling or education have more satisfying relationships than those who do not.

Premarital counselling could be seen as an ideal way to work with engaged couples in the areas of communication, resolution of conflict, getting to know each other better, resolving differences and handling work-family balance.

1.1.1.2.4 Postfoundational practical theology

The understanding of social constructionism can be said to relate to postfoundationalism. Postfoundationalism should be positioned between absolutism (fundamentalism) and relativism; it moves away from the standpoint of absolute truths and gives space for knowledge to be constructed by the people using that knowledge (Van Huyssteen, 2000:430). Postfoundationalism should be seen as a posture rather than a position (Pienaar, 2014).

The recent turn of practical theology to engage in interdisciplinary and public conversation is in line with the postfoundational turn Van Huyssteen (1997) proposed for theology (Van der Westhuizen, 2008:50). According to Van der Westhuizen (2008:51-52), van Huyssteen's work originates "from the context of a fragmented, pluralist postmodern society", through the dialogue between natural science and theology – through the philosophical epistemology making it possible for beneficial interdisciplinary discussion. Macallan and Hendriks (2012:194) described practical theology as moving from applied theology to becoming a sphere where it is an interdisciplinary methodology of working and has become a "natural way of doing theology".

Contextuality is very important within postfoundational research, and conversations with interdisciplinary teams are promoted (Van der Westhuizen, 2010:2). Postfoundationalism gives the opportunity to us in the field of Practical Theology to take hands with other disciplines, to listen to the questions that they would ask in a particular situation. I believe this also helps define the space for Practical Theology to operate, creating an opportunity to give meaning and to understand something within a specific context and within the socio-philosophical context of what many regard as the ultimate questions of life.

From Van Huyssteen's (1997:4) application for postfoundationalism to theology, Müller (2004:300-304) has applied the postfoundational frame of reference to practical theology.

1.1.2 Problem statement

The Dutch Reformed Church (Clasen *et al.*, 2010:152) regards marriage as an enduring lifelong commitment. The dismal state of marriage as an institution can be seen in often-referenced divorce statistics. According to the last national census held in 2014, the 24 689 divorces in that year is a 3.8% increase from the 2013 figures (Statistics South Africa, 2016:6). The divorce rate has a clear increase since 2011 after the significant drop in reported divorces in 2010 (Statistics South Africa, 2016:35). The 2015 South African divorce statistics showed a 2.3% increase, with 25,260 completed divorce forms, from 2014 (Statistics South Africa, 2017). This left 14,045 divorces affecting children younger than 18 years of age.

As divorce is an increasing phenomenon, not only in South Africa but around the world (Morgan *et al.*, 2011:220), the need to equip couples with the necessary skills to create healthy, sustainable and satisfying marriages is also increasing. Divorce has a great impact, not only on families but also on society. The need for safe family environments is something that the Church can help society with. Couples deciding not to get married and those that have chosen to live together without getting married have become a worldwide phenomenon. Marriage is not considered the norm in society any more (Seekings, 2014:78-79) and family structure is starting to look very different than a few years ago.

Although the practice of marital counselling and premarital counselling is well known and also supported by clergy and the church in general (Koch, 2016:11), the lack of current premarital counselling programs that help couples prepare for marriage in the South African context proved a valuable topic for research (Stahmann, 2000:104).

A research gap became evident after thorough searches on databases, including EBSCOhost (that included Academic Search Premier, ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials and E-Journals) and Sabinet, using the keywords “premarital counselling” and “narrative therapy”, found no results in the combination of the two search terms. This is further supported by Stahmann (2000:104) who identified premarital counselling as a research gap in family therapy, another theoretical approach to therapy. This is, however, the only touchpoint found between a theoretical therapeutic perspective and premarital counselling (Stahmann, 2000:104).

The increased work stress on families adds additional concern to the institution of marriage. It influences couples' relationships by adding strain symptoms, such as tension, anxiety, fatigue, depression apathy and irritability (Brief *et al.*, 1981; Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985:80). Greenhaus and Powell (2006:88) later described the enriching experience achieved through work and family, where experiences in one role increase performance and have a positive effect on another role.

As will be discussed in the exploration of the context, study has been done on the work-family balance and how that relationship could improve (Goodwill *et al.*, 2014). Studies have also been done on the effectivity of premarital counselling and education (Stanley *et al.*, 2006:117-126; Stanley, 2001:272-280; Stahmann & Hiebert, 1997). There is also a research gap in the combination of work-family balance and premarital counselling. The same method to determine this research gap was used, as mentioned above. The research aims to prepare couples for marriage and equip them with the necessary communication skills and conflict resolution techniques, within the basis of relationship values, which will help them establish a healthy work-family balance.

The triad this study will focus on is the combination of premarital counselling, work-family balance and narrative counselling as a method for research and of facilitating the above-mentioned.

It should be relatively clear, particularly since we are dealing with complex human behaviour that “information” as such is not the answer. The kind of research that is therefore employed tries to step away from pure information or knowledge creation and takes the direction of integration. A narrative approach seeks integration in which vivid accounts of the world of work are brought into the premarital context, accounting for the particularities of experience as it is contextually and environmentally informed. This stands in stark contrast to premarital and psychological approaches that are intra- and interpersonal and diagnostic in nature such as with the use of personality assessments, abstract disembodied conversations about family background and other usual topics (Müller & Schoeman, 2004:9). The narrative approach not only asks with Osmer (2008:4): “What’s going on, why is it going on, what should be going on, and how we might respond?” but is already developing emergent alternative outcomes.

Narrative practical theology is an ideal field for combining pastoral counselling with the social and relationship needs of the working force as it relies on the epistemologies of social constructionism (that will be described in 2.1) and postfoundationalism (that will be explored in 3.1.1) in interdisciplinary work, which will open up this research into broader fields of enquiry (Dreyer, 2014:2). As will be seen in an examination of existing literature, specifically on narrative therapy and premarital counselling, it has indicated both a paucity of academic research and a need for premarital narrative counselling focused on work-family balance.

Osmer (2008:231-240) describes the origin of practical theology as coming from an encyclopaedic approach – where it was distinguished from Biblical studies, church history and dogmatic theology/Christian ethics – acting like a silo for the practical parts of theology: how to preach, serve and care. In the late 1980s three distinct practical theological approaches were found: the confessional, correlational and contextual (Dreyer, 2012:44). In his discussion on the evolution of practical theology, Dreyer (2012:44) discussed the distinctions Heitink (1999), Dingemans (1996) and Ballard and Prichard (1996) made between the paradigms of practical theology in their time. Heitink identified five different practical theology currents, namely the normative-deductive, hermeneutical-mediative, empirical-analytical, political-critical and pastoral-theological. Dingemans, meanwhile, distinguished four different paradigms in the praxis of practical theology: clerical, church, liberation and individual. Ballard and Prichard considered four models that comprised the practical theology of the time, namely practical theology as applied theory, critical correlation, praxis and habitus. These different perspectives of practical theology were clearly visible in the contrasting points of view between Afrikaans-

speaking reformed theologians and black contextual theologians in the apartheid era (Dreyer, 2012:45).

Ganzevoort (2004:18) stated that in the broader theological field practical theology was, for a long time, understood as “applied theology”, adding the “layout and presentation” of other theologians’ work, making it a secondary or help-science. Van der Westhuysen (2008:47-48) recognises the hermeneutical turn in practical theology, as influenced by Heidegger (2008) and Gadamer (1975). Heitink, Browning (1995) and Pieterse added to this hermeneutical approach, with Heitink (1999) focusing on faith as the object of study, Browning seeking for a “descriptive moment” (Campbell-Reed & Scharen, 2013:234) and Pieterse (1993) describing practical theology as the communicative theory of practice. In the mid-1990s both Elaine Graham, in Great Britain, and Bonnie Miller-McLemore, from the United States of America, broadened the character of “descriptive theology” that takes the differences of power and context of lived experiences into account (Campbell-Reed & Scharen, 2013:234). This practice-orientated notion in practical theology has shifted the stigma of “applied theology” towards a scientific field in its own right that is “situated in local and concrete contexts, [that] are empirically described in order to hermeneutically provide for a contextual theological description” (Schoeman & Van den Berg, 2016:215).

In writing about pastoral care Gerkin (1991:13) makes a paradigm shift wherein practical theology is not merely aimed at the ministry practice of the church but in a broader perspective of the Church’s presence in society. This focal shift in practical theology from the theological world towards “all domains of human existence” is also supported by Schoeman and Van den Berg (2016:215). Van der Westhuizen (2008:49) describes this shift as one that makes theology public and a true interdisciplinary conversational partner.

In these broader terms Woodward and Pattison (2000:13-14) describes practical theology in the following ways:

1. A transformational activity;
2. Not just concerned with the propositional, the rational, and the logical;
3. Confessional and honest;
4. Unsystematic;
5. Truthful and committed;
6. Contextual and situationally related;

7. Socio-politically aware and committed;
8. Experiential;
9. Reflectively based;
10. Interrogative;
11. Interdisciplinary;
12. Analytical and constructive;
13. Dialectical and disciplined; and
14. Skilful and demanding.

Campbell (2000:84) makes the following observations regarding practical theology:

- The focus of practical theology is the study of social structures and individual initiatives focused on revealing God's continuing work of renewal and restitution.
- Practical theology should broaden its investigation, wider than the function of the ordained ministry, which could be limiting when seen as the norm.
- The relationship between practical theology and other theological disciplines should be seen as "lateral", rather than "linear" as it is neither inductive nor deductive.
- Practical theology can tend to a fragmented or poorly systemised nature, due to the "situation based" method it employs.
- Practical theology tends to deliver concrete proposals in its findings.

Müller (2005:73), explains that practical theology "happens whenever and wherever there is a reflection on practice, from the perspective of the experience of the presence of God". The recent turn of practical theology to engage in interdisciplinary and public conversation is in line with the postfoundational turn Van Huyssteen (1997) proposed for theology (Van Der Westhuizen, 2008:50). According to van der Westhuizen (2008:51-52), van Huyssteen's work originates "from the context of a fragmented, pluralist postmodern society", through the dialogue between natural science and theology – through the philosophical epistemology making it possible for beneficial interdisciplinary discussion. In this sense practical theology should not find it necessary to induce a form of *Christianisation* through its practices or investigations, as it should rather discover the (already present) presence of God (Ganzevoort, 2008:11-12; Schoeman & Van Den Berg, 2016:216). Grimell (2017:96) agrees with Ganzevoort and Roeland's (2014:93-94) statement that the praxis of practical theology should not only be concerned with pluralised, secularised and institutionalised contexts that only focus on

Christianity or religion, but should be open to a broader field that includes spiritual and existential practices. This makes practical theology a discipline that is concerned with the “theological study of practices with an emphasis on lived religion” (Schoeman & Van Den Berg, 2016:216).

From Van Huyssteen’s (1997:4) application for postfoundationalism to theology, Müller (2004:300-304) has applied the postfoundational frame of reference to practical theology through the seven movements he suggests. The bolded words indicate Müller’s (2004:300) emphasis in the original, indicating focus points for postfoundational practical theology:

[A] **postfoundationalist theology** wants to make **two moves**. First, it fully acknowledges **contextuality**, the epistemically crucial role of **interpreted experience**, and the way that **tradition** shapes the epistemic and nonepistemic **values** that inform our reflection about God and what some of us believe to be **God’s presence** in this world. At the same time, however, a postfoundationalist notion of rationality in theological reflection claims to **point creatively beyond the confines of the local** community, group, or culture towards a plausible form of **interdisciplinary conversation**. (Van Huyssteen, 1997:4)

This has led to the seven movements of postfoundational practical theology by Müller (2004:300) being divided in the following ways:

The context & interpreted experience

- i. A specific context is described.
- ii. In-context experiences are listened to and described.
- iii. Interpretations of experiences are made, described and developed in collaboration with “co-researchers”.

Traditions of interpretation

- iv. A description of experiences as they are continually informed by traditions of interpretation.

God’s presence

- v. A reflection on God’s presence, as it is understood and experienced in a specific situation.

Thickened through interdisciplinary investigation

- vi. A description of experience, thickened through interdisciplinary investigation.

Point beyond the local community

- vii. The development of alternative interpretations that point beyond the local community.

The praxis on how the seven movements for postfoundational practical theology have been applied within this study is discussed in the methodology.

While the narrative space is seen as a sphere of co-creation, postfoundational practical theology is seen as an ideal area for working hand-in-hand with other academic fields. Interdisciplinary work is a very important aspect of social-constructionist and narrative research, where a status of “transversal rationality” is sought after (Müller, 2009a:202-204). Research that was done with an interdisciplinary intent “has more depth and breadth than one designed by researchers from single discipline” (Mcqueen & Zimmerman, 2006:475).

The necessity for this study is justified especially by the following realities: there remains a need in narrative therapy research focused on premarital counselling, as indicated by the paucity of research; and the socio-economic situation in the South African context has had the effect that in households both husbands and wives need to be part of the workforce – placing new challenges on marriages and families in the current context (Seekings, 2014:73; Cherlin *et al.*, 2013:214), demanding premarital preparation. Premarital counselling focused on work-family balance is an ideal study within a postfoundational practical theology methodology, as postfoundationalism strives to create transversal rationalities and work within interdisciplinary discussion.

1.2 Preliminary literature study and state of research

1.2.1 Preliminary literature study and contextualisation

In a preliminary literature study three aspects pertaining to the subject of premarital counselling focused on work-family balance are investigated: the social context of pre-marriage, the influence of work on family life and exploring the concept of premarital counselling and the benefits it could have for a couple’s work-family balance.

1.2.1.1 The social context of pre-marriage

In the past 20 years vast changes have taken place in marital legislation; focusing on the inclusion and revision of previous disadvantaged groups within the Marriage Act No. 25 of 1961, with the Recognition of Customary Marriages Act and the Civil Union Act (Budlender *et al.*, 2004:4; Chambers, 2000:111; De Vos & Barnard, 2007:798). Couples have, with these vast changes, changed their ideas of getting married as well. For couples in committed relationships marriage is no longer the norm, as young people are looking for financial and job stability before marriage (Seekings, 2014:73). Many committed Christian couples have chosen to take a path away from getting married or getting married after a period of living together. The study will, however, focus on heterosexual, Christian couples that have made a choice to get married.

With the changes in South African marital legislation, processes of getting married in the church have followed suit (Du Toit, 2010:1-3). Gay unions have been legalised, but gay marriages have to be officiated by marriage officers from the Department of Home Affairs (DHA) as they are seen as civil partnerships and not seen in the same category as marriages (DHA 2015; De Vos & Barnard, 2007:798, 810). At the General Synod of the Dutch Reformed Church, held at Afrikaanse Hoër Seunsskool (Pretoria) in October 2015 a decision was made allowing reverends of the Dutch Reformed Church in South Africa to officiate at civil unions of gay couples and to enter into civil unions – if they were homosexual themselves (Algemene Sinode NG Kerk, 2015:32). Shortly after this decision, various appeals were made to this general meeting and the decision and implications thereof were stalled until a resolution is found (Janse van Rensburg, 2015:1).

My work in premarital counselling often involves equipping couples with communication skills, making them aware of possible relationship discourses, establishing values for the relationship and helping them understand how their specific relationship works. The added focus on a work-family balance would enhance the discussion on relationship values given the necessity (in numerous situations) where both parties in the relationship have a full-time job and have to give attention to work and family, not only for survival but to make their relationships meaningful.

According to a study, out of the 2,000 Protestant pastors who were questioned on their feelings about relationship counselling competency, only 39% indicated that they felt competent in marital and relationship counselling (Schumm *et al.*, 2010:2). Considering that in a study conducted by Stanley *et al.* (2001:67) as many as 75% of weddings still occur within a religious setting, the demand for pastors to equip themselves as premarital counsellors is great.

The need for basic premarital counselling becomes a greater need for couples, especially if it is considered that most couples express the need for communication skills and conflict resolution skills in their relationships (Tambling & Glebova, 2013:335).

1.2.1.2 Context of work within committed relationships

This section will investigate the work-family balance of families and the role and gaps identified within premarital counselling, within the South African context. Tambling and Glebova (2013:336) identified the balance between home and work as a matter that 57% of respondents identified as an issue within relationships; 39% of their respondents identified dual-career relationships; and 43% of couples identified spirituality as issues in their relationships.

One of the aspects that the researcher recognised as lacking in his congregation in the way we do premarital counselling with couples, is the power narratives of work within relationships. The amount of time people spend at work has a definite influence on people's relationships, according to Goodwill (Goodwill *et al.*, 2014), which also has an influence on society as a whole.

According to Goodwill (Goodwill *et al.*, 2014) large corporates in South Africa are implementing health and wellness programs for their employees that include a focus on work-family balance, as they see healthy employees as one of their greatest assets. This is a positive approach as large corporate companies in the United Kingdom are currently identifying debt and relationship problems as the top two problems affecting their workforce (Hancock, 2014).

Phillips (Goodwill *et al.*, 2014) stipulates that chronic diseases have a direct correlation to work performance. Matheson and Rosen (2012:403) in turn link "high levels of fatigue, poor or little sleep, waking up in the middle of the night with worry, or high levels of stress" to an imbalance within the work-family relationship and as a forerunner to health problems. It is evident that this could turn into a vicious cycle, detrimental to both family life and the work environment.

According to Jowitt (Goodwill *et al.*, 2014), Nestlé South Africa identified various areas to aid the health and wellness of employees and to promote healthy families within their workforce. These areas included occupational health management, financial health, emotional health, work-health balance, physical health, nutritional training, breastfeeding rooms and crèches at some of their plants.

Coverdill (2000:231-232, 234), however, identified different elements within companies' philosophy and practice that are counter-productive towards these types of health and wellness programs' implementation and functioning. Where companies could allow flexible hours, part-time work and working from home, a business philosophy of people working overtime, plenty of face-time and rigidity in schedules would counteract the good intentions of flexibility.

Furthermore, evaluations of work performance normally reward individual accomplishments and not group performance. Where promotions are at stake, the “dedicated worker” with the most overtime and face-time would be more likely to be promoted, than the “part-time worker” or the “flexible time worker”. Kirkland (2014:973) added that such wellness programs could at times be interpreted as discriminatory in terms of fitness and health goals, as some people’s physical disabilities keep them from performing in this field; this is supported by Basas (2014:1037). Consequently the critique of these programs considers that wellness programs do not necessarily result in the economic and health benefits they claim to have, do not consider individual worker needs, and may lead to a form of social control that is not desirable (Kirkland, 2014:974).

Another phenomenon detrimental to the success of work-family balance is that the controlled and more predictable work environment could also be more appealing to some as against the home environment distracted by house and school work, child care, divorce and blended families. With the ongoing gender war within the corporate setting, less time is being spent at home, and the strain felt on work-family life becomes more prevalent (Coverdill, 2000:234-235).

Work-family conflict does not only have an adverse influence on marriage and family relationships, but also in the workplace. Lower job satisfaction, fewer promotions and less loyalty towards companies are some of the effects of employees’ work-family conflict on organisations (Carroll *et al.*, 2013:531).

1.2.1.3 A focus on premarital counselling in aid of work-family balance

Premarital counselling in the Dutch Reformed Church normally would depend on the minister’s need to speak to couples about their marriage. Although some forms of marital planning and consultations exist, no formal counselling programs exist in the Dutch Reformed Church that make premarital counselling compulsory for couples. Clergy therefore sometimes use the pastoral models available from other countries.

The practice of premarital counselling in the United States of America has been structured into different programs such as PREP (the Prevention and Relationship Program), which focuses on communication and conflict skills, and helps couples in understanding commitment within the relationship as well as enhancing the couples’ friendships, while discussing different expectations (Scott *et al.*, 2013:131). Another program, PREPARE, has been recognised, together with PREP, to increase couples’ marital satisfaction and lower marital break-ups (Tambling & Glebova, 2013:330).

Premarital counselling has been incentivised by certain USA states, by giving couples substantial discounts on marital licences and reductions on the waiting periods for these

licences when they participate in approved premarital programs (Tambling & Glebova, 2013:331). South African marriages between heterosexual couples do not, however, need marital licences, and Christian couples can get married directly through their local reverend or pastor if he or she is a marriage officer. Some religious organisations and individual pastors do, however, require that couples enrol in a premarital education or counselling program, such as the Lutheran or Roman Catholic traditions (Gribble, 2011:120-121; Koch, 2016:11, 20).

Despite the USA incentives in place for premarital counselling, 30% to 50% of couples offered premarital counselling declined and less than 30% of the general population enrolled for premarital counselling or education (Markman *et al.*, 1993; Tambling & Glebova, 2013:331-332). In Tambling and Glebova's study (2013:335-337) those interested in premarital counselling preferred four to six sessions with a therapist and would prefer having these sessions after their engagement; communication skills as well as conflict resolution are seen as the most important topics. Preference would also tends towards couples seeing these relationship counsellors in sessions in which couples participate together, but not with other couples. No South African studies indicating couples' preferences and what they found most valuable were found.

Scott *et al.* (2013:135) identified the following factors as reasons why people who enrolled for the PREP premarital course later divorced: lack of commitment, infidelity, frequent arguing and conflict, marrying too young, financial problems, substance abuse and domestic violence. Parrott and Parrott (2006:20-29) identified differing expectations, idealising your partner or thinking that the challenges will go away as some of the key factors that prohibit marital happiness.

The focus respondents in Tambling and Glebova's study (2013:335) placed on the expectations they had of premarital counselling are in line with the factors Scott *et al.*'s study (2013) identified as reasons for and awareness of partner's concerns, resolving differences and stress management as essential topics in premarital counselling and education. This is in line with the most helpful topics for premarital education identified by Stanley *et al.* (2001), Markman *et al.* (2004), and Schumm *et al.* (2010:11).

From a practical theological point of view the role of cognition or mediation (Heitink, 1999:169) comes into play. Firet (1988:21) stated that the *agogisch* moment in pastoral care has to do with a particular kind of interaction and communication. This kind of communication should lead towards change or transformation (Firet 1988:125). The essence of communication should lead towards attitude change and therefore the components of understanding and of change. In order to lead someone to change, it is pivotal that the humanity of the human being is honoured. According to Firet it is about guidance and not about manipulation. It is therefore seen as the Church's task to aid couples in creating meaning for their relationships (Louw, 1985:279). Not

only should it be taken into consideration that most couples do not fully comprehend the benefits and need for premarital counselling (Tambling & Glebova, 2013:330), but also the specialised nature of premarital counselling. Ake *et al.* (2017) stress the need for study from a practical theology point of view in order to assist clergy in fulfilling this role.

This study speaks to the different needs couples may have for premarital counselling: improving communication, preventing divorce, improving and building the relationship and creating marital satisfaction. Hawkins *et al.* (2008:729) indicated that premarital education programs had no lasting effect on the marital satisfaction and decrease in conflict. This stresses the need for a premarital counselling approach that moves past a mere cognitive field where information is provided, and creates real change. The combination of a postfoundationalist understanding and the power of deconstruction that is added by the acknowledgement of the socially constructed nature of knowledge will aid couples in creating a meaningful relationship.

1.2.2 Status of research

Various researchers in the field of family therapy see premarital counselling as beneficial in decreasing the likelihood of marital instability and increasing marital satisfaction (Stahmann & Hiebert, 1997; Stanley, 2001; Stanley *et al.*, 2006). Tambling and Glebova (2013:331) add that couples who make use of premarital counselling or education have more satisfying relationships than those who do not. The narrative approach will, however, add to the conversation on premarital counselling by allowing couples to create meaning in their lives and relationships and within their context (Louw, 1985:279; Anderson 1990:137).

Some publications on marital relationships in the South African context acknowledge the influence and importance of values in relationships. Louw (1996:96-99) in his book on marriage and relationships: *Liefde is vir altyd*, qualifies marital love as mutual understanding, respect, acceptance, trust and openness. Müller (2009b:32), in turn, sets the criteria of reciprocity, durability, freedom and safety as important criteria for relationships that are confirmed by marriage. These values suggested for marital relationships open a route of value-driven premarital counselling.

Earlier South African marital and premarital publications, however, did not focus on relationship values. Knouwds' (2000:9-14) book *Bou 'n tip-top huwelik* concentrated on 32 secrets for creating unity in a relationship, whereas Mol's (1981) book *Kom ons wen saam* included temperament evaluation, decision making, communication and the value of commitment as the key to marital happiness. Nicol (1996:16), in turn, emphasised the role background plays in couples' relationships. She also invites couples to investigate alternative solutions for the

problems they face (Nicol 1996:58-65). However, these solutions are not necessarily driven by values, and tend to lean to a more empirical form of decision making.

Although research has been done on work-family balance, no research from a postfoundational practical theology perspective has been done on work-family balance and no known studies on premarital counselling with a work-family balance focus has been identified. The narrative approach will be the ideal way of integrating both couples' relationship narratives and their narratives on work-family balance.

1.2.3 Contribution of the study

The paucity of premarital counselling addressing the field of work-family balance will be addressed by this study focused on helping premarital couples integrate their work-family life. Although narrative therapy is used in a wide variety of settings, no recorded studies were found using narrative therapy for premarital counselling. The integration of this triad will be a definite contribution to the field of practical theology to help the Church. This will be done through the publication of a research report in the form of a thesis and article in an accredited peer-reviewed academic journal as well as through drafting a guideline for narrative premarital counselling in the thesis. Opening the overall narrative of premarital counselling will explore the experiences and understanding of co-researchers that could later be extended beyond the local context (Meyer, 2010:35).

1.3 Research problem, aim and objectives

1.3.1 Research question

As derived from the questions asked within the problem statement, the overarching research question is:

What is the contribution narrative counselling can make from a postfoundational practical theological approach towards work-family balance for premarital couples?

The seven movements for postfoundational practical theology of Müller (2004:300-304) guided the objectives and methodology of this study, which are explained in the first and second chapter of the thesis. These seven objectives and questions serve as guidelines in opening conversation, allowing the couples' narratives to unfold rather than dictating the thesis's chapters (Müller, 2015; Pienaar, 2014).

Questions arising from the research gap in combination of premarital counselling, work-family balance and narrative counselling:

1. What is the specific context for this study?
2. Which stories of premarital couples would be best fitted to listen to, document and describe couples' narratives on work-family balance?
3. How could the premarital couples' relationship experiences be enhanced?
4. Which literature and stories of couples will aid the investigation into creating a balanced work-family life for premarital couples?
5. What is the influence of spirituality, religion or relationship with God that plays a role in the relationships of co-researchers?
6. What value could other disciplines add to the discussion on narrative premarital counselling, focused on work-family balance?
7. How will premarital couples and clergy benefit from narrative premarital counselling as presented from a postfoundational practical theological approach?

1.3.2 Research aim and objectives

1.3.2.1 Aim

To enhance couples' work-family balance through the combination of narrative therapy and premarital counselling as informed by postfoundational practical theology.

1.3.2.2 Primary objectives

From Van Huyssteen's (1997:4) application for postfoundationalism to theology, Müller (2004:300-304) has applied the postfoundational frame of reference to practical theology, which is used in the methodology (1.5.2) of this study. The seven movements Müller (2004:300) identified for postfoundational practical theology will be used as objectives for this study:

i. A specific context for research in postfoundational practical theology is described

The context of this research (Müller, 2004:301) is in the first instance the work-family balance of premarital couples. Relationships between the couple and their work narratives will be explored, as well as the alternative narratives and meaning they form within these relationships.

ii. Listen to, document and describe in-context experiences of premarital couples

Research, based on the narrative approach, is done through narrative counselling (Müller, 2004:301). Stories of relationships and the influence of work on family life are listened to in order to gain an understanding of the in-context experiences of couples' relationship values.

iii. Describe, develop and interpret experiences of premarital couples with their collaboration as co-researchers

Müller (2004:302) states that within this research approach, researchers are not only interested in descriptions of experiences, but are especially focused on the interpretations of their co-researchers. During this phase, the researcher is not merely looking for data, but for meaning given by the co-researchers. This is a process of empowerment for couples.

iv. Collaborative and interpretive thickening of couples' relationship narratives as they are continually informed by theological and other traditions of interpretation

Specific discourses exist within communities concerning family life and work (Demasure & Müller, 2006:413; Müller, 2004:302). The primary researcher and co-researchers will collaboratively identify how their relationships are influenced by these discourses. Through consulting literature on work-family balance, narrative counselling and premarital counselling the description of premarital couples' relationships will be further evolved.

v. Reflection on the religious and spiritual influences and experiences of the presence of God in couples' relationships

Although not a forced effort, listening to the experiences of God's presence within relationships will come naturally within the context of premarital counselling within a church setting. This should also be included in the social-constructionist approach. As counsellor, reverend and researcher the researcher's own understanding of God's presence could add a valuable influence to the conversation (Müller, 2004:303).

vi. Thicken description and investigation into premarital couples' work-life balance narratives through interdisciplinary investigation

Practical theology is an ideal liminal space for interdisciplinary conversation, which can help the Church engage with other fields of study (Van Huyssteen, 2000:428-429). This includes conversation with other fields of study and backgrounds to develop a thicker description on couples' narratives and open conversation. Careful listening is involved to create an equal transversal space (Müller, 2004:303).

vii. Develop alternative interpretations that point beyond the logical understanding of work-family balance for premarital couples

The narrative approach welcomes deconstruction of negative discourses and the creation of new preferred realities (Freedman & Combs, 1996:42-43). Since practical theology aims to move beyond mere description and interpretation of phenomenon and experiences, postfoundational practical theology aims to create new meaning through co-creation (Müller, 2004:304). This objective holds the ideal of helping premarital couples with their work-family narrative and integration of their relationship values. Furthermore, extending the narrative approach in support of premarital counselling will aid reverends in their counselling sessions with couples.

1.3.2.3 Dissemination

- Publication of research report in the form of a thesis and article in an accredited peer-reviewed academic journal; and
- Drafting a guideline to be used in narrative premarital counselling for clergy to use.

1.4 Central theoretical argument

The central theoretical argument is that premarital couples' work-family balance and their relationship will benefit from narrative premarital counselling as informed by postfoundational practical theology.

1.5 Research design and methodology

In this narrative study, the insights of Müller's (1996b:22) view will be utilised, that our lives and identities are constructed and interpreted by the stories we choose to tell about our lives. It is, therefore, proposed that the work and family stories of premarital couples will have an impact on their relationship. According to Demasure and Müller's (2006:412) hermeneutic interpretation of Ricœur, couples' interpretation of their stories of the past will influence how they see their future together. This study will focus on how couples tell and live their stories – how they integrate their family stories in their relationship and how they combine work and family narratives.

1.5.1 Research design

In the research methodology of this study, qualitative research will be used as the primary point of view. Narrative research will be discussed and proposed as part of research methodology. Broadly the research can be seen as following a qualitative design – more specifically a critical qualitative design (Hickson, 2016:381).

Struwig and Stead (2007:12-13) describe four specific characteristics for qualitative research:

- The participant's (co-researcher's) perspective is distinct from the researcher's.
- Research is contextual.
- The process is an action of the research, and understanding change over time is imperative.
- Researchers are flexible and guided by their co-researchers to remain open to unexpected events.

Within the postfoundationalist view of social constructionism, a quantitative study, especially with the goal of research being empirical and positivistic, would not be suitable. When different researchers achieve different findings, it should not be seen as problematic for research, as knowledge – as seen from a postmodern view – is contextual and situational. A qualitative study focused on the telling of unique stories, situated within a specific context, would, therefore, be better fitted for study within a social-constructionist paradigm (Rubin & Rubin, 2005:27).

Situated in postfoundational theology (Van Huyssteen, 1997:4; Schrag, 1994), a social-constructionist view on premarital narrative counselling has been used. More importantly, it involves a practical theological notion of postfoundationalism (Muller, 2004:300-304), in which narratives are subsumed. The design is strongly connected to the seven movements of postfoundational practical theology. Not just any narrative research approach is followed as part of the design but an interpretive interdisciplinary and collaborative approach as informed originally by what is technically referred to as Narrative Therapy (Demasure & Müller, 2006:413; Morgan, 2000:2; Freedman & Combs, 1996:xvii-1). The ideas of Narrative Therapy have, since its origins in the 1980s, been influential in many settings, from education, postmodern and poststructuralist research, organisational development and other areas. Though narratives are in research not used for therapeutic ends it is an apt approach to evoke the quality of experience emphasised in qualitative research.

The narrative approach used in this study is a respected form of qualitative research, used in various disciplines of study (McQueen & Zimmerman, 2006:475). This enables the researcher to do research within the postmodern paradigm of social constructionism. Subjective integrity, rather than objective truth or knowledge, is used and acknowledges the researcher's presence and influence within the process of research – instead of denying and negating the researcher's biases (Müller, *et al.*, 2001:77).

The narrative researcher does not work with a hypothesis of confirmation or disconfirmation. Instead, he or she tries to understand how people construct their lives within their socio-cultural context. Within narrative research people and their stories are important, and they are not seen as mere research subjects: they are co-researchers (Müller *et al.*, 2001:79).

In narrative research, the meaning of co-researchers' stories plays an integral part. Accurate portrayal of co-researchers' stories and their interpretation are therefore critical and should be correlated with respondents for the correct intention and meaning. Being in constant conversation with co-researchers will ensure that authenticity takes priority.

As primary researcher, I have constantly reflected on and facilitated various couples' stories of their relationships. When the co-researchers share their stories of their relationship and the meaning of work-life together with their relationship story, it aids the storyline and identity of their relationships (Müller *et al.*, 2001:80-83). It remained, however, the co-researchers' decision whether the stories they told about their relationships were relevant (Müller, 2000). Narrative research is not just concerned with the collection of data; it is rather focused on the meaning that co-researchers link to these stories.

Within a qualitative study, the different, sometimes conflicting, realities of the same story could be told and still be of value and true. Considering this, an ideal perspective on research within the narrative approach would be the research method of qualitative research. Rather than looking for the averages between narratives, qualitative research allows for reporting on specific events and meaning, which aids in creating an understanding of the specific interpretation of what respondents (in narrative study called co-researchers) perceive (Rubin & Rubin, 2005:27-28).

1.5.2 Research methods

Considering the seven movements for postfoundational practical theology (Müller, 2004:300-304) used for this study (indicated as the research objectives in 1.3.2.2), the following methods have been used to adhere to the different movements:

A specific context is described

Methods used:

- Having informal interviews with at least five premarital couples;
- Interpreting of interviews on a social-constructionist basis; and
- Doing research on existing narrative counselling, premarital counselling and work-family balance.

In-context experiences are listened to and described

Methods used:

- Through narrative counselling, help couples formulate integrative narratives of their relationship identity and the influence of their work on their relationship.
- Help couples to integrate relationship narratives into a working method of communication within their relationship.

Interpretations of experiences are made, described and developed in collaboration with co-researchers

Methods used:

- Interpretation is made through constant feedback loops with co-researchers collaboration.
- An interdisciplinary team is involved in aid of reflection and sharing of their work-family experience.

A description of experiences as it is continually informed by theological and other traditions of interpretation

Methods used:

- Discourse analysis;
- Reflection with an interdisciplinary team, and identification of contextual discourses in the couples' narratives;
- Literature review on narrative therapy, premarital counselling and work-family balance; and
- Exploration of the influence of Biblical social-science background on work-family balance.

A reflection on the religious and spiritual aspects – experiences of the presence of God

Methods used:

- When talking about their marriage and proposed wedding day, couples will naturally include “God talk” and describe their relationship with God, individually and in their relationship.
- Exploration of couples' experience of faith and God on their relationship.

A description of experience thickened through interdisciplinary investigation

Methods used:

- An interdisciplinary team from various fields, including female and married homemakers, CEOs, small business owners, professionals, divorcées and human resources is involved.
- They reflect on the relationship and work-family narratives of the couples
- Feedback in the form of reflective questions (Van Der Westhuizen, 2010:3) is given back to the initial couples in order to reflect on possible discourses and insights the different fields may add to the discussion of work-family balance.

The development of alternative interpretations that point beyond the local community

Methods used:

- Reflection by co-researchers on questions asked by the interdisciplinary team; and
- Presentation of a guideline for narrative premarital counselling including a focus on work-family balance.

1.5.2.1 Interviews

Qualitative interviews recognise the humanness of the primary researcher and the co-researchers. This acknowledges that people will not be seen as objects of study, but as beings with feelings, thoughts, personality and experiences. It also opens up room for reflection on interviews, to consider if the researcher heard correctly and to reflect on people's experience of the interview (Rubin & Rubin, 2005:30-31).

Towards the above end, narrative interviews can be seen as a form of participatory action-research, but is strongly situated in deconstructive listening and co-creation through the use of images and metaphors whereby alternative counter-dominant stories are developed. In the narrative approach the term deconstruction is seen in a positive light as the process of narrative therapy and deconstruction – through externalisation – adds value and the locus of power back to conversation partners. As will be discussed in the ethical considerations (1.6) the risk level of a medium risk, according to the risk-benefit ratio scale of Greeff (2016:11) is actually minimised through the process of deconstruction and co-creation of new understanding together with couples.

This research takes place in the context of premarital counselling. Metaphors and externalisation come forward strongly whereas deconstruction is part of the continuing process informed by interviews, interdisciplinary inquiry and literature. Since the research is research

and not merely premarital counselling the interviews particularly revolve around values, communication, and work and family balance stories. Follow-up questions are posted spontaneously – as it depends on what respondents or co-researchers bring to the table within the setting of narrative premarital counselling.

In addition to the above-mentioned literature and scientific research on the topics of narrative counselling, premarital counselling and work-family balance are also used in an effort to thicken the narratives of premarital narrative counselling. This is used in reflection upon the discourses couples face concerning work-family balance and will also thicken the research narrative.

1.5.2.2 Narrative therapy as research

Various fields, including psychology (Kendall *et al.*, 1999; Reiss, 1991), behavioural marital therapy (Dunn & Schwebel, 1995) and music therapy (Wheeler, 2005), have used narrative therapy as a form of research. The study includes premarital narrative therapy as a vehicle to create a workable work-family balance for co-researchers (in narrative therapy also called “conversation partners”).

The narrative therapist, and in this case researcher, plays the role of a facilitator giving commentary and asking questions in order to expose discourse and add meaning to metaphors of relationship and work. Where “problem stories” are found, the search for new stories and metaphors begins in order to create an alternative future story.

In the process of externalisation and the telling of different stories, the process of deconstructing various discourses and narratives is used. The primary focus is to empower the co-researchers and their relationships, through the process of narrative premarital counselling. Clergy and other relationship counsellors will also benefit, through the insights of this study. The process of searching for alternate stories and alternative meaning will be the greatest learning curve for all parties involved. If research is properly contextualised, new avenues in broader contexts could be explored (Visser, 2009:24).

The scope for conversation will be limited to couples’ relationship values, communication skills, work narratives and the work and family balance. Although a basic range exists, as to which conversations are relevant to the study, follow-up questions are posted spontaneously – as it depends on what respondents or co-researchers bring to the table within the setting of narrative premarital counselling.

Questions asked primarily focus on the meaning of what respondents say and how it influences their identity and stories. The other areas’ questions focused on personal emotions, opinions, experiences, knowledge and the integration of meaning of these facets on group and personal

identity. The data collected focuses on the stories of co-researchers, especially the stories they find relevant to their situation. These stories narratively connect with respondents' realities or identities that they link to these situations or stories. These perceptions and resulting behaviour have a direct influence on a person's engagement and interaction within various fields (Burr, 2003:127).

1.5.2.3 Research setting

For data collection, the premises of Dutch Reformed Church Wierdapark was used as setting for interviews and premarital counselling of couples intending to get married, with the informed consent of the couples and the authorisation of the church council.

1.5.2.4 Method of data collection

Responsive, semi-structured couple interviews, within a combination of life history and focus group setting (Rubin & Rubin, 1995:27), were used in this study. This enabled couples to share their experiences of their relationship, how the intended marriage would change their work and family life, what stories of the past influences their future and how they imagine their future story would look like.

1.5.2.4.1 Population, sampling, sample and sample size

i. Population

Relevant populations for this study were engaged, namely working couples, as they would be the ideal candidates for questioning and implementing a qualitative narrative study on anticipated work-family balance. Although unmarried couples living together could also have serious and meaningful relationships, engaged couples with the intention of getting married form an ideal sample group. Within a space of co-creation couples are able to establish their relationship values and boundaries.

Reflection from an interdisciplinary group, consisting of female and married homemakers, CEOs, small business owners, professionals, divorced people and human resources personnel added to transversality of the study and enhanced the interpretation of couples' relationship narratives.

ii. Sample size and motivation

The perspectives of co-researchers are a crucial aspect of qualitative research. Understanding and exploring co-researchers' experience of particular phenomena is the core motivation of study within qualitative research.

The following interviews were held:

- Qualitative semi-structured interviews with not more than five premarital couples that reported that they wanted to get married, with the focus of the discussion on their relationship and the influence their work-life has on their relationship.
- Focus group discussions with an interdisciplinary team, consisting of female and married homemakers, CEOs, small business owners, professionals, divorcées and human resources personnel. Each added to the discussion the specific important focus points that his or her field of study or background and experience thereof would require, in order to create a broad landscape of meaning. This interdisciplinary team was divided into different groups and reflected on the relationship and work-family narratives of the couples. These focus group discussions were held electronically or physically, depending on the availability of the interdisciplinary team.
- Feedback in the form of reflective questions (Van der Westhuizen, 2010:3), within these groups, was given back to the initial couples in order to reflect on possible discourses and insights the different fields may add to the discussion of work-family balance.

iii. Process of sample recruitment

Couples reporting to the researcher's congregation (Dutch Reformed Church Wierdapark) with the intention of getting married were approached and asked if their premarital counselling sessions could be used as part of this doctoral study on work-family balance and premarital counselling.

The interdisciplinary team was approached, based on the role they played in their different vocations.

iv. Sampling method

Any couple in the specified population was eligible for inclusion. The sampling therefore was based on non-probability convenience sampling. Based on the methodology of the study that seeks depth, the sample size should not be big.

The initial makeup of the interdisciplinary team was not crucial. The content of the co-researchers' conversations dictated who the interdisciplinary team members should be. Their function was to help develop rich descriptions of the stories of the co-researchers but not from a modernist diagnostic perspective. The group was also balanced to try to include an equal number of men and women. It can therefore in part be seen as contextual purposive sampling.

Inclusion criteria

Premarital heterosexual couples, aged between 25 and 35 years, living in the Centurion or Pretoria, Gauteng area that could attend four interviews and who could report back on the follow-up questions from the interdisciplinary team fitted the inclusion criteria. The interdisciplinary team was chosen to represent various fields.

Exclusion criteria

Homosexual couples and couples living together, without an intention of marriage did not fit the criteria for this study. Homosexual couples who wanted to marry could be included but that took the research into a different direction, which the study did not want to inquire about.

v. Trustworthiness (qualitative studies)

The narrative approach is concerned with the creation and retelling of stories, rather than searching for a saturation point for generalising data. The individual stories told should, therefore, faithful to qualitative study, be understood as the development of certain stories in a specific context that is described (Müller, 2004:296). The relevance of the research has in the end more to do with verisimilitude than with generalisability.

1.5.2.5 Data analysis method

Conversations, with co-researchers' consent, were recorded as a form of reference when reflecting on sessions and for accountability in being true to narrative practice. The recorded interviews aided the primary researcher in using the co-researchers' own language, adding value given to the interpretation of co-researchers' unique understanding. Conversation with co-researchers about their intended meaning of language was important; therefore writing the dissertation has been a process of giving feedback to the couples and correlating the interpreted meaning of what co-researchers intended with their stories. Reflection on the premarital counselling sessions was written down and handed to the co-researchers to confirm that what they meant to say was accurately conveyed.

Morgan (2000:85-99) and Patton (1990:11, 282) agree that written documents such as diaries, official documents and letters are of importance and could aid narrative reflection if the meaning of those documents is influential on respondents' identities. These documents then aid qualitative research and can be used as sources.

1.5.2.5.1 Narrative approach

The methodology does not encourage referring to people's stories as data. Be that as it may, data analysis is seen in this research paradigm not as discovering truth but actually "creating" or "constructing" in the analysis. The method would then technically be called interpretive conversation and discourse analysis.

To explain further: the narrative approach is positioned within a postfoundational framework and broadly within a postmodern frame of reference. The collection and evaluation of research data, therefore, should be done with an intent of being socially constructed. My research participants (in the narrative approach called: co-researchers) were considered as experts on their own stories and the primary interpreters of the relationships they engage in. They are not seen as "objects of research" or simply respondents but rather co-creators or co-researchers, whose understanding of their own stories was as important as other voices in my research. Co-researchers, therefore, should not be pathologised or victimised, as they were an integral part of the research and should be respected as such (Graham, 2000:112).

This implies that within the narrative approach, certain key concepts are paramount and are explained as part of the positioning for this study. Anderson and Goolishian's (1992:26) reference to a "not-knowing position" underlines the inquisitiveness required for a narrative study. Interdisciplinarity or transversality (Müller, 2009a:204) aids the narrative approach in taking hands with other fields of study in search of liminal spaces to make changes within a system practically viable. The search for stories of meaning (Morgan, 2000:6) aids people within this liminal spaces to create new stories and possibilities for the future.

1.5.2.5.2 Analysis in narrative research

Although this study was focused on narrative therapy with premarital couples, the goal was rather to listen to their stories, to allow change to emerge rather than creating change. Listening and retelling of stories created a space for stories and their interpretation to evolve. Change happens through co-creation and is not a one-sided decision. Where the "action-research model" is focused on bringing change from the researcher's side, narrative research sees such an intervention as a power discourse, which should be avoided (Human, 2003:41).

The "not-knowing position" (Anderson & Goolishian, 1992:28) is an integral stance in the narrative approach. "Not-knowing" means that participants are entering a space with the primary researcher in which one looks at the familial, societal and cultural constructions of the co-researchers' stories. The co-researchers allow a primary researcher insight into their life stories, and the researcher is invited to see how these stories form part of the co-researcher's reality.

The danger in research as well as in therapy could be that the researcher decides which stories are relevant and should be told. Within the narrative approach, co-researchers are invited to tell their own stories and take a decision on the relevance of their stories for their situation. The primary researcher becomes a facilitator of the space where these stories are told (Human, 2003:42).

Conclusions made in narrative research and within narrative therapy should also be done from a stance of social constructionism as it reveals discourses and power relations (Demasure & Müller, 2006:413). Conversation with different co-researchers and conversation partners are sought, before conclusions are made. The co-researchers' interpretation of their partners and their own stories of work and family life should be respected. Narratives should be reflected back towards the co-researcher to understand fully what they originally intended by what was said, and to give them the opportunity of a re-imagined future story. The conclusions they make will, therefore, influence the path they choose in their relationship metaphors. Therefore statistical analysis is not needed.

1.5.2.6 Role of the researcher

1.5.2.6.1 Subjective integrity

The primary researcher should be aware of his or her own discourses, within this research paradigm, in order not to steer the conversation towards his or her preferred direction. This is the basis of subjective integrity, which should be respected within narrative conversation (Freedman & Combs, 1996:40-41). Pienaar (2012:1) argues that subjective integrity leads the practical theologian to realise that they do not bring a clean slate when engaging with people. This urges researchers and counsellors to be sensitive to discourses of power, which might be part of their role or presence.

Pienaar (2012:3) calls this position of subjective integrity an intentional decentralisation, where the practical theologian or narrative therapist in the role of facilitator, coach or therapist is unable to dissociate from previous experiences or knowledge but chooses to acknowledge their influence on his or her point of view. This is important to uphold in the study as the primary researcher is a minister for the couples. The positive contribution, however, is that couples show more openness when talking about their lives as some level of trust already exists. Haugaard (2016:1) suggests that accountability as a narrative therapist is dependent on recognising the position from which we understand other's lives and problems.

1.5.2.6.2 Decentralised from psychotherapeutic stigma

Haugaard (2016:2) identified a problem when narrative therapy is compared to a psychotherapeutic expectation, as the narrative approach loses its essence when used as a “quasi-medical practice of applying techniques for the manipulation of individual minds”.

Authentic to the narrative approach of narrative therapy a move beyond taken-for-granted truths, and positivistic discourse is taken to allow conversation partners to steer away from the labelling and limiting avenues the medical model of therapy provides for new realities (Pienaar, 2014).

Apart from the above the usual ethical considerations apply, as referred to throughout.

1.6 Ethical considerations

Ethical clearance for the study was obtained from the North-West University⁶. Rubin and Rubin (1995:95) describe research ethics as the way trustworthy information is acquired and disseminated. This should be done in a way that causes no harm to those being studied. They described the following ethical obligations in research:

- Avoid deception.
- Ask permission.
- Be honest about the intended use of the research.
- Do not hurt co-researchers in any way.
- Warn co-researchers about something they said that might get them in trouble.
- Do not use any material for your own benefit.

Permission from the church council was received to use the premarital counselling sessions used in the study as part of the research. The ethical guidelines of the North-West University, stating that permission should be granted by the co-researchers taking part in this study, was followed. An ethical consent form was given to co-researchers to sign before the commencement of any interviews, and they were also be given the opportunity to approve the summaries as a true reflection of the discussions. The interdisciplinary team signed a confidentiality and privacy agreement.

In the methodology of this research, co-researchers were constantly part of the process. Feedback was given to them to confirm that what was written had their approval. This was done

⁶ Ethical clearance number: **NWU-00448-17-S6**.

so that the primary research could provide a true reflection of the discussions in counselling sessions and to limit the primary researcher's own bias.

Co-researchers' names have been changed to respect their privacy and anonymity.

1.6.1 Risk level

According to the risk-benefit ratio scale of Greeff (2016:11) and the scale of the University of Stellenbosch' Humanities Ethics Committee, the study holds a medium likelihood of trivial harm as only temporary discomfort could be anticipated when adult co-researchers reflect on their personal stories of the past and the future.

If such a discomfort is experienced – when respondents think about situations or stories of grief or loss – in their reflection on previous relationships or relationships with parents or work, the interviewer in the role of counsellor reframed these narratives to create a positive outcome for the couple and their relationship.

1.6.2 What was expected of participants during data gathering?

Four interviews of approximately an hour to an hour-and-a-half took place, as well as a follow-up reflection on the interdisciplinary team's review of respondents' narratives. The interdisciplinary team had to reflect and pose questions based on the interviews with couples.

1.6.3 Probable experience of the participants

The couples, as part of the premarital counselling they received from their congregation, reflected on their personal as well as relationship values. They also discussed the influence work has on their relationship and any other relationships that might have an impact on their relationship.

1.6.4 Risks and precautions

The possible risk in the study only entailed a temporary psychological discomfort when respondents might reflect on negative situations. These stories might be needed for the couple to reinterpret their current situation. The re-framing of such situations was beneficial for the couples and individuals as it assisted them in not repeating such situations and also assisted them to frame their relationship identity to become more resilient to such threats.

1.6.5 Benefits for participants

Participants will directly benefit through an integrated and balanced work-family life. Premarital couples' communication skills will improve, and the discussions will create a sense of mindfulness on the importance of family life and the integration of relationship values.

The indirect benefits or benefits for society as a whole and the narrative field of research include the creation of a movement for premarital counselling in the narrative approach. Families will benefit from an integrated work and family life. Corporate environments may gain knowledge from work-family balance research; this research could be applied to corporate facilitation for employee well-being.

1.6.6 Risk/benefit ratio analysis

In the proposed study the risk is significantly outweighed by the benefits, as respondents will not be adversely affected by psychological inconvenience. The couples and the interdisciplinary team know me in the setting of a narrative counsellor and reverend. From previous narrative counselling, this type of counselling has not proven to cause any harm.

Participants of the study may experience temporary psychological discomfort, but will, however, benefit through the empowering integration of a balanced work-family life through the use of externalisation (as discussed in 2.5.1.1), the improvement of communication skills in premarital couples and the creation of mindfulness of the importance of family life and the integration of relationship values.

Society and the academic field will benefit by the creation of a path for narrative premarital counselling, which will aid families in the integration of work and family life. Corporate environments may benefit from work-family balance research, which in turn will aid corporate facilitation for employee well-being.

1.6.7 Expertise, skills and legal competencies

The primary researcher completed an MA degree in Pastoral Family Therapy through the University of Pretoria with the Narrative Approach as Epistemology. This qualifies him as a narrative counsellor and someone that will be able to apply narrative counselling to premarital counselling and work-family balance.

1.6.8 Facilities

Interviews with the couples were held at an office of the Dutch Reformed Church Wierdapark, with the approval of the church council. The premises are approved for public gatherings and

adhere to all reasonable precautions for health and safety as set out by the Municipality of Tshwane.

1.6.9 Goodwill permission/consent

The church council of Dutch Reformed Church Wierdapark approved the primary researcher's application for further study and that he may use the premarital counselling sessions for couples that the church ministers to, for the intended study.

1.6.10 Criteria for participant selection and recruitment

The study was limited to premarital couples within the age range of 25 to 35 years, as the study focuses on premarital couples with the same spectrum of life and work expectations as a requirement for respondents for the study. Couples were available for four interviews held in the Centurion area where Dutch Reformed Church Wierdapark is located. A choice for heterosexual couples for the study was made, as ministers of religion cannot officiate civil unions in South Africa and homosexual couples would not be in the same spectrum of life and work expectations as described earlier.

1.6.11 Participant recruitment

Couples presenting themselves for premarital counselling before their wedding (between January 2015 and October 2015) were asked whether they are interested in participating in the study. The interdisciplinary team was approached on the basis of their discipline and were voluntarily included as part of the interdisciplinary team.

1.6.12 Informed consent (consent, permission, assent and dissent)

Trust between the primary and co-researchers is crucial in this medium risk research process. Ethically, the primary researcher should refrain from deception and written permission was asked to record respondents' conversation. Honesty regarding the goal of intended research and precautions against conversation partners' emotional, physical and financial damage because of the study was taken. Conversation partners were instructed that participation was voluntary and that they could withdraw participation from this study at any given time, especially if their involvement brought something to light that could bring them into danger or in trouble with authorities (Rubin & Rubin, 1995:94). The latter could, however, have an influence on reflection and findings of the study. This, however, was never the case in the study.

The researcher foresaw no emotional or physical harm because of interviews that were held and none were reported. Conversations might, however, refer to previous situations that

respondents found to be traumatic, and these situations were, however, handled in a manner faithful to the narrative counselling approach as stated in the positioning of this proposal and therefore handled as such.

Interviews were held at the premises of the Dutch Reformed Church Wierdapark as part of premarital counselling. Interdisciplinary discussions took place through electronic communication. Conversation partners were also instructed that participation was voluntary and that they could withdraw participation from this study at any given time. As no other parties were involved in transcribing or summarising of the interviews, no indemnity was required.

Anonymity and confidentiality was respected by everyone involved; therefore respondents had the right to anonymity by not having their names or identifiable characteristics mentioned (Elliott, 2005:141-143). All respondents were of a legally accountable age and are fully bilingual in both Afrikaans and English.

The primary researcher asked for consent to the use of conversational data and the interdisciplinary discussion before interviews commenced. A letter of informed consent was filled in by all respondents, including the interdisciplinary team, in which they gave permission that their stories and the study's conversations might be used for the purpose of a thesis and research article.

1.6.13 Incentives and/or remuneration of participants

To strengthen the basis of qualitative research, the positive impact on couples' relationships would be a greater incentive than being reimbursed. Reimbursement might influence data wherein respondents might give answers which they anticipated the researcher wanted for the study. Respondents volunteered to take part in the research and were not reimbursed.

1.6.14 Announcement/dissemination of study results to participants

After the initial conversations, a summary was made available to the interdisciplinary team, which in turn posted questions from their discipline to the couples for reflection on couples' relationship metaphors and narratives. With the help of electronic email communication, the couples in turn, had a chance to answer the questions posted to them.

Dissemination of study results will be announced through publication of the research report. This has been done through this thesis and an article will be submitted to an accredited South African journal, and a guideline will be drafted to be used in narrative premarital counselling for churches to use.

1.6.15 Privacy and confidentiality

Anonymity and confidentiality were respected towards and by all parties involved; therefore respondents had the right to anonymity by not having their names or identifiable characteristics mentioned. Respondents' names were substituted with a pseudonym and any identifying information kept confidential to respect respondents' privacy.

1.6.16 Management, storage and destruction of data

During the interviews with the couples, the sessions were audio recorded on a cellular phone with the authorisation and consent of couples. A summarising report was written on the couples' interviews, with pseudonyms given to couples, protecting their identity. Recordings and reports were saved in protected cloud storage and on the researcher's personal computer, protected with a password. Data will be stored for five years, and then erased. Only the primary researcher has access to manage the stored data. All data were electronically recorded except for the hard copies provided to the Practical Theology department of the North-West University, which will be stored and destroyed according to university guidelines.

1.6.17 Monitoring of research

Through the well-known process of narrative therapy, the couples externalised their relationship to create its own identity. The design and methodology were structured in accordance with postfoundational practical theology guidelines and were adhered to throughout the study.

Participants engaged in this study willingly and signed the informed consent form. The study was conducted in agreement with the ethical code of the North-West University, and the study leader was informed of all progress of the study and engaged for feedback throughout.

Necessary amendments to the process were taken under advisement by the study leader. No serious incidents were reported to the study leader for advisement.

1.6.18 Justification of sample size

In a qualitative study in the narrative approach a strong focus is placed on describing in-context situations, in this case, the narratives of couples' relationships. The narratives explored is therefore limited to the situation of those couples. The description of five different couples relationship narratives will, therefore, be told.

1.6.19 Method of randomisation

The study sampling does not involve probability sampling, since randomisation is not applicable. As mentioned the study involves a mixture of convenient and purposive sampling.

CHAPTER 2 DEVELOPMENT OF THE CONTEXT

Postfoundational practical theology is serious about practical theology being a contextual theology (Müller, 2005:75). Context, as described in postfoundational practical theology, requires specific people whose lives and relationships are honoured by a well-suited narrative approach for a proper description in the process of knowledge creation (Müller, 2004:294). A narrative paradigm (as part of a postfoundational notion of practical theology) is therefore intimately part of the context. The stories of specific lives become the context.

As a space of theology to enter into conversation with other fields of study the voice of social-science study on the Biblical background of marriage and its influence on work in Biblical times and the work of practical theologians on marriage are also invited into conversation to better describe the field of meaning for this study. The context is further explored by listening to the real-life experience of the couples that created their metaphors of their respective relationships (Müller, 2009a:221). This was done to reflect on the influence work has on their family life.

This chapter focuses on the second, third and fourth movements for practical theology study within the postfoundational sphere, as set out by Müller (2004:300). The second movement focuses on listening to and describing in-context experiences, the third movement interprets those experiences, describes and develops them further and the fourth movement considers traditions of interpretation, which in this chapter are the literature review and a social-science study on the Biblical background of marriage and its influence on work in Biblical times. The context for the study is explored through the literature review in the PESTLE⁷ study, investigating the field of work-family balance and is further developed in this chapter through the use of theological input and interviews with couples (co-researchers).

Before we are able to listen to the different voices that share their story on work and family balance it is important to recognise how knowledge is acquired in the postfoundational approach to practical theology. The epistemology of social constructionism, acknowledging these different voices, is therefore important.

2.1 Social constructionism

Meyer (2010:74-75) described the evolution of practical theology and family therapy from a theory of systems and structure to a paradigm of social constructionism. She states that the field of family therapy evolved from a locus of power (using a modernistic epistemology) where the therapist analysed their patients. The examples of psychoanalysis and intrapsychic conflict

⁷ PESTLE is an acronym for 'political, economic, social, technological, legal and environmental'. PESTLE analysis is discussed in detail in section 2.2.

within individuals that was proposed by Sigmund Freud were used for a long time. Later the social context of people was accounted for, opening therapy up to a more postmodern way of viewing reality. From there therapy will not only account for the “internal processes and intrapsychic dynamics”, but also include the “familial and social context” of human behaviour.

Structuralism or the theory of systems may have the effect that people and family members are seen as part of an inflexible, geometrical arrangement, creating the notion that the family therapist’s work is to rearrange, strengthen or loosen certain social and familial structures. Freedman and Combs (1996:2) state that the disadvantage of such a perspective could be that the ever-changing relational aspects of people are negated and will, therefore, oversimplify the relationships between people and even dehumanise and objectify them.

Goldenberg and Goldenberg (2012:14), however, identified recurring patterns of individuals’ interaction between people within a system, as a positive contribution which system theory made towards family therapy. Freedman and Combs (1996:2) agreed with this supplementation of the systems metaphor, but have stated that it might limit one’s thinking when trying to generalise the individual’s interaction into a larger sociological grouping, such as cultural, traditional or political societal groupings.

Meyer (2010:77) stated that in the 1950s the follow-up of systemic theory thinking was a cybernetic system of functioning. The *first-order cybernetics* system, as a “circular” or “feedback” system, studied how families or closed social groups managed to use self-regulating feedback systems to maintain their balance and stability (Freedman & Combs, 1996:2-5; Goldenberg & Goldenberg, 2012:17). Broecker and Guddemi (2007:902) explained that the feedback loops of first-order cybernetics would react either negatively or positively, depending on the values and goals of the system.

Meyer (2010:77) credits the system theory’s focus on patterns in the development of *first-order cybernetics*, as it created a shift in the traditional modernistic understanding of what is “known” and what is considered as “knowledge”. Family therapy from this perspective of positive and negative feedback loops, would involve having the group or family agree on ways of interrupting the family’s patterns that produce unwanted outcomes and reinforce patterns that develop and sustain the wanted outcomes.

Freedman and Combs (1996:2) identified the limitation of this form of therapy, as it denied the influence of the therapist on the system and presupposed that the therapist is “separate from and able to control families, that they can make detached, objective assessments of what is wrong and fix problems in a way analogous to the way of a mechanic fixes a malfunctioning engine”.

Freedman and Combs (1996:5) added that the focus of this approach was too heavily focused on the “dysfunctional” and what is wrong in people’s lives, and that it limited the view of other contributing factors that might have added to people’s experience of dissatisfaction or frustration.

The *second-order cybernetic* model was less control-orientated and places the therapist inside the dynamics or processes of the social group or family and focused patterns of specific meaning for the people involved (Meyer, 2010:78).

The *second-order cybernetic* approach has the following qualities:

- The idea of an outside observer (usually understood as the therapist) is denied, as that person will inevitably take part in the changing of the system (Goldenberg & Goldenberg, 2012:21).
- The therapist will, by taking part in the system, be changed by the system him- or herself (Goldenberg & Goldenberg, 2012:21).
- The therapist should be aware that each person in the group has their own perspective, view of reality and descriptions of this reality (Meyer, 2010:78).
- The group’s reality will, therefore, be the “agreed-upon consensus that occurs through the social interaction of its members” (Goldenberg & Goldenberg, 2012:21).
- The therapist and the social group or family are together actively involved in the process of creating new meaning and restructuring (Meyer, 2010:79).
- The relationship between the therapist and the social group or family is non-hierarchical (Meyer, 2010:79).

This co-construction of a new reality has led the way for the formation of social constructionism. Given the similarities in the epistemology of narrative therapy and narrative research (as relevant to narrative research), Meyer (2010:79) describes that in the setting of therapy a therapist should invite his or her conversation partner, the family or group members into a process of co-constructing that will bring forth a new way forward or another way of perceiving their available choices. This will allow new perspectives to emerge from the conversation.

Describing social constructionism as an epistemology describes the way in which knowledge is collected, and also underlines the importance of knowledge in creating reality. Van der Westhuizen (2008:29) explains that knowledge is created in a constructionist way, knowledge is created socially – in communities and cultures. In describing the ontological part of social constructionism, reality is formed by the language we choose to describe phenomena, perception and experience (Burr, 2003:92).

Burr (2002:3-4) further explains that knowledge and understanding are culturally and socially specific. People construct their reality through daily interaction with each other. Van der Westhuizen (2008:29-31) describes the four basic understandings in social constructionism:

- Knowledge is constructed socially.
- Social constructionism has a critical view on absolute knowledge – knowledge that is just accepted without question or critique.
- Social constructionism opens a path for deconstruction of the power within discourses.
- Social constructionism goes hand-in-hand with social action.

Research for this study is done from a social-constructionist point of view (Müller, 2001), where the researcher is invited into the world of co-researchers. In social-constructionist thought people construct their own and others identities through social interaction and the encounters they have with each other daily (Burr, 2003:13). Mills and Sprenkle (1995:369) describe social constructionism as a “philosophy of community”, wherein “it treats reality as a group project and actually questions the existence of an essential self apart from others.” Richter (2010:34) adds that the researcher then becomes part of the community and part of the reality for the co-researchers.

Freedman and Combs (1996:22) see social constructionism as an integral part of narrative research. They identified the following points that are considered faithful to the postmodernist frame of reference: truth is socially constructed; truth is constructed by language; narratives or stories are used in the containment or organising of truth or reality; and the existence of absolute truth is denied. This point of view is supported by Müller *et al.* (2001:79) especially concerning the “not-knowing position” a narrative counsellor or researcher should respect and maintain to give the social construction process time to develop.

Meyer (2010:80) summarises the influence of social constructionism on therapy by stating that it challenges the systemic model’s ideas. It invites conversation partners into the conversation, to collaborate on seeking new meaning behind behaviour and choices. The role of the therapist, from a deconstructionist point of view, would be to aid their conversation partners in deconstructing their narratives and reconstructing narratives of empowerment, control and meaning (Freedman & Combs, 2002:12-13). Social constructionism is not focused on problems and their symptoms, but rather opens up new possibilities and narratives (Meyer, 2010:83).

Social constructionism will, therefore, question how knowledge is created, what the different discourses are that take this knowledge for granted, how we use language in the creation of knowledge and how power influences what we consider to be true.

2.1.1 Social construction of knowledge

Gergen (1998:147) appreciates social constructionism in the sense that it gives a voice to stories which are not often heard. This is ground-breaking for further study and the creation of new realities. Interdisciplinary conversation within social constructionism opens the field for new hermeneutical interpretation and is crucial for transversal rationality (Hermans, 2002:vii-xxiii).

A “not-knowing position” helps the narrative counsellor to enter into the conversation without leading questions as to what conversation partners (in this study co-researchers) should or should not be doing. Having a predetermined goal as to where conversation partners should arrive at the end of discussion or counselling sessions, is contrary to the socially constructed narrative framework (Anderson, 1992:28).

Gergen (1994:80-81) reflected on people’s narratives on their own story as text – a source of knowledge. He added that from a textual essentialist perspective all accounts of human memory are interpreted socially, questioning the existence of true, original thought.

Social constructionism insists on a critical stance towards ways of understanding the world that are taken for granted. Vivien Burr (2003:2-5) sees social constructionism as the critical questioning of perceived objective truths. Knowledge is seen as historically, culturally, as well as socially defined. Knowledge is, according to the social-constructionist framework, something that goes hand-in-hand with social action and bound by power relations.

Gergen (2003:15-16) states that from the social construction point of view, understanding is achieved through active participation in the relationship between individuals and not through a positivistic understanding of knowledge. The researcher’s observation and conclusions – without consultation and retelling of stories together with co-researchers – is, therefore, a poor reflection of reality and truth, as the primary researcher and co-researchers as a group carry the responsibility of creating reality within this specific context and study. By not being sensitive to co-creation a researcher will reflect a one-sided story of events. The descriptions, reflections and conclusions given in this study, are, therefore, a collaboration between the co-researchers and myself as primary researcher.

2.1.2 Language

Wittgenstein (2003:18-19) adds that knowledge should be seen as a construct of language. Language has constructive power as a result of social and material constructions as well as relational and institutionalised practice (Meyer, 2010:81). Instruction and description find unique and situational meaning within their given context. Meyer (2010:81) further describes the

“constructive power of language” as something that sets the stage for our social and psychological well-being.

Burr (2003:8) describes the use of language as more than just a way of communication, for language constructs a new world for both the user and hearer. Burr mentions that the psychological view of language could be seen as a clinical and passive vehicle of thoughts and emotion, but the social construction idea of language would rather place it within the boundaries of space and time. As an example of the power of language, she refers to a judge who can sentence a person or a minister who could marry people, which would have practical consequences, restrictions or obligation.

Mills and Sprenkle (1995:369) explains that language facilitates change through the meaning people attach to their lives and how these meanings are expressed. Words are, therefore “form giving” and “meaning making” (Anderson, 1990:137).

The narrative therapeutic work of this study was focused on couples creating communal language, which both partners can relate to and both can use to express how they feel in the relationship. The creation of a metaphor, to name the externalised relationship, helps through broadening the field of meaning for couples. They would be able to more easily express how they feel in their relationship and because their partner knows their relationship story, would understand the words used if the language relates to the relationship metaphor.

2.1.3 Discourse

Discourse is another important term to be considered within the space of social constructionism. Discourses are “practices which form the objects of which they speak” (Foucault, 1972:49). Burr (2003:64) would refer to discourse as “a set of meanings, metaphors, representations, images, stories, statements and so on that in some way together produce a particular way of presenting it in a certain light”. The language added within the specific context would add to the understanding of an idea. To this, we could add art or architecture to the understanding of “text” or language that, put within a specific context, could be “read” for meaning. Burr (2003:64-67) understands discourse as a specific frame of reference in which action or language is to be understood.

Meyer (2010:83) explains that a discourse is internalised by people who did not necessarily take part in its creation. She describes a discourse as “a specific ‘representation’ created by the socio-cultural and/or political world which conveys a specific message or interpretation regarding certain events”.

Social constructionism is interested in how the individual uses discourses in his or her social context to create a narrative of the self (Meyer, 2010:83). A socially constructed discourse could be the result of age-old cultural history. If such actions are passed on through the generations they become normative and part of particular discourses. In such ways, our reality gives meaning to our lives and will influence our actions (Freedman & Combs, 1996:22-32).

Demasure and Müller (2006:414) remark that public discourse (what people say or write) strengthens the particular discourse, in such a way that the individual becomes a mouthpiece of the prevalent discourses of his or her culture. Repetition of actions or the transfer of values through generations or within a religious system could create problematic tension within one's reality. This could, in turn, add to people's crises or stories of need (Gergen, 2003:7).

Within the social-constructionist view, the prejudgements of the researcher or therapist are never considered as objective or unbiased. People's experience towards their larger social network is subjective (Meyer, 2010:82). The "not-knowing position" is, therefore, a valuable tool for the narrative researcher or therapist in order to uncover underlying discourses.

Another part – in this case a positive one – of discourse could be a relational one, a like-mindedness or, as Meyer (2010:84) presents it, "communalism". Here people who relate to a story or share similar stories feel a connectedness towards each other, through the stories they share or relate to. This can be reinforcing for one's identity and strengthen bonds of friendship, partnership and, in the case of this study, a marriage partnership.

In this study that is primarily focused on couples creating stories of their values and future together, it is imperative that stories both partners relate to are formed. In the process of questioning and exploring existing narratives and co-creating new ones, couples will find their relationship's identity. Communication in the relationship becomes easier when the couples communicate by using shared narratives. Likewise the different voices on work-family balance should be acknowledged for the influence they exert in creating communal narratives or even discourses from which couples live their lives

2.2 PESTLE analysis as literature review

The structural component of our house of enquiry is investigated in the fourth movement of postfoundational practical theology investigation ("a description of experience as it is continually informed by traditions of interpretation"). In this case it also forms part of and describes a specific context for the study, as it is found in the first movement (Müller, 2004:300).

Within postfoundational practical theology (where narratives are emphasised), the background is referred to as the context of a certain problem or phenomenon (Park, 2010:10; Müller,

2011b:2). The context of the research is set against the background of the interplay between personal and work lives. Literature refers to this interplay as work-life balance (Waumsley *et al.*, 2010:2; Soni, 2013:35). As was discussed in the epistemology (1.1.1.1) in the previous chapter, the postfoundational approach to practical theology is a contextual one. The interdisciplinary conversation in this study that frames its contextual nature and perspectives other than a theological stance (Van der Westhuizen, 2008:165), is opened by the use of the PESTLE analysis to acknowledge the voice of a business and work perspectives. In describing the context, a literature review on the social context of marriage as it is seen in the Dutch Reformed tradition and the context of work in committed relationships, which are investigated through the PESTLE analysis.

This literature review section will investigate the work-family balance of families and the role and gaps identified within premarital counselling within the South African context by using the PESTLE analysis.

As discussed earlier, under the transversal space opened by postfoundational practical theology, this epistemology allows an open space for listening to the insights of other disciplines. In this case the business analysis method of PESTLE is used, to open conversation on work and family life. In postfoundational practical theology the use of another field of study's methods is allowed at the conversation table, without it dictating the methodology of the practical theology study (van den Berg, 2010:9, 11).

The PEST (or PESTLE) analysis was designed as a business environmental tool to analyse the larger and external factors in which businesses operate. This is done to take into account the external considerations that might have an impact on premarital couples. Francis J. Aguilar identified Political, Economic, Social and Technical as four critical areas to be taken into consideration in addressing environmental study in 1967. In the 1980s the four factors were expanded, under the influence of Fahey, Narayanan, Morrison, Renfro, Boucher, Mecca and Porter, by adding Legal and Environmental as additional factors (Morrison, 2012).

2.2.1 Political

One of the aspects that is lacking in the way we do premarital counselling with couples is the power narratives of work within relationships. I realised this through the pastoral work in my congregation. The amount of time people spend at work has a definite influence on people's relationships, according to Goodwill (Goodwill *et al.*, 2014), which also has an influence on society as a whole.

According to Goodwill (Goodwill *et al.*, 2014) large corporates in South Africa are implementing health and wellness programs for their employees, that include a focus on work-family balance, as they see healthy employees as one of their greatest assets. This includes healthier eating options in the office cafeteria, free counselling for employees and their family, on-campus gymnasiums and even nurseries looking after employees' children during work time. This is a positive approach as large corporations in the United Kingdom are currently identifying debt and relationship problems as the top two problems affecting their workforce (Hancock, 2014).

More companies are implementing wellness programs, as governing bodies like the Commission for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration (2015) expect companies to prove that they have met workers' socio-economic needs before laying workers off for a lack of productivity. These wellness programs need skilled helpers, particularly when the work-family balance is considered.

2.2.2 Economic

After the recession of 2008/2009 the current financial situation in South Africa makes it difficult for young couples on the brink of getting married to have consultations for expensive therapies and other wedding costs (Cherlin *et al.*, 2013:214; Seekings, 2014:73). As wedding expenses add up, the social factor of impressing wedding guests seems to weigh heavier than the importance of proper communication skills and learning to handle a work-family balance within relationships.

Although ministers of religion are not allowed to charge for officiating at marriages as such, the practice of charging specifically for the wedding service, travel costs and premarital counselling has become the norm. An in-depth psychological knowledge falls outside of the broad discipline of theology and particularly pastoral theology; it is not currently a prerequisite in the curriculum for a BTh degree in South Africa. Except for the pastoral approaches taught at theological faculties, theological students are not necessarily exposed to broad psychological frameworks. A reverend's work, however, still relies on the knowledge of people and helping people. With the lack of the added background of formal psychology coursework, most of the clergy only have the basic pastoral skills they learnt in their coursework. Given that Ake *et al.* (2017) consider premarital counselling a specialised field of counselling, it could be asked if many pastors are charging couples for something they do not have the necessary skill set for. Especially if – as in the focus of this study – they do not have experience of the corporate or business environment to help negotiate a workable work-family balance with a couple intending to get married. As discussed under the social spectrum of this PESTLE study, in a study that included 2,000 Protestant pastors, only 39% indicated that they felt competent in marital and relationship counselling (Schumm *et al.*, 2010:2).

2.2.3 Social

In the past 20 years vast changes have taken place in marital legislation, focusing on the inclusion and revision of previous disadvantaged groups, within the Marriage Act of 1961, with the Recognition of Customary Marriages Act and the Civil Union Act (Chambers, 2000:111; Budlender *et al.*, 2004:4; De Vos & Barnard, 2007:798). Couples have, with these vast changes, changed their ideas of getting married as well. For couples in committed relationships marriage is no longer the norm, as young people are looking for financial and job stability before marriage (Seekings, 2014:73). Many committed Christian couples have chosen to take a path away from getting married or getting married after a period of living together. This study will, however, focus on heterosexual, Christian couples that have made a choice to get married.

As divorce is an increasing phenomenon, not only in South Africa but around the world (Morgan *et al.*, 2011), the need to equip couples with the necessary skills to create healthy, sustainable and satisfying marriages is also increasing. Divorce has a great impact, not only on families but also on society. The need for safe family environments is something that the Church can help society with. Couples deciding not to get married and those that have chosen to live together without getting married have become a worldwide phenomenon. Marriage is not considered the norm in society anymore (Seekings, 2014:78-79), although couples deciding not to get married – but living together – could still have strong and meaningful relationships.

My work in premarital counselling often involves equipping couples with communication skills, making them aware of possible relationship discourses, establishing values for the relationship and helping them understand how their specific relationship works. The added focus on a work-family balance would enhance the discussion on relationship values given the necessity (in numerous situations) where both parties in the relationship have a full-time job and have to give attention to work and family, not only for survival but to make their relationships meaningful.

The need for basic premarital counselling becomes a greater need for couples, especially if it is considered that most couples express the need for communication skills and conflict resolution skills in their relationships (Tambling & Glebova, 2013:335). Even though many marriages are physically officiated at distances far from the local congregation, ministers from the local church are still asked to officiate at marriages held at various wedding venues. It is common practice that ministers of the Dutch Reformed Church in the South African context do premarital counselling with congregants who are getting married.

According to a study, out of the 2,000 Protestant pastors who were questioned on their feeling of relationship counselling competency, only 39% indicated that they felt competent in marital and relationship counselling (Schumm *et al.*, 2010:2). If considered that according to a study

conducted by Stanley *et al.* (2001:67) as many as 75% of weddings still occur within a religious setting, the demand for pastors to equip themselves as premarital counsellors is great.

2.2.4 Technological

The frequency of laptop, cell phone, tablet and personal computer use in work and personal life has blurred the lines between work and family life even further. This boundary-less situation of not being able to escape or close the door behind work has added to psychological, social and physical problems filling the offices of therapists and doctors (Soni, 2013:34).

Soni (2013:34-35) describes the added stress added by the tension between family responsibilities and demanding jobs together with community involvement is worsened when 24-hour communication is added. This leads to a stressor he identifies as *Time Poverty*.

Furthermore, the global use of technology has added pressure concerning employees' time, performance, energy and work commitment because of financial and market share competition (Soni, 2013:36).

Ngcogo (2016:76) indicates that the use of mobile technology, especially cellular phone usage, has shown an increase when general social interaction is considered. Where use of mobile technology could be implicated as a source of conflict and intrusion (Ngcogo, 2016:76), technology could also be praised for its potential in maintaining relationships (Johnson *et al.*, 2008:385). Additionally, the use of technology could have a negative impact on certain couples, affecting their sexual health and opening a threat of internet infidelity (Hertlein & Webster, 2008:446). Given that Whitty's (2005:65) research indicated similar damage to relationships done by online relationships as with offline relationships, the impact of technology and its use in infidelity cannot be underestimated. The ever-evolving nature of technology places an imperative on therapists concerning the different uses of technology and its use in communication (Hertlein & Webster, 2008:458).

The use of technology has, however, added a positive spin to the field of family counselling. In an era of time constraints and work environments requiring that workers travel to work in remote areas, leaving their families back home, the aid of programs such as Skype and FaceTime has opened new avenues in counselling. By not being bound to a physical location and not even requiring both people in a couple to be in the same room as their counsellor, couples could work on their relationship while not even being in the same country or continent.

2.2.5 Legal

Marriage officers are governed by the DHA in South Africa. The Health Professions Council of South Africa governs psychologists and some counsellors. South African legislation finds itself in the process of establishing a legitimate governing body for pastoral therapists or pastoral counsellors in South Africa (The Southern African Association for Pastoral Work, 2017). It is understood that ministers of religion do pastoral work under the supervision of their church councils.

With the changes in South African marital legislation, processes of getting married in the church have followed suit (Du Toit, 2010:1-3). Gay unions have been legalised, but gay marriages have to be officiated by marriage officers from the DHA as they are seen as civil partnerships and not seen in the same category as marriages (De Vos & Barnard, 2007:798, 810; Department of Home Affairs Republic of South Africa, 2015). At the General Synod of the Dutch Reformed Church, held at Afrikaanse Hoër Seunsskool in October 2015, a decision was made allowing reverends of the Dutch Reformed Church in South Africa to officiate at civil unions of gay couples and to enter into civil unions themselves, if they were homosexual themselves (Algemene Sinode NG Kerk 2015:32). Shortly after this decision, various appeals were made to this general meeting, stalling the process (Janse Van Rensburg, 2015:1). At the extraordinary meeting of the General Synod of the Dutch Reformed Church, held at Dutch Reformed Church Pierre van Reyneveld in October 2016 the decision of 2015 was repealed, allowing only heterosexual couples to be legally wedded by Dutch Reformed ministers. The decision, however, left room open for interpretation by church councils to allow their reverends to bless civil unions in a church ceremony (Claassen, 2016:1).

Ministers of religion who are marriage officers may also only officiate at marriages for people from their own denomination. Other marriages have to be conducted by a magistrate or by a marriage officer from the DHA office (Du Toit, 2010:2). Ministers of religion are also now prohibited from officiating at marriages where one of the parties does not have South African citizenship.

Current South African legislation concerning marriage has moved marriages further away from the church structure (Du Toit, 2010:1). In the past, the vast majority of Afrikaans-speaking Christian couples would get married at the church and thereafter have the wedding dinner at the church hall. More couples currently tend to get married at wedding venues – some far away from their own congregations.

2.2.6 Environmental

The impact of the reasonable availability of marriage services has an influence on the people intending to get married. Marital officers living and serving in suburbs of South Africa have greater access to DHA offices where marriages need to be registered. In rural areas access to these offices is more difficult. Certain marital officers may be more helpful towards couples that want to get married, than those who struggle to get the weddings at which they officiated registered.

Considering the environmental situation of work-family balance, Tambling and Glebova (2013:336) identified the balance between home and work, dual-career relationships and spirituality as the major issues married couples face.

Chronic diseases showed a direct correlation to work performance, according to Phillips (Goodwill *et al.*, 2014). High fatigue levels, poor or little sleep, waking up in the night with worry and high stress levels were identified by Matheson and Rosen (2012:403) as indicators of an imbalanced work-family life and as forerunners to health problems. The correlation between chronic disease and high stress levels could turn into a vicious cycle, detrimental to both family life and the work environment.

Nestlé South Africa identified occupational health management, financial health, emotional health, work-health balance, physical health, nutritional training, breastfeeding rooms and crèches at some of their plants as areas that will aid the health and wellness of employees and promote healthy families within their workforce, according to Jowitt (Goodwill *et al.*, 2014).

Various elements within companies' philosophy and practice that are counter-productive towards these types of health and wellness programs' implementation and functioning, were identified by Coverdill (2000:231-232, 234). Whereas companies could allow flexible hours, part-time work and working from home, a business philosophy of people working overtime, plenty of face-time and rigidity in schedules would counteract the good intentions of flexibility. Furthermore, evaluations of work performance normally reward individual accomplishments and not group performance. Where promotions are at stake, the "dedicated worker" with the most overtime and face-time would be more likely to be promoted than the "part-time worker" or the "flexible time worker". Wellness programs could sometimes be interpreted as discriminatory in terms of fitness and health goals, if workers' physical disabilities (that will keep them from performing in this field) are not taken into account (Kirkland, 2014:973; Basas, 2014:1037). As such the critique on these programs suggests that wellness programs do not necessarily result in the economic and health benefits they claim to have, do not allow for individualisation and may lead to a form of social control that is not desirable (Kirkland, 2014:974).

Coverdill (2000:234-235) additionally identified another phenomenon detrimental to the success of work-family balance: the controlled and more predictable work environment – over the home environment distracted by house and school work, child care, divorce and blended families – could also be more appealing to some. With the ongoing gender war within the corporate setting, less time is being spent at home, and the strain felt on work-family life becomes more prevalent.

Work-family conflict affects both the marriage and family relationship and the workplace. Carroll *et al.* (2013:531) explain that lower job satisfaction, fewer promotions and less loyalty towards companies are some of the effects of employees' work-family conflict on organisations.

When looking at the positive effect of work-life balance, in a global survey by the Regus work-life balance Index, consisting of over 16,000 professionals in more than 80 countries, the benefits of business growth are added to the benefits of living healthier and happier lives (Soni, 2013:35).

2.2.7 Opening up to further exploration

The above-mentioned aspects, as illustrated in the PESTLE analysis, explored the fields of premarital counselling and work-family balance. This opened our description of the research gap: the combination of premarital counselling, work-family balance and narrative counselling. This first step in opening the context of this study invites us to further exploration.

This PESTLE analysis forms part of the different aspects that describe the context of this study. Subsequently the concept and different influences on work-family balance will be discussed as part of the structural element of this house of enquiry.

2.3 In search of balance

2.3.1 An evolving definition of work-family balance

The understanding of work-family balance has evolved over time. The first impression when talking about work-family balance is that work might be seen in a negative light and therefore less time should be spent at work and more time at home (Soni, 2013:36). Jain and Nair (2013:44) compare this definition to that of work-family conflict in the research of Greenhaus and Beutell (1985) that stated that conflict arose when work interfered with family. Gordon (2012:7) in turn placed the focus on allowing enough time for other responsibilities and thereby ensuring that work does not engulf one's whole life. This places an emphasis on work and life functioning separately like the "separate-spheres model" of Chow and Berheide (1988:27).

The work of Frone, Russel and Cooper (1992:66) described work-family conflict as a bidirectional process, accentuating that family life could have an adverse impact on the workspace as well. This research was followed by that of Barnett (1999:149), acknowledging the overlapping spheres of work and family life.

Even though the research moved in a direction of inclusion with the research of Werbel and Walter (2002:293), Thomson and De Bruin (2007:70) described the existing tension in work-family balance by explaining that different definitions of work-family balance exist, that mainly focus on the comparative roles between work and family. They point out that the terms “balance” and “conflict” are interchangeably used to either indicate harmony or a clash of domains.

Greenhaus and Powell (2006:88) later described the enriching experience achieved through work and family, where experiences in one role increase performance and have a positive effect on another role. Waumsley, Houston and Marks (2010:2) defined work-life balance as “having sufficient control and autonomy over where, when and how you work to fulfil your responsibilities inside and outside paid work”. Clark (2000:751), linking to the later evolution of Greenhaus and Powell, defined work-family balance as “satisfaction and good functioning at work and at home, with minimum role conflict” opening up, meaning to focus on balance between work and family. In this sense “work-life balance” and “work-family balance” could be used interchangeably. With this in mind, Roy (2016:81-82) defined work-family balance as “equal time, satisfaction, and involvement in each of the work and family spheres irrespective of job demands, family demands, family structure, financial pressures”.

2.3.1.1 Unpacking balance

The definition of work-family balance given by Hill, *et al.* (2001:49) as “the degree to which an individual is able to simultaneously balance the temporal, emotional, and behavioral demands of both paid work and family responsibilities”, indicates the academic and general language used to refer to, and give legitimacy to, this concept of balance between work and family life.

The narrative approach acknowledges the discourses in the conversation about the interplay between work and family life. Dominant narratives such as the term “work-family balance” indicate a certain ideal of how couples should function in the workplace and at home. They presuppose a certain working formula or idea of balance that is dictated from a modernist research paradigm. Exploring work-family balance from a narrative point of view opens conversation to describe “in-context” experiences of couples’ relationships and their narratives of work and family life.

The use of the term “balance” in this study is therefore more functional in nature as it refers to the general language people use when talking about this concept in their relationships and family life. As will be described in 4.2, an externalised metaphor when referring to work-family balance will instead be used to indicate the unique nature of balance for each couple.

2.3.2 Discourses of “five-step plans” for achieving work-family balance

The “five-step plan” refers to the popular self-help books found on the shelves of bookstores on obtaining anything from “marital bliss” to getting an MBA in 30 minutes a day. These books and titles are typical of consumerist culture. I once even saw a book titled “Have a new husband by Friday” (Leman, 2009) and wondered what the wife is going to do with the old one, come Friday? I also wondered about the discourses of power within such relationships. An excerpt from Leman’s (2009:18-19) book indicates a different epistemology (cognitive psychology) that is not compatible with that of the narrative approach:

Yes, the principles in this book do work. They've been tried out in thousands of relationships with very successful results. Best of all, they're simple. You don't need to schedule three luncheons with your girlfriends to discuss them and figure them out. Your man is a very simple creature. If you do a few things right and consistently to get his attention, you'll be surprised by how simple this really is. Hopefully *then* you'll call you call friends and say, “Hey, you're going to have to read this book. It works incredibly well!”

Follow these principles, and you'll have your new husband by Friday. He'll do anything for you. Got that? *Anything*.

The narrative approach looks at the different discourses involved in a subject, a “five-step plan” on achieving balance in work-family life which is not as easily achievable. As the narrative approach deals with specific people within a specific context, it cannot be used as a step-by-step plan or a method that could just be applied to different situations (Dreyer, 2014:3). Respecting people’s differences and the meaning attached to the events of their lives is important; it is not something that could be generalised. Couples are different; their relationships differ and the meaning they create from work and family life differs from that of their friends and neighbours.

It is, however, important to acknowledge the research that was done on work-family balance as it contributes to the conversation on finding balance, whether it is at home or in the workplace.

2.3.2.1 Positive psychology

Morganson, Litano and O'Neil (2014:222) acknowledge the impact a blurred work-family balance has on work-related, individual and health outcomes. They based their research on psychological literature from positive psychology, leadership and other research on work-family balance to better equip the workforce and management on a path to work-family balance.

The focus of their findings related to the influence managers have on employees in the workplace (Morganson, *et al.* 2014:238):

- Family supportive supervisor behaviour was linked to heightened organisational commitment, lowered intention to leave and improved job performance by employees.
- An optimistic management approach (defined as increasing empathy, taking individuals into consideration, an optimistic style in re-framing tasks and positive relationships) allowed managers to support their employees better in practising work-family balance.
- An added positive effect on work-family balance was noted in situations where managers practice self-care, which leads to their behaviour being copied by employees.
- Supplying employees with resources to equip them with the necessary skills needed for achieving work-family balance had a positive effect.
- Management and human resource teams focusing and rectifying organisational praxis that could have a negative impact on work-family balance (e.g. where consequences could be negative towards people utilising family-friendly policies and examining expected work hours) was noted.

2.3.2.2 Personology

Thomson and de Bruin (2007:69) acknowledge the harmful effects longer working hours and working under extreme pressure have on the non-working areas of people's lives – leaving them neglecting those parts of their life and with a sense of being overwhelmed.

According to Greenhaus, Collins and Shaw (2003:513) factors like time balance, involvement balance and satisfaction balance are important role players in achieving work-family balance. Lewis, Rapoport and Gambles (2003:827) state that a term like work-life balance implies that work and life or family are mutually exclusive and negates the transfer of skills between the different aspects of life that an integrated person represents. This leads to the term *work-family facilitation* that Wayne, Musisca and Fleeson (2004:110-111) suggest, indicating an integration and fluidity between work and family lives.

Thomson and De Bruin's study (2007:77-82) was aimed at helping human resource professionals in the corporate environment that deal with employees struggling with work-family balance. The findings of their study indicated that the personality trait of agreeableness does not have an influence on work-life balance. Extroversion and neuroticism do not impact work-life balance in the presence of conscientiousness and openness to experience, which does have an impact on work-life balance.

2.3.2.3 Industrial psychology and human resource development

Nyati (2011:47) emphasises the difficulty working women have in achieving work-family balance, quoting the former first lady of the United States of America, Michelle Obama: "Women in particular need to keep an eye on their physical and mental health. Because we're scurrying to and from appointments and errands, we don't have a lot of time to take care of ourselves. We therefore need to do a better job of putting ourselves higher on our own 'to do' list."

Opie and Henn (2013:3) emphasise the negative influence work-family conflict has on the well-being of individuals, families, organisations and societies. It has a negative impact on satisfaction, health and behaviour on both the home and work front and leads to "burnout". They also state that greater work-family conflict is experienced by married women.

Nyati (2011:47) links inequality in the workplace to extra stressors for people trying to climb the corporate ladder, which adds to an imbalance between work and family. These imbalances or compromises are linked to "burnout" where stress levels are not managed. This, in turn, leads to physical and mental health challenges.

The study of Opie and Henn (2013:9), taking personality into consideration, found that women with high levels of conscientiousness – considered as "most desirable to organisations" – experienced significantly higher levels of work-family conflict.

The study of Field, Bagraim and Rycroft (2012:30), in turn, focused on fatherhood, questioning if the South African labour legislation recognises the rights of working fathers, considering the fact that the "traditional family model with the male as breadwinner and the female spouse as homemaker and caregiver is no longer the dominant family model". Their study identifies the following issues for working fathers:

- Does the right to equality mean that paternity leave and rights must also be available to fathers in the same way as maternity rights are?
- Does South Africa have international obligations compelling us to recognise the rights of fathers to paternity leave?

- Does South Africa comply with its international obligations regarding the right to leave for new fathers?

Field, Bagraim and Rycroft's study (2012:39) found that internationally gender equality improved in societies that enabled working fathers to share family responsibilities. In some countries the implementation of paternal rights was voluntary. However, other countries mandated it. They further found that South African leave provisions still assumed and enforced traditional household roles, having "the father as the breadwinner and the mother as the stay-at-home caregiver", which is not congruent with global trends. This leaves the South African labour legislation with work to be done in the field of paternity and paternal leave provisions if gender equality is considered to be important.

Sanichar (2004:42) identifies work-family balance as part of a corporate managerial issue that needs to be addressed in the training of managers, equipping them with the necessary skills to enforce proper wellness programs in the workplace. Communication of the different work-family programs available to employees is crucial. Managers should also be helped to address their own work-family balance; they are key players and role models that should lead by example. Stereotypes, which label employees that make use of wellness and work-family balance programs as people that are not serious about their work, should be dispelled publicly by companies.

2.3.3 "Work/life harmony"

Creating meaning as far as work-family balance is concerned involves the process of co-creation and the search for new meaning (as stated earlier in Chapters 1 and 2). Using a metaphor for explaining the relationship of couples towards their work-family balance would be fitting in a study like this. In this study it fits with the process of finding space within the couple's metaphor and balancing between the two – it could be described as having the couple riding a bicycle: a tandem bicycle (this will be discussed further in Chapter 4).

In the evolution of the understanding of work-family balance, McMillan, Morris and Atchley (2011:15) developed the concept of "work/life harmony", indicating that harmony is reached when the resources gained through work-family enrichment align with and alleviate the stressors that arise from work-family conflict. They define "work/life harmony" as "an individually pleasing, congruent arrangement of work and life roles that is interwoven into a single narrative of life" (Morris, 2010).

McMillan *et al.* (2011:8) base their model on the influence work-family conflict and work-family enrichment have on each other in achieving balance or what they call "harmony".

Three types of work-family conflict (or work/life conflict) have been identified, namely time-based, strain-based and behaviour-based (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985:76). Time-based conflict presents in two ways: (a) the amount of time spent in one role leaves little time left for the other role; and (b) if one is preoccupied in one role the ability to function in another is impaired, despite their physical presence in the latter. This includes the scarcity of time and/or energy to participate in multiple roles to meet their demands, which creates strain and conflict (Mcmillan *et al.*, 2011:9). Strain-based conflict “exists when strain in one role affects one’s performance in another role” (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985:80). This includes strain symptoms, such as tension, anxiety, fatigue, depression, apathy and irritability produced by work stressors (Brief *et al.*, 1981; in Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985:80). Lastly “when the behaviors required in one role are incompatible with the behaviors required in the other role”, it is identified as behavioural-based conflict (Mcmillan *et al.*, 2011:10).

Work-family enrichment (or work/life enrichment) is divided into four parts. These are: (a) developmental (comprising knowledge acquisition, skills, values and perspectives) (Carlson *et al.*, 2006:149); (b) affective (behaviour, mood and/or attitude changes) (Carlson *et al.*, 2006:139); (c) capital (asset acquisition, security and/or fulfilment) (Carlson *et al.*, 2006:140); and (d) efficiency (development of an increased focus level or becoming a better worker) (Carlson *et al.*, 2006:141; Mcmillan *et al.*, 2011:11).

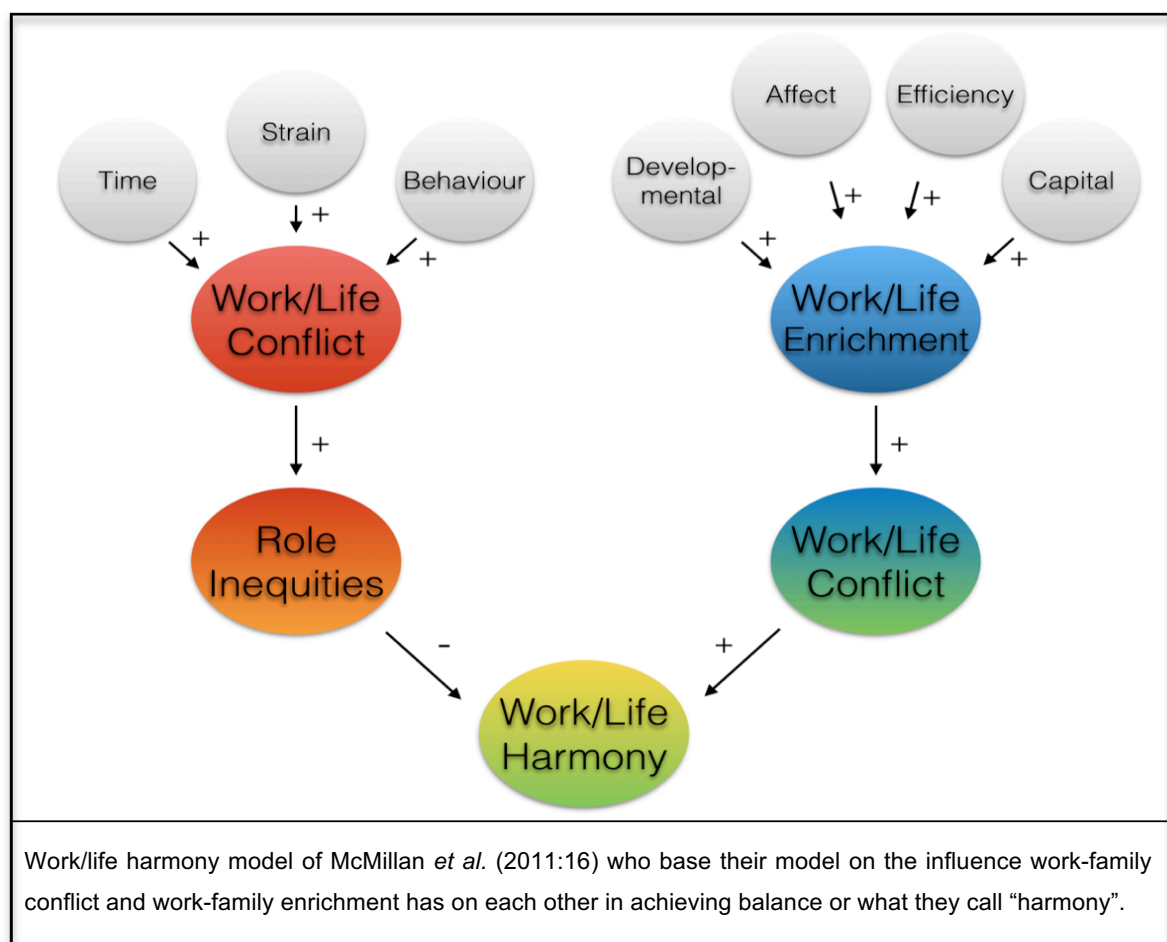


Diagram 2.1: Work/life harmony model of McMillan *et al.*

As seen in Diagram 2.1, McMillan *et al.* (2011:13) disagree with the statement of Frone (2003:145) that work-family balance is the “lack of conflict or interference between the work and family roles”, but rather experiencing it in itself as a balancing game. They find the definition of Grzywacz and Carlson (2007:458) more fitting, defining work-family balance as “the accomplishment of role-related expectations that are negotiated and shared between and individual and his or her role-related partners in work and family domains.”

McMillan *et al.* (2011:13) explain that work-family balance “becomes a continuum with imbalance (in either role) anchoring one end and balance (again in either role) anchoring the other end.” This definition is much more useful within the narrative approach as it carries with it the possibility of accommodating opposing meanings. In explaining work/life harmony McMillan *et al.* (2011:16) identify two distinct characteristics, namely that it could be applied to individuals or organisations. These characteristics can be measured by assessing the individuals’ levels of experienced conflict and enrichment or in organisations by checking specific departments’ (or the whole company’s) health, to establish if any interventions are needed. Secondly they state that integrating work and life does not constitute a “zero-sum gain”, meaning that a “surplus of gains” could lead to a perceived increase in positive work/life harmony or performance in a company.

The context will further be developed through a social-science Biblical background on marriage and work in the first century Mediterranean world. Other theological insight on marriage will also be heard before the couples’ narratives will be added as the final step to explore the real-life experiences premarital couples face on work-family balance (Müller, 2009a:221). A proposal for a workable metaphor for work-family balance on the route of narrative premarital counselling will further be investigated after the discussion of discourses in this study, in Chapter 4.

2.4 Social-science background on marriage and its effect on work in Biblical times

The social-science background on marriage and how it affects the work sphere in Biblical times are considered as part of “a description of experiences as it is continually informed by traditions of interpretation” in this section (Müller, 2004:300). It is imperative in a study that takes the narratives (and sometimes discourses) people have about faith and their belief in God into account, when we talk about how work and family are balanced and how Biblical narratives and background could be taken for granted.

2.4.1 Theological background of social-science

The purpose of social-science commentary is to allow the reader to interpret the text in a way that is fair to the original author and audience (Malina & Rohrbaugh, 1998:1). Malina and Pilch

(2006:ix) explain that although most commentaries are theologically or religiously orientated, or focus on linguistics or philological aspects of the Text, the distinctive feature of social-science commentary is “that it draws insights from an array of social sciences such as anthropology, social psychology, sociolinguistics, and the like in order to determine the most culturally plausible interpretation”. It takes into account which social structures, cultural values and understanding of humanity in the first century eastern Mediterranean were at play.

As this study is rooted in a paradigm of social construction, the use of social-science as a lens to look at Biblical background is a fitting one, as it takes the different “truths” of the first century Mediterranean person into account. This allows us as readers of an ancient Text to consider the different discourses at play of the first century Mediterranean world and earlier. Malina and Rohrbaugh (2003:ix) explain that the social scientific interpretation of the New Testament ideally fits with someone that went through the experience of a “culture shock” and appreciates the uniqueness and differences of other culture groups. They find it especially true when people had prolonged exposure to people that used to make up the audience of the New Testament document, like the traditional eastern Mediterranean people.

Malina and Rohrbaugh (1998:1) commented that the Industrial Revolution’s impact on how modern readers read and understand the New Testament, threatens our ability to grasp what the Bible said to its earliest readers (and hearers). They (Malina & Rohrbaugh, 1998:1) describe the vast difference between our worlds, especially when comparing our separation of religion and economics from kinship and politics, which were seen as a unit in the first century Mediterranean world.

This emphasises the need to investigate the ancient Mediterranean world if we want to understand what the Bible has to say about marriage and work, and if it is at all possible to draw such a correlation to our world.

2.4.2 Marriage strategy

A noun for the word “marriage” is found neither in the Old Testament nor in Ugaritic or Babylonian texts (Dorey, 2005:32). Seen as a civil (and not a religious) matter (King & Stager, 2001:56), Old Testament marriage was a political and economic transaction between two families (Pitt-Rivers, 1977:160; Matthews & Benjamin, 1993:13; Newsom & Ringe, 1998:96-97; Marsman, 2003:72). In this sense, marriage combined two families that were willing to share goods and services for a substantial period of time (Matthews & Benjamin, 1993:13).

Malina (2001:146-159) divides Israel’s history in three broad periods: the patriarchal period, pre-exilic period and Judean period, he notes that each of these periods had a different marriage

strategy (cf. Kloppenborg, 1990:185). Van Eck (2007a:92) describes the marriage strategy character of these different periods in the following way: the patriarchal period's strategy was *reconciliatory*, the pre-exilic period's strategy was *aggressive* and the typical strategy of the Judean period was *defensive*.

2.4.2.1 Patriarchal period

Dorey (2005:38) explains that power and survival had a great influence on the marriage strategy of Israel. With the introduction of the patriarchal narratives, tension is created through the knowledge that Sarah is barren. The promise of being a big nation and having their own land is constantly in jeopardy.

Van Eck (2007a:93) uses the history of the Biblical patriarchs to describe the endogamic ideal of this period: Abraham marries his half-sister (Genesis 20:12), Nahor marries his brother's daughter (Genesis 11:29). Izak marries the daughter of his cousin (Genesis 24:15), Esau marries his cousin, who is a blood-relative (Genesis 29:10) and Amram (the father of Moses) marries his aunt on his father's side (Numbers 26:57-59). He indicates that these fathers, who gave their daughters to close family (close enough that the rules on incest were not broken), indicates the *reconciliatory* marital strategy of the time.

During the patriarchal period, concerning Israelite marriages, unmarried women were deemed under the authority of their father and married women under the authority of her husband (King & Stager, 2001:50). A father could even sell his daughter, should he see the need for it (Exodus 21:7-11) (Dorey, 2005:57).

Van Eck (2007a:93) additionally indicated exogamous examples in this period, where daughters and women (who were previously married) were given in marriage to individuals with higher status than the *paterfamilias*, for the sake of political and economic protection. These examples include Abraham, Sarah and Pharaoh (Genesis 12:10-12), Lot with his married daughters (in the presence of their husbands; Genesis 19:12-16, 31-38), Abimelech (Genesis 20:2-12) and Jacob and his daughter (Genesis 34:1-10). Van Eck (2007:93) mentions that Abraham's "sexual hospitality" to someone with higher status, indicates an acceptable social norm of the time. Other instances of polygamous relationships, that were typical of this period, are Abraham (Genesis 16:1-4; 25:1-6), Izak (Genesis 24:67), Esau (Genesis 26:34; 28:9) and Jacob (Genesis 29:21; 30:12).

Malina (1981:106) explained the patriarchal period by centring on family as a sacred unit that was chosen by God. This comprised the patriarch, who headed the family, and his offspring. Worship was perceived as central to the family, from which social interaction and custom flowed. Inheritance and residence after marriage depended on the patriarchal lineage.

Van Eck (2007a:94) summarised that women in this period were seen as possessions, who could be used for the benefit of men, mentioning Exodus 20:14's arrangement about desiring your neighbour's property. Dorey (2005:57) mentions that Exodus 20:17 indicates that women be counted as part of her husband's property. After the wedding a wife would leave her family and join the family of her husband. The children that came from this arrangement were deemed part of the husband's family.

2.4.2.2 Pre-exilic period

As stated earlier, Van Eck (2007a:92) pointed out the *aggressive* nature of this period's marital strategy. In this Israelite-focused period the ideology of establishing Israel as "holy land" was imperative (see Exodus 34:14-16; Joshua 23:11-13). Daughters were given in marriage to males with as close a relation to the father of the bride as the incest laws would allow, to keep the daughter close to the extended family of the father.

Malina (1981:106) explained that the aggressive strategy "demands that fathers attempt to choose as mates for their daughters those who are closest and best known and who somehow already share in the collective honor of the patriline".

In turn the sons married women who were not family members, given that the son and his new wife became part of the father's household (Van Eck, 2007a:94). This would result in the expansion of the Israelite community and which would imply more political power. Van Eck (2007a:95) pointed out that this aggressive marital strategy also viewed women and daughters as possessions, as the daughter's value depended on the expansion of honour and status, political power and economic growth she could bring the family. Women were, therefore, embedded in the honour of the man – implying shame if he were to give her to someone outside of the family, as he and his tribe would lose honour in this process. Although "sexual hospitality" was not acceptable in this period, polygamy was, as seen in the narratives of Gideon (Judges 8:30), David (1 Samuel 25:39-43; 27:3; 2 Samuel 3:2-5) and Solomon (1 Kings 11).

According to Dorey (2005:36) a male was able to demonstrate his manliness and power through sexual "victory". By gaining sexual entry, against the will of the family, they would be put to shame and his honour and power would increase. Stone (1996:43), however, remarks that raping of girls was not tolerated, as it was seen as an onslaught on a family's stability and honour. Dorey (2005:58) indicated an endogamic nature of marriage in this period as seen in Genesis 24:4 and Exodus 34:15:16.

2.4.2.3 Judean period

The roots of Judaism are found in the return from exile (see Ezra and Nehemiah). Van Eck (2007a:96) explains the impact of the exile on the Judean community, with the addition of new symbols for this community. One of these symbols included the addition of priestly orders of cleanliness, creating clear division between the Judeans and non-Jews (Neyrey, 1991:227). These divisions were enforced by various temple laws, and laws for sexuality and marriage were also included (Van Eck, 2007a:97).

Dorey (2005:61) mentions that the post-exilic period indicated an important religious era in Israel. The changing political situation demanded spiritual seriousness of the nation. The *defensive* marital strategy expected Judean men who married non-Judeans during the exile to put an end to those marriages and remarry Judean women. This was to keep the covenant God made with Israel (Malina, 1981:110). The marriage strategy of this era could, therefore, be seen as endogamic (Dorey, 2005:62).

According to Van Eck (2007a:97), these recovery measures that were put in place had the following effects:

- New laws regarding incest were put in place (see Leviticus 19:29).
- Adultery was not only an attack on the man's honour but was an abomination before God (Leviticus 18:20; 20:10).
- "Sexual hospitality" (Leviticus 19:29) marriages with women that were previously married (Leviticus 21:7), Israelite women as slaves and homosexuality (Leviticus 18:22) affected men's honour and accordingly were regarded as an abomination before God.
- Polygamy was still acceptable.

2.4.3 The Greek and Roman influence on marriage

Dorey (2005:63) counts the Greeks and Romans under the few nations of the ancient world that did not practice polygamous relationships. Roman law saw marriage as a monogamous institution (Kiefer 1934:18; Herlihy, 1985:7). Divorce, remarriage and having concubines were acceptable practices in the ancient world (Dorey, 2005:63). These practices were indicated as a leading factor for the prevalence of prostitution at that time (Ahmadu, 1992:43).

Dorey (2005:63) indicated the vast impact of the Greco-Roman world on the early church and Christian view on sexuality, marriage and procreation.

2.4.3.1 The Greek world

The default view on monogamy was substituted for bigamy during 413 BC – 403 BC (Noy, 2000:4). Brayford (1999:175) indicated that men, however, had concubines, but that only their legitimate wives could bring forth children that were considered as legitimate. Blundell (1995:124) states that in classical Athens women that lived with men (even on a permanent basis) that were not given to them in the process of marriage, were regarded as concubines. Patterson (1991:108-109), however, mentions that marriages were deemed as a social process and not seen as a juridical event. Couples' marriages were, therefore, deemed as legitimate in the eyes of the people and not the state. It was regarded as illegal in ancient Athens to have sexual relations with another man's wife, widowed mother, unmarried sister or concubine (Blundell, 1995:125). Lyons (2003:96) indicates that some women from affluent families were able to gain more independence through the use of their dowry; this was, however, limited to the sphere of their homes. The dowry was normally used by fathers to attract wealthy husbands and to secure his daughter's safety (Blundell, 1995:69). The dowry also attracted husbands for widows, if they were still of a child-bearing age (Blundell, 1995:149).

The military background of the Greek people had an undeniable influence on their marriage practices. In the seventh century BC, the Spartan community was characterised by wife sharing and selective breeding to produce superior soldiers (Blundell, 1995:154; Powers, 2000:3). Boys were sent to military school at age seven, lived with other soldiers between ages 20 and 30 and could only return to their wives after age 30 (Morrow, 1960:53).

Plato found the body impious and placed a great value on reason and thought (De Bruyn, 1982:21). This type of philosophical reason had the effect of further demoralisation of sexuality and added to the degrading of women. This is seen in the negative view against women as seen in the Wisdom of Jesus Syrach (Syrach 25:24). The Stoic moral code, that had its origin in Zeno (336–263 BC) and Cleantha (331–232 BC), was against pleasure as a goal in life (Lohse, 1976:244). This had the effect that property and family did not enjoy priority (Dorey, 2005:65). Blundell (1995:185) mentions that Plato regarded men and women equally (except for women's child-bearing and caring function). Plato's solution for creating this equality would be to hand the function of child caring over to women of a lower class. According to Riley, the Stoic reason had an effect on Hellenistic Judaism and the early church (2016:146). Philo concluded that the original sin of Adam and Eve was of a sexual nature, and agreed with Plato that higher beings were asexual and lower beings were physically sexual (Bullough & Bullough, 1977:174). This exegetical exposition of Philo influenced early church fathers, resulting in a negative view of women (Dorey, 2005:66).

2.4.3.2 The Roman world

Marriage in the Roman world was a family event which was arranged by the male heads of the family in the case of the ruling class (Kiefer, 1934:20; Botha & Van Rensburg, 2002:58). The early Roman empire was patriarchal in nature (Dorey, 2005:67). Women, with their belongings, became her husband's possessions through marriage, as men were regarded as the owners of these women (Osiek & Balch, 1997:56-57). Women, however, were regarded with authority in the space of their homes, where she received guests and made decisions (Dorey, 2005:67). Coontz (2006) states that women had more freedom in ancient Rome than their Athenian counterparts. The influence of men, being away from home and on the battlefield, had the effect that women gained more political power. Among the lower class, marriage was not prevalent and children that came from these relationships were regarded as part of the mother's family (Kiefer, 1934:18).

Lohse (1976:202-214) mentions that some Romans that were more focused on pleasure remained unmarried. Some marriage relationships were childless. Divorce was also a rising factor. Coontz (2006) states that having children and allowing new-borns to live were matters of convenience.

Caesar Augustus's rise addressed the moral decay of Rome (Edwards, 2002:42; Guerra, 2002:3). In 18 BC he promulgated the law *Lex Julia de Adulteriis*, promoting marriage and the birth of children (Riley, 2016:163). Edwards (2002:61) mentions that adultery under Augustus' rule was regarded with the same seriousness as treason. Augustus' law led to punishment for childlessness, fathers could kill their daughters and the man she committed adultery with, and men were forced to divorce unfaithful wives. These laws were adjusted because of opposition in 9 BC (Riley, 2016:165).

Carcopino (2013) states that before Augustus betrothal was regarded as not creating any actual obligation. Satlow (2001:75) describes the influence Augustus had on the Rabbinic tradition, where betrothal was regarded as marital status. This was found in the fact that a woman stayed under guardianship of her father, and that it did not transfer to her husband when she married. She would then become a free person at the death of her father, and so would a woman that birthed three children, under reign of Augustus.

Dorey (2005:70) states that the *patria potestas* (patriarchal father authority) made it difficult for women to become free citizens as the financial implications between the *patria potestas* and *manus* (protector). A marriage under *manus* had no guarantee that the dowry, paid by the bride's father, would be used for her benefit. This dowry was even kept by the man, after divorce. Gradually families started opposing the *manus*, having the effect that free marriages

allowed for the wife to demand accountability of her husband, considering the dowry. This led to women being somewhat more protected in their marriages.

2.4.4 Marriage in the first-century Mediterranean world

Van Eck (2007a:83) explains the cultural influence on marriage of the eastern Mediterranean world in the first century. It had four prominent influences on marriage:

- Marriage was embedded in the social institution of kinship.
- Women were sociologically, economically and psychologically embedded in the paternal family.
- Personality was dyadic in nature.
- Marriage strategy was relationally connected to certain frames of time in the history of Israel and Judaism (as stated above).

2.4.4.1 Marriage as part of the family system

Malina (1986:152) identifies four social settings in the community: kinship, economic, political and religious. *Kinship* (or the family system) refers to the social structure in which people take part, as defined by their dedication to the group. The *economic* relates to provision and is characterised by the incentivisation of the exchange of goods and services. The *political* has the collective action of the community as focal point, driven by the use of power. The religious refers to the collective system that regulates being and is characterised by influence. The family system was dominant in the first-century Mediterranean world, while the religious was embedded in the other settings (Van Eck, 1995:208-211).

Malina and Rohrbaugh (1998:166-167) described the role kinship played in regulating relationships in and among family groups. It determined (and still does) different life stages or family roles, but that it differs greatly from that of the ancient agrarian societies. In the ancient world kinship dictated status, work and marriage prospects, how far relationships with others extended, where one's loyalty ended and even the deity or deities that one worshipped. This meant that kinship was embedded in a patriarchal system which was part of the hierarchal political system. The embeddedness of economics in the setting of kinship meant that family businesses or farms were significant.

In the first-century Mediterranean world, people were always embedded in the paternal family (Malina & Rohrbaugh, 1992:28, 30, 241). The sexuality of an unmarried woman belonged to her father and a married woman's belonged to her husband (Marsman, 2003:121). Marriage, as part of kinship, meant the release of the honour of her father (and the blood relations to which

she was born), to a woman's embeddedness with her husband and his extended family (Van Eck, 2007a:85).

Marriage, within this setting of kinship, meant that two extended families were “fused”. The family’s honour played an integral role, especially in negotiating the finer points of the marriage contract to ensure balanced reciprocity. Families used defensive strategies to prevent the loss of members to other families (Malina & Rohrbaugh, 1998:167). Women were the symbol of shame, because of women’s embeddedness in the honour of her husband, and they had to be sensitive not to bring shame to their husbands and extended family (Malina & Rohrbaugh, 1992:29).

Van Eck (2007b:105) mentions that the custom of arranged marriages – as was the situation in these cases – relied on the belief that children had to honour their parents. In a culture where decisions made had to benefit the extended family, the perception was that God was as involved in an arranged marriage as with the birth of a child. Malina (2001:140) explained that the choice of marriage partners was limited and that families arranged marriages among each other to fit into established kinship groups, to avoid the repercussions and insecurities of establishing relationships with the wrong groups.

After both families made a choice for the marriage partner for their son or daughter, the process of betrothal started. The father of the groom (as a form of positive challenge of the bride’s father’s honour) made an offer (in the form of goods or services) to the bride’s father (Van Eck, 2007b:109). The groom’s father, in turn, did the same. This dowry was called a *mohar* (Dorey, 2005:60). If this process was successful, the two fathers would go into a contractual agreement, witnessed by the whole community and facilitated by a town elder (for example the *paterfamilias*). This meant that the couple was engaged to each other (or betrothed) and the woman was embedded in her future husband’s honour (Van Eck, 2007b:110).

The sexual nature of a marriage was for the purpose of procreation, Ferguson (2003:74-75) mentions that consent to living together constituted marriage in these societies and that its sole purpose was procreation. Marriages were registered to legitimise the children that came from these marriages.

2.4.4.2 Honour and shame

Judean marital customs should be seen in the light of honour and shame (Dorey, 2005:35). Honour and shame were among the most powerful driving forces in Judean Old Testament culture (Brayford, 1999:163; Satlow, 2001:101).

Malina (2001:30) explains that honour “might described as socially proper attitudes and behaviour in the area where the three lines of authority, gender status, and respect intersect”. Malina and Pilch (2006:368) extend this cultural norm to the first-century New Testament world by explaining that in all societies sanctions are used in the upbringing of children. The sanctions used included guilt, shame and anxiety. In a cultural setting a focus is placed on one of these three, so the Mediterranean societies of the first century used shame as the key sanction for noncompliance. The absence of shame constituted honour.

In this manner honour referred to public reputation of a person or group, or how the community and the public recognised one’s standing. To claim honour that was not recognised in the community was foolish and such a person was perceived as greedy or dishonest, because of society’s perception of limited goods. Honour and shame were forms of social evaluation in which men and women equally had to evaluate their conduct as well as the conduct of those they were associated with (Malina & Pilch, 2006:368-369).

Malina (2001:49) explained that shame could be seen in a positive light, when one is sensitive about your reputation and other’s opinion. Shame, therefore, has a dual meaning: a sensitivity towards honourable actions (positive) and the result of shameless behaviour (negative). One could also lose your honour, by being publicly shamed (Van Eck, Ernest 2007a:86).

Children could be born in honour, and if they were part of a prestigious family, likewise their honour would be higher. Honour could also be bestowed upon someone with political power (Malina & Neyrey, 1991:28). Awarded honour was given through someone’s achievements, most likely through “challenge-riposte” where one would publicly challenge someone that is on a similar social scale in order to gain the other person’s honour (Malina & Pilch, 2006:334).

This description of honour and shame is important when considering marriage in the first century Mediterranean world. Honour is defined in terms of roles males and females had to fulfil. It also defined the social spaces in which these genders operated (Van Eck, 2007a:87).

The spaces and work men and women were allowed to fill differed vastly. Men were supposed to live “out of doors” during the day, with other men. Their space was the public sphere, “male spaces” and busy with “male things”. During the day they had to be away from home; sowing, reaping or gathering if they were peasants or at the gymnasium or participating in civic discussions if they were part of the urban elite (Neyrey, 1998:212; Malina & Neyrey, 1991:43).

Women lived “inside”; their space was the home, being busy with “female things” in “female places”: caring of children, preparing food and making clothes. The male and female spaces never mixed. Women were, however, at certain times allowed outside to fetch water, but then they were accompanied by other females and had the proper head covering. These two spaces

in which men and women operated were taken very literally and crossing these spaces would result in shamelessness or dishonourable behaviour (Van Eck, 2007a:89-90).

A virgin protected her father and family by abstaining from promiscuity. By staying a virgin she secured economic and political security, as it was a sign of stability in her father's house. Families primarily lost honour through the actions of the women in those families (Dorey, 2005:36).

Browning (2003:75) states that the changing view on honour and shame, together with a new imperative of male responsibility and servanthood, is one of the most important transformations brought forward by Christendom. The Christian view on grace and mercy demanded a cultural and religious change of Jesus' followers. It demanded an attitude of humility and mercy from men and lifted the value and regard of women and children. This turned the status of male dominance to accept the equality of males females and children (Dorey, 2005:77).

When considering the difference in roles and spaces and how societal roles were perceived in the first century Mediterranean world, or even earlier ages, and the role of equality between men and women in the workplace, one needs to ask in which ways the Biblical norms of marriage and work could and should influence postmodern society.

2.4.4.3 Dyadic personality

Van Eck (1995:175-179) mentions that the important role of honour and shame, with the fact that marriage was embedded in kinship, should be understood from the perspective of a dyadic personality in the first century Mediterranean world. Dyadism is a system by which one needs others in order to know who you are. The idea of individualism was, therefore, a foreign concept in the first century Mediterranean world. The main structure of this dyadic personality was the family unit, and without the family they ceased to exist.

People in this era were defined by the group they belonged to. Approval for behaviour, in the eyes of the group, meant honourable behaviour for the individual. One, therefore, had to fully understand one's role in the group and in society to act appropriately and show the necessary sensitivity (or shame) to act honourably (Malina, 1979:62-76). A person needed other people for his or her existence to be recognised. Meaningful existence meant being aware of what the other members in your group thought of you. Your in-group acted as your conscience (Van Eck, 1995:176).

The result of dyadic personality in the first century Mediterranean world was not only that people had to rely on others to be defined as to who they were, but also did not know each other on a psychological or emotional level. This is a clear difference in how modern relationships are

formed, compared to the first-century person in the Mediterranean world (Van Eck, 2007a:92). Further, people that were not part of the in-group, were seen in a negative light. People that might have had the same ethnicity, but were considered strangers as they were from another town, were perceived as potential enemies. People from another ethnicity were perceived as enemies by default (Malina & Neyrey, 1991:32).

2.4.5 Biblical values for marriage and work

Van Eck (2007c:482) underscores the imperative of not working ethnocentrically or anachronistically with Biblical Text and importantly to allow a cultural critical reading of the Text (through a social-science reading), to distinguish between contingency (cultural) and necessity (gospel). Secondly it allows for a deliberate hermeneutical approach of the Text, not with a “canon within the canon” approach, but rather a “canon behind the canon” – allowing the “cause of Jesus” to come to the foreground (Van Aarde, 2001:148-149). Van Eck (2007c:482) also considers that some of the text found in the Gospels or Paul could be an estrangement of the “cause of Jesus”. This means that Jesus’ sayings about marriage, adultery, divorce and remarriage in Q 16:18 (Luke 16:18 and Matthew 5:31-32), Mark 10:2-12 and its parallel Matthew 19:3-12 cannot be taken as “the plain sense of Scripture”.

When taking the above-mentioned into consideration, Loader (2005:142) describes that Jesus had a subversive stance towards kinship and the patriarchal system of the first century Mediterranean world. We should not be misguided into thinking that it refers to our current understanding of family, but that Jesus’ stance referred to a social and political structure that dehumanised people. Jesus instead called for a new type of personhood, an alternative to the marginalising first century Mediterranean structure.

Van Eck (2007c:502-503) described that Jesus associated with the marginalised of the patriarchal system: Jesus healed women (Mark 5:21-43; 7:24-30; Luke 7:11-17; 8:1-3; 13:10-17), he made no distinction between men and women or perceived women as sexual objects or symbols of uncleanness (Mark 7:24-30). He had respect for women’s sexuality (Matthew 5:28). He celebrated women as examples of true faith and discipleship (Mark 7:24-30; 14:41-44), He allows a woman to anoint Him (Mark 14:3-9), talks to a woman in public (John 4:1-20), eats in the presence of prostitutes (Luke 7:34-50) and women are often part of His parables (Matthew 13:31-33; Luke 15:4-10). Women of a dishonourable reputation were include in his genealogy (Matthew 1:1-17; Luke 3:21-38) and he refused to partake in androcentric humour about a woman with seven husbands (Mark 12:18-27). Jesus is inclusive, non-sexist and treats women equally as he would men – clearly a critique of a patriarchal society that marginalises women, children and the so-called “unclean”.

Van Eck (2007c:509) mentions that Jesus was critical of the institution of marriage in the first-century Mediterranean world, as it marginalised women and children and left vulnerable people open to become easy victims of a patriarchal system. This excluded them from society in the political, economic and social areas. Furthermore, Van Eck (2007a:82-83) mentions that western postmodern marriages are characterised by companionship, shared memories and trust, unlike arranged marriages in the first century Mediterranean world. Relationships in current times are more value driven, anti-patriarchal and redefine gender roles. A fusion between the professional and familial sphere is also noticeable: men do not work “outside” and women “inside” anymore. Men and women are often equally engaged at work and the patriarchal hierarchy does not dictate who should marry whom or whose work is more important than the other’s.

In an argument that the postmodern marriage and view on work should be “Biblical”, Van Eck (2007b:125-126) mentions that it could not be accepted, as it leads to an anachronistic and ethnocentric reading of Scripture. Cultural sensitivity when reading Scripture should be considered, or we will find our own postmodern views in the New Testament. Rather, the canon, instead of the culture of the canon, should inspire our lives and the church. This leaves space for couples to explore Biblical values they find appropriate for their work and family lives in an activity of co-creation and meaning making.

2.5 Introducing narrative research to the stories of premarital couples

What are couples’ stories of work-family balance? In this section we will be looking at our co-researchers’ (couples’) stories of their proposed marriage and how they balance work and family life. The route for this discovery will now be introduced. By adding the stories couples have about work, the couple can decide on the influence they want work to have in their life. This forms part of a balanced bicycle ride (explained in Chapter 4) couples share with work to keep moving forward regarding work-family balance.

2.5.1 Narrative research

The narrative approach used in this study is a respected form of qualitative research, used in various disciplines of study (Mcqueen & Zimmerman, 2006:475). This enables the researcher to do research within the postmodern paradigm of social constructionism. Subjective integrity, rather than objective truth or knowledge is used and acknowledges the researcher’s presence and influence within the process of research – instead of denying and negating the researcher’s biases (Müller *et al.*, 2001:77).

Narrative research, as a qualitative research method, is based in the literature tradition of collecting and analysing themes within narratives (Casey, 1995:211). Interpretive narrative research, in the social sciences, is guided by researchers. Through using pre-planned questions on a particular topic, narratives are formed. One can thereafter formulate follow-up and clarifying questions (Mcqueen & Zimmerman, 2006:475-476). The narrative approach can be used for interpreting different kinds of data such as interviews, observations, diaries, videos, internet pages and research findings (Wiklund-Gustin, 2010:32).

Within interpretive narrative research, co-researchers are selected on the basis of certain particularities. Participants are not randomly selected, but meet the criteria of the particular research project (Mcqueen & Zimmerman, 2006:476). Careful consideration concerning participants' unique experiences dictates the inclusion or exclusion of co-researchers in setting up an appropriate framework for narratives (Wiklund-Gustin, 2010:34). This underlines that information gathered from narrative research in the area of qualitative research cannot be generalised, but rather describes the narrative themes within a specific context.

The narrative researcher does not work with a hypothesis of confirmation or disconfirmation. Instead, he or she tries to understand how people construct their lives within their socio-cultural context. Within narrative research people and their stories are important, and they are not seen as mere research subjects, but as co-researchers (Müller *et al.*, 2001:79). Qualitative data in the form of narratives are mutually recorded within conversation (Wiklund-Gustin, 2010:33). Wiklund-Gustin (2010:34) explains that the narrative researcher should possess the necessary self-esteem and autonomy that allow him or her to let narratives develop, instead of controlling what happens. This gives the storyteller the opportunity to focus on what is important to them and forces the researcher to step away from preconceived ideas of what "ought to be in focus".

In narrative research, the meaning of co-researchers' stories plays an integral part. Accurate portrayal of co-researchers' stories and their interpretation are therefore critical and should be correlated with respondents for the correct intention and meaning. Being in constant conversation with co-researchers will ensure that authenticity gets priority. For Wiklund (2010:61), authenticity within the narrative paradigm is paramount: "Analysis must be performed in a way that allows narrative qualities to be visible in the findings."

As the primary researcher, I engaged in constant reflection and facilitation of the various couples' stories relating to their relationship. When the co-researchers shared their stories of their relationship and the meaning of work-life together with their relationship story, it aided the storyline and identity of their relationship (Müller *et al.*, 2001:80-83). It remained, however, the co-researchers' decision whether the stories they told about their relationship were relevant (Müller, 2000). Narrative research is not just concerned with the collection of data; it is rather

focused on the meaning that co-researchers link to these stories. Wiklund-Gustin (2010:36) emphasises that narrative research is not the mere interpretation of interview transcriptions, but rather the meaning created within the conversation between the researcher and co-researchers. Identity is formed within the dialogue. The process of narration and narratives in conversation should therefore not be reduced to a mere methodology of retelling or interpreting past events.

2.5.1.1 Externalisation

Externalisation is a technique within narrative therapy, used to separate a person's identity from the problem for which they seek counselling (Morgan, 2000:17). Within this study, it forms part of the methodology as a means to gather information about couples' relationships and their work narratives. Feelings, problems between people, cultural and social practices and other metaphors can be externalised (Morgan, 2000:20-21).

Developed by Michael White, externalisation is used to objectify and personify issues that people may experience. The "problem" is identified as a separate entity, seen apart from the person that this matter has an effect on (Freedman & Combs, 1996b:47). Externalisation helped conversation in this study to aid couples in telling the stories about their relationship and work-life. In the case of this study the concepts of "relationship" and "work" were externalised. Although these two "entities" were not seen as problem stories, the technique of externalisation, when talking about relationship and work, aided respondents in creating an imagined story of the future (Müller, 1996:165-166).

Externalisation requires a shift in language. Problems, or in this case the stories of *relationship* and *work*, were discussed as separate from the couple. This should then not only be seen as a technique in narrative therapy, but rather a point of departure. The experience individuals have of judgement or being pathologised is minimised, compared to a positivistic model of counselling. Ideally, the work and relationship stories should get their own descriptive name, connected to the values that the relationship and work stories represent. The use of metaphor is therefore utilised in this process of externalisation (Morgan, 2000:17-21).

2.5.1.2 Metaphor

Wiklund (2010:61) explains that *metaphor* could be understood as "two conceptual domains" that are related in terms of one another. This will create connections of "language and meaning" and enhance them as tools to facilitate communication. The narrative therapist never wants to impose a metaphor on the conversation partner: in the process of re-authoring a narrative it is important that someone choose their own metaphor to explain the situation (Morgan, 2000:20). In the case of the premarital couples, couples chose a metaphor for their relationship which embodied the values and uniqueness of their relationship.

Experiences, abstract situations and complex phenomena are explained in more tangible and comprehensible ways through the use of metaphor (Wiklund, 2010:61). In a therapeutic situation, metaphors aid conversation partners in the process of separating themselves from a problem (Swart, 2013:77). In the context of premarital counselling a positive metaphor aids couples in the search of an alternative future story – one they will be working on to realise together.

In both research and therapeutic situations the use of metaphor could aid investigation in describing abstract concepts (Van Den Berg, 2014:1). Metaphors, as an analytical tool in hermeneutic inquiry, aid in the following ways: they facilitate understanding and help the researcher and co-researchers to become more objective towards phenomena (Wiklund, 2010:63), in this case by creating metaphors to externalise couples' relationships. Creating understanding for both partners in the relationship is essential. Metaphors assisted these couples in developing like-minded language to talk to each other about their relationship. Ganzevoort (2009:5) even uses the metaphor of "tracing" when reconstructing and developing knowledge, as one does in the process of narrative research and therapy.

2.5.1.3 Assumptions

When working from a narrative perspective, one needs to be aware of one's own biases. Being aware of your own subjectivity, or as Freedman and Combs (1996:40-41) call it "subjective integrity", is a critical approach within narrative research. It is, therefore, good practice to present my own biases and expectations, in order to stay true to the research process, but also to give unique voices the chance to come forward.

The intention here is not to prove or disprove any of it. Assumptions will be scrutinised as part of the process. Naturally, these assumptions form part of the motivation for the study, although they are not necessarily formally part of the research problem.

Families struggle because of work taking too much time from family relationships

Couples not spending enough time together may find it hard to stay together. Marital satisfaction deteriorates as an effect of not investing enough time and commitment to a relationship, although the amount of time needed to sustain relationships may vary between different relationships.

Corporate organisations create wellness programs to cover themselves from unnecessary legal action

Although the wellness programs created by some corporate organisations and businesses may have a positive spin-off for their workers the most prominent reason why corporate institutions create these programs is to increase the productivity from employees and to avoid legal action from unions and bodies protecting workers.

Parents who are absent from their children's lives create children who are absent from their children's lives.

Modelling behaviour of parents will create a negative environment for their children. These children will grow up lacking the necessary social skills to be present and engaging with their own families and will compensate for their lack of emotional intelligence by engaging more with the work environment.

Wellness programs could help families

I expect to find that some wellness programs implemented in corporate and business environments help families in relieving strain from the family structure. I would like to investigate which ones do and what the reasons are for them working.

Premarital counselling will help families with their work-family balance

The work-family discussion could be easily added to premarital counselling practice, and will hopefully help couples set the necessary boundaries within their relationship to balance work-family life. I expected that having a discussion on the value system of couples' relationships in premarital counselling will aid marriages in making life-changing decisions.

2.5.2 Narrative therapy

Michael White and David Epston could be seen as the fathers of narrative therapy, combining the approaches of narrative and social construction (Freedman & Combs, 1996:xvii-1). They encourage people to look at their lives as stories to find meaning. This helps people to realise which voices and influences assisted in building their realities and the meaning people experience in their lives.

Morgan (2000:2) describes narrative therapy as a "respectful, non-blaming approach" of counselling and work in the community. An integral premise of narrative therapy is that it recognises people as the "experts in their own lives." Additionally, people are separated from their problems and could rely on various "skills, competencies, beliefs, values, commitments

and abilities” that will enable them to manage and even diminish the power of these problems in their lives.

The narrative process involved in this study is based on the works of Müller: *Om tot verhaal te kom* (1996), *Companions on the journey* (1999) and *Reis-geselskap* (2000). In *Om tot verhaal te kom* a narrative approach is described on the basis of the following movements:

- The story of need;
- The story of the past;
- The story of the future;
- The re-authored story of the past; and
- The imagined story of the future.

As narrative counsellors, we should allow our conversational partners to take responsibility for their own lives. Narrative counsellors have the role of inviting their conversation partners to explore new horizons (Müller & Stone, 1998:331). It is through the telling and retelling of our stories that new possibilities and change in people’s narrative identity are created.

Anderson and Goolishian (1992:27-28) base their view of therapy within the narrative position on the following premises:

- Human systems are language generating as well as meaning generating. Communication and discourse define social organisation. They acknowledge the therapeutic system as a linguistic system.
- Meaning and understanding are constructed socially. Dialogue is imperative and relevant in therapy.
- Dialogue and meaning making are critical in “dis-solving” of problem-narratives. They called the therapeutic system a “problem organising, problem dis-solving system”.
- Therapy is an event of language, where dialogue is used to search and explore for new meaning and solution.
- The narrative therapist is compared to an architect, who facilitates and creates new space in order for new meaning to evolve through language and dialogue.
- This art of the narrative therapist is embodied through conversational and therapeutic questions. These questions are guided by the “not-knowing-position” where a therapist truly asks questions to which he or she does not know the answer.
- Change in narrative therapy comes through the creation of new narratives, in which new possibilities and meaning are created.

In narrative therapy stories of meaning are sought after. A thick description of stories, through the selection and interpretation of certain events from the past or present, helps to create these stories of meaning (Morgan, 2000:11-12). By telling and retelling certain events, conversational partners reframe their identity, and new avenues of interpretation are explored (Müller, 2001, Human, 2003:43). As my research was done with premarital couples, the “story of need” played less of a prominent role, especially with these couples intended to get married. Stories pertaining to couples’ work-family balance involved stories of need that were re-framed during the narrative counselling process.

2.5.3 Narrative counselling with premarital couples

As stated, the focus of narrative counselling with premarital couples is much rather on positive narratives instead of searching for problem-saturated stories. Prinsloo (1999:138) expresses his concern of marital counselling which tends to focus on problem-orientated stories because, in his opinion, it is much harder to create positive stories if a problem-saturated narrative is the starting point. In other types of narrative counselling the problem-saturated narrative, or as Müller (2000) calls it “the story of need” will play a more prominent role in the counselling process. Prinsloo (1999:138) engages narrative counselling with couples from a “success-orientated narrative”, focused on constructing the success narrative for the couple’s story.

It is through the influence of Julian Müller’s book *Reis-geselskap* (2000), the work and conversations with Ruben Kitching (2008), Prinsloo’s (1999) work on marriage enrichment, conversations and training with Roelf Opperman and Fritz Snyman (2005) on experiential learning, and conversations with my colleague Jan Bester that the following route of premarital counselling was formed within the narrative position.

When we invite couples to voice their life stories through conversation, we are allowed into a rich description of complex life experiences. Couples will find it much easier when they are allowed to narrate the story of their relationship, rather than directly asking what their relationship values are, what the origin of their conflict is and how one should balance work and family life (Campbell-Reed & Scharen, 2013:244).

The route of narrative premarital counselling lingers at the following stations:

- Exploring individual values and significant patterns (packing the bags);
- Establishing the couple’s relationship values (setting course);
- Creating a metaphor for the relationship (packing the car);
- Strengthening of the relationship metaphor (safety checks and filling up); and
- Using the relationship metaphor to extend beyond the local community (on the open road).

2.5.3.1 Packing the bags

As pointed out earlier, people's identity is linked to the stories they choose to tell about themselves (Demasure & Müller, 2006:412). We also create meaning through the experiences we relate to, which becomes part of our reality (Van Der Westhuizen, 2008:20).

At our first station on this narrative route of premarital counselling we are taking, we stop and look at the stories the individuals that make up the couple getting married tell about themselves. There are different ways of getting people to tell their own stories about who they are and what is important to them. One could consider the following options:

- Having a person describe how his or her ideal house would look; where this house is situated, what the descriptive characteristics and qualities of the house are, and who is welcome to visit and when. Elmo Pienaar (2016) presented this example as a way for someone to externalise his or her motivations and what someone considers being important.
- Campbell-Reed and Scharen (2013:244) suggested the question "How did you get to today?" to engage understanding and interpretation in such an initial counselling session. This could invite the speaker to talk about their childhood, their family life or other formative experiences that introduce the speaker and listeners to the "interhuman sphere", a reality of "face-to-face rationality" (Campbell-Reed & Scharen, 2013:245).
- Let someone pick out pictures from a magazine or from the internet that portray what the person identifies as important in his or her life. They should present these pictures and the stories of meaning they find in this pictures when meeting the counsellor with their partner.
- During this study, I chose to ask the individuals to bring along individual timelines of their lives thus far. These timelines should indicate the highs and lows they have experienced. Individuals are to present these timelines to their partner and the narrative counsellor.

In listening to the different stories that the individuals present, the counsellor asks the couple to listen for certain patterns they find in their own and other person's story. The process of packing your travel bags is a process of taking inventory. It is as important for the person that is packing the bags to realise which luggage they are taking along for the road ahead, as it is for his or her partner. It is in these patterns that different discourses in the person's stories of identity are found.

It is important for the partner to be aware of these various discourses of what his or her significant other finds relevant in their story, as these patterns are bound to be repeated. Themes of family and achievement might form part of a person's dominant narratives, for instance, if a person shares stories of the loss of a family member which they have found traumatic, or they tell about how proud they were when they became a school prefect, or they

express their feeling of sadness when not making the first rugby team and the sadness and confusion when their parents got divorced, or how excited they are about getting married. It is, however, always important to ask a person which of the highs and lows they would group together, in order for the narrative counsellor to allow a person to find their own significant discourses. These discourses might have an influence on the relationship of the couple e.g. when someone finds spending time with family more important than with friends and that person's partner find the opposite necessary, tension and conflict will be avoided if a person is aware of his or her partner's needs and the couple communicate it openly with each other.

The needs and values of a person might also have an influence on the couple's shared values, and that will be explored at the next station.

2.5.3.2 Setting course

Instead of looking for an alternative story – like in the work of Müller (2000) and Swart (2013:74) at the lack of having a “story of need” – the story of “setting the course” will form the main narrative and identity of the relationship. We could ask: “What is the path the couple wants to embark on?” To find this meaning, the couple should be guided to explore the main values and unique characteristics of their relationship. The following options in helping the couple express their relationship's values were considered:

- The method used in this study included searching the internet for various types of pictures that are relatable to love, family, intimacy, conflict, vacation, home, nature, unhappiness, happiness, children, etc. I unpacked these cards, 99 in total, on a table and asked the two individuals to each identify four or five qualities or values of their relationship, by using the picture cards. The use of picture cards is part of the experiential learning training I received from Roelf Opperman (2005). People use these cards to tell their own story, as the cards do not have a predetermined meaning.
- The same method can be applied to pictures in a magazine. In this case, the couple might cut out these pictures and use them in a collage to help them externalise and tell their relationship story.
- The couple could also just name the values that they find important in their relationship.

It is important to reflect, with the couple, on the values they have identified, as this will form part of their relationship metaphor. Clarification, to make sure that the counsellor understood the couple correctly and wrote down the values they have identified in their own words, should be part of this process.

As an example, one person could identify trust, safety, love and openness in the context of the values they find in their relationship, while the other person uses the words communication,

quality time, having fun and feeling safe. These relationship values form part of the parameters that the couple sets for their relationship. Decisions for the future are made within these parameters.

This provides a couple with the necessary language that forms part of the relationship identity. Sharing the same language will help the couple to communicate effectively by understanding each other, especially when both understand where this specific language originates.

If a person in a relationship feels that a decision they are making does not fall in the spectrum of their relationship values, it can easily be expressed by using the language that forms part of the relationship's identity. For example, when a person in a relationship with the values just mentioned realised that the other partner has withheld vital information from them, the value and language of trust, openness and communication is relevant and could be used to open up the conversation about the needs and values of the partner and respect for the relationship.

2.5.3.3 Packing the car

By using a metaphor to externalise the relationship and exploring the fine nuances of these values that are supported through the utilisation of the metaphor, a stronger picture of what the couple expects from each other is established. By using the language of metaphor during communication, the couple will be meeting each other on equal ground, as they are co-creators of the relationship's identity.

It could be wise to allow the couple to reflect on the values they have chosen and give a name or a metaphor for the relationship; that embodies these values and then come back in another session with the relationship metaphor they chose. The metaphor should be able to reflect the values, strong points, vulnerabilities and hopes and dreams the couple has for their relationship. This will aid the couple in thickening the story of their relationship (Morgan, 2000:69-70; Swart, 2013:75-77).

This process of "packing their relationship-car" should prepare them for the road ahead. The metaphor chosen should be as vivid, tangible and relevant as possible to them. It should be a metaphor that they can easily remember and one that allows them to explore the identity of their relationship even further.

Creating a metaphor as a form of externalisation will have the following benefits:

- Using shared language that the couple has created themselves for their relationship will create a sense of better communication, as couples can more specifically understand each other as co-creators of meaning.

- Having an externalised metaphor for the relationship will help both parties in the relationship in decision making, when the impact on the relationship is considered and how decisions reflect the values of the relationship.
- The couple not only stands in relation with each other, but also in relation to the relationship itself. If, for whatever reason, they find themselves in a moment of feeling anger, resentment or any negative feeling towards their partner, the externalised relationship and the values (that form part of the relationship) could aid them both toward moving closer through working on the relationship and building on its values.
- Using the creative language of the relationship metaphor in areas of conflict could take the sting out of the fight. Creative language could even make light of the situation and bring the couple into a better mood when communicating in difficult circumstances.
- Using of creative metaphoric language will help the couple to look at situations more objectively and to see the situation from their partner's perspective.
- Using creative language will stimulate problem-solving skills and help couples look at their situation from a different viewpoint.

As seen from the benefits as mentioned above the process of creating a relationship metaphor creates valuable opportunities for creating meaning and understanding not just for the couples' wedding preparation but also for their future together.

2.5.3.4 Safety checks and filling up

As one does, going on a long road, it is important to check the tyre pressure, the oil and to fill up the car – if you do not want to become stranded along the road. This station on the premarital counselling route is the one where the narrative counsellor will have to keep his or her creative juices flowing.

Firstly you will be listening carefully to the metaphor the couple chose to describe their relationship. Also, check that they have included all the values they have identified in their metaphor. This part of the process is one where the metaphor comes alive – especially if they have not put much effort into their metaphor – the couple might need some help.

The important parts of strengthening their relationship metaphor will be “safety checking” the following aspects:

- Are all the values of their relationship included in their metaphor?
- Have they explored what the strengths of their relationship are and how that is symbolised in the metaphor?

- What are the weaknesses of the relationship, or which aspects of their relationship do they want to work on, and what effects does it have on their metaphor?
- What are the “safety features” or “checks” they can do to make sure their metaphor is working optimally?
- What should they steer clear of?

Let us put these “safety checks” into practice by using the values we have listed under “setting course” and explore a metaphor as an example. Our hypothetical couple has chosen the following relationship values:

- Trust
- Safety
- Love
- Openness
- Communication
- Quality time
- Having fun
- Feeling safe.

Let us say that they chose to embody their relationship as a sunflower, with the bright yellow petals of a sunflower symbolising them having fun. One can explore their metaphor on “having fun” by asking what things they do together that are fun for them. Let us say that they enjoy going out together and like exploring at flea markets, and they like hiking and jogging together. One can note that physical activity and exploration help them as a couple.

They might explain that as a sunflower turns its head towards the sun, so their heads are turned towards each other, symbolising communication and openness. The counsellor could ask them how they ensure that communication stays open and what they do on cloudy days when the sun’s rays are not that apparent. It is also worthwhile to explore how a couple expresses frustration and anger in their methods of communication, as conflict could be seen as a form of communicating. Do they share the same communications styles or how do they differ? If this couple has chosen openness as part of their communication style, it is likely that they feel it to be important to communicate openly about their feelings. It might help them to use the language of the sunflower to enhance their communication in relation to the sunflower. The other values and parts of being a sunflower will assist them with this.

Let us say this couple expresses the need to see each other’s faces, by reflecting on the positive. In looking at each other’s faces they deliberately choose to “check in” with how the other person is feeling and being sensitive in their communication with each other. They might

be “partnering with the wind”, to blow away the clouds, enabling the sun to shine again. In this case “partnering with the wind” could mean clearing up space to communicate openly.

How does one make a sunflower feel safe? Our hypothetical couple might have chosen to have the sunflower firmly planted in rich soil, making sure the nutrients they get from the ground are beneficial for growth. This might include them checking that they will be financially stable, that they have a strong foundation to work from – which could include family and friends as well as a good work life. Soil being too rich could make the sunflower feel overwhelmed and could be wasteful. A sunflower can only take up so many nutrients. What would be the barriers or boundaries they have in place making sure that the right nutrients get through at the right time?

The couple could possibly then reflect on the other aspects and values of their relationship: How will communication help them with boundaries? How will they make sure they are living according to their means? How will they handle family or friends imposing their ideas of relationship (and at the time of premarital counselling: what should be happening at the wedding) on them? These are some of the aspects that could be explored further.

In explaining the values of love and quality time, our couple could choose the water a sunflower needs to give attention to this aspect. One could ask them what the benefits of this water are and how frequently the sunflower needs water. This could open up a very important aspect in the discussion on what is expected in terms of time spent together as relationship partners might have different ideas on how they spend quality time and how often they need to spend time. If one of them feels crowded or overwhelmed by his or her partner’s need for attention, the aspect and necessity of watering a plant could be used as a practical example of what is expected of each other.

The counsellor could also explore what would happen to the sunflower if it does not get enough water. One could also explore what “giving water” typically looks like for them. Is it the same as the bright yellow of the sunflower’s petals? This gives the counsellor an opportunity to explore the sunflower’s field of meaning together with the couple.

An aspect our couple forgot to include in their metaphor is trust. One could ask them upfront if there is any part of the sunflower they would connect it to, or one can suggest a part for them. As you are working with a metaphor they have chosen, and they already chose the value of trust, it is acceptable in the process of co-creation and meaning making to give such a suggestion. Let us say our couple feels comfortable with the idea of linking trust with the sunflower seed that is protected by shells.

These shells could then also be linked with the boundaries that you asked them about when talking about the soil, but it is up to the couple to decide as their metaphor should be true to who they are – it stays their metaphor after all.

Once the different aspects and values are covered, attention should be spent on reinforcing the metaphor. In asking them on the unique strengths their sunflower has, they might feel that their sunflower has a strong stem. The sunflower is a place of safety for them, something that helps them stay upright. In being together, their lives are enhanced. The leaves also give them energy, like a sunflower gets energy from the sun to photosynthesise through its leaves.

In speaking about weaknesses the sunflower or any other metaphor might have, it might be better to link such a weakness to an external factor that has an influence on the sunflower. The reason is that one does not want to weaken the identity of the relationship by making the weakness part of the metaphor. The influence of gale force winds, drought, clouds or other external factors could have on the sunflower should be explored as well as an action plan of how one handles drought or when the sun is covered by clouds.

As mentioned earlier the sunflower might partner up with the wind to blow away some clouds to allow the sunflower to feel the sun on its face, but the delicate relationship where the wind might take over and bend the sunflower should be taken into consideration. As mentioned “clearing up space” to talk to each other could be seen as the wind’s job, but isolation (when clearing up space for too long) could be like leaving the sunflower malnourished (when the couple would isolate themselves for too long from family, friends and work).

Safety features our couple’s sunflower might have are looking at the sunflower and making sure that it stays strong. Frequent water and opening up to the sun might be important. If a couple does not have a plan to make sure that this happens, the counsellor might suggest some ideas like frequent date nights or making sure that they spend time together (planning time in one’s diary, for example).

It is also a responsible idea to ask the couple what things they have realised are positive or detrimental to their relationship. Having them identify these aspects will encourage them to plan on what they could do to make their sunflower flourish. As a personal preference I would have the couple determine the negative things that could damage the sunflower, but have them focusing on the positive, replacing the negative with the positive. This is in line with the creation of an alternative story for one’s narrative and reinforcing the new re-imagined story (Müller, 2000).

2.5.3.5 On the open road

At this station on the premarital narrative counselling route attention is given to more external factors that the couple experience. Within the seven movements of postfoundational practical theology by Müller (2004:300) this station could be used to reflect on God's presence in the couple's relationship (if it was not mentioned already), another one of the movements would be to develop an "alternative interpretation that points beyond the local community" – linking with the research topic this could be used to talk with the couple about work-family balance and other relationships, such as family and friends.

In the method used for discussion in this study, the couple was once again asked to choose four or five picture cards from the deck that remind them of challenges and benefits they experience from their work situation. The idea is to invite the couple into a discussion and reflection on the influence their relationship story and their story about work have on each other.

Although people might have some negative discourses around work, care should be taken in regard to how work is referred to. One could easily, if one of the partners has a negative story about work, externalise this narrative in a way that you would with narrative counselling (Morgan, 2000:17). The counsellor should, however, respect the agenda of why the couple is there in the first place. If the discussion leans towards a counselling session on a "story of need" in connection with work, then it is important to convey to the couple that more time could be spent on this topic (Müller, 2000).

The counsellor should be aware of his or her own power and consider that in the creation of a metaphor for work. If a person is relatively happy in his or her work environment, though there could be a few negative aspects, the counsellor should be respectful in the way they talk about work. Work should not become a "monster that preys on the relationship", that will be detrimental to the way the couple perceives their work-family balance.

If an overly negative metaphor for work is created, the couple (or the person whose work situation it is) could start developing even more negative feelings towards their work – a situation they might still need to function in. The discourses at play in the work environment should be assessed through mutual discussion, with respect for both the work and relationship situation.

If the couple agrees that this avenue is an important one for them to explore and they want to create metaphors for their work lives, it could obviously be done, and one would follow the same route as with "setting the course", "packing the car" and "safety checks and filling up".

The narrative counsellor and couple would then be working with three different metaphors and explore the relationship between these three. Otherwise, the various aspects (positives, negatives, values and so on) that work has on the relationship metaphor will be discussed.

The different stations of narrative premarital counselling will be re-explored as “packing the bags”, “setting course” and the stations of “packing the car” and “safety checks and filling up” becomes relevant again. The couple is invited to reflect on their own values; what they find important and meaningful for their life, what the relationship finds important and the value they find in their relationship and the influence work (or any other external factor; whether family and friends, health, wealth or their faith) might have on them.

It is at this point in the conversation that the couple is confronted with a question about balance and what it means for them “to be balanced”.

Careful consideration at this point should be taken by the counsellor to stay in a “not-knowing position” and to ask questions of which he or she really does not know the answer to (Anderson & Goolishian, 1992:26). As this is a process of co-creation and the “client is the expert”, careful respect is important in guiding the couple to balance the narratives of work and family (Anderson & Goolishian, 1992:29; Brunsdon, 2010:11).

Let us take our couple’s metaphor of a sunflower again and consider the influence of work on the sunflower. The one person might have decided on cards that reflect time management, intellectually stimulating, congenial co-workers and a positive work environment even though it could be challenging at times. This person chose to name the work story “Busy Bee”.

The other partner’s work narrative is more of a challenge. Even though the payment is good, the person feels micromanaged and overwhelmed, but there is an option for promotion. This person calls the work “Chapman’s Peak”, with beautiful vistas of the sea and mountains, but very challenging.

In this case the influence of “Busy Bee” and “Chapman’s Peak” could be explored in relation to “Sunflower”:

- What would the benefits on Sunflower be? Is this a symbiotic relationship?
- Is this relationship sustainable or what adjustments would be necessary?
- Is the possibility of getting a promotion on the horizon enough to keep going? If not what would the impact be on Sunflower?
- What are contributions that “Busy Bee” and “Chapman’s Peak” give to “Sunflower”?
- In which ways are “Sunflower” being held back by “Busy Bee” and “Chapman’s Peak”?
- Where would “Busy Bee” and “Chapman’s Peak” stand in relation to “Sunflower”?

These questions explore the relation between the work and relationship metaphors and should be able to guide the counsellor and couple in the direction of how balance is found between work and family. As couples' relationship narratives and metaphors differ, so will their work narratives and metaphors, and the balance for couples, differ.

The couple could be invited to go through the same process – like this example of the work-family balance conversation – with other aspects, influences or relationships. This would include their relationship with God, friends and family and how it influences their relationship. This route of premarital narrative counselling would therefore also have the potential to be applied towards marital or relationship counselling, through the use of externalisation.

2.6 The narratives of premarital couples, focused on their work-family balance

The following couples presented themselves at Dutch Reformed Wierdapark with the intention of getting married. Over the course of four sessions we discussed their relationship by using the route of narrative premarital counselling as set out in 2.7. We explored their individual needs and the values they shared as a couple. These values were further investigated and developed to accentuate the strengths and become cognisant of the weaknesses. A plan to use these strengths to overcome the weaknesses was considered by the couples and their relationship metaphors were further developed by exploring what each couple considered as a workable work-family balance for their relationship.

Following is a report on the conversations during premarital couples' pastoral counselling sessions. Information from four counselling sessions with the couples' reflections on work-family balance were combined to integrate the relationship metaphors of couples and the work narrative.

The description of the first couple's relationship metaphor will be used to indicate how the route of narrative premarital counselling was used to develop the couples' relationship metaphors. The other couples' metaphors and relationships will just be described, as the same route of narrative premarital counselling was used to explore their relationships.

2.6.1 Ridge and Beth⁸

2.6.1.1 Packing the bags

Ridge and Beth were, before the first session, asked to bring a timeline of their lives thus far. This timeline had to indicate the highs and lows in their own life narratives. After discussing their

⁸ Couples' names are changed throughout to respect their anonymity.

timelines they were asked to identify patterns or themes that they recognised in these high and low points of their life stories. This helped them as individuals to distinguish the dominant discourses in their lives and helped their partner to be mindful of these discourses.

Ridge and Beth described themselves as a couple who are focused on family and friends, achievement and relationships. Both share stories of disappointment with failing to complete studies but find great joy and meaning in the positions at work they currently occupy. They are very passionate about their relationship with God although they conclude that they have different spiritualities.

2.6.1.2 Setting course

As indicated in 2.5.3.2, 99 cards with different pictures were placed on the table to help Beth and Ridge identify the important values of their relationship. Each of them chose between four or five qualities or values of their relationship of which the cards reminded them of. These cards and values were discussed to form a description of how these qualities and values played a role in their relationship.

They identified the following relationship values:

Best friends, laughing and joking: they are each other's best friends and see that as a vital aspect of their relationship. The fireplace in the home they are building together is a symbol of their friendship. They aim to grow old together and keep the joy in their relationship.

Big workload: (*"Te veel hooi op ons vurke"*), they are busy people and express the need to work on a balanced work-family life. They plan on making time for each other and their relationship. Their work and living situations (Beth residing and working in Pretoria and Ridge in Heilbron⁹) forced them to spend an extended time away from each other. This forced them to make the best use of the time they have together.

Creativity: Ridge and Beth enjoy making things from scratch. Beth has a side-line business of making creative home décor, and Ridge helps her with some woodwork. They are renovating the house they will be living in and experience that as part of a creative process and enjoy the time they spend together doing that.

Ironman: they work on being active. Beth completed the half-ironman triathlon. Living an active lifestyle is something they share with each other. Beth is looking forward to more moments in the future of running and riding a bicycle together.

⁹ Place names are changed throughout to respect couples' anonymity.

Babies: Ridge and Beth expressed the need to start a family. Ridge's sister struggling to get pregnant has brought them to realise how important that would be for them to have their own family.

Rainbow after the rain: A sign of God's grace and a new beginning. The rainbow signifies them starting their life together.

2.6.1.3 Packing the car

Beth and Ridge were asked to discuss these relationship values before the following session and to externalise their relationship by creating a metaphor that was constructed by the relationship values they identified. Pienaar (2014:7) understands "metaphor" from a cultural-linguistic perspective, where narrative could be encapsulated in word form through the use of a metaphor. Ricoeur (1976:69) stated that: "Metaphors are just the linguistic surface of symbols, and they owe their power to relate the semantic surface in the depths of human experience to the two-dimensional structure of the symbol." This indicates that the use of language opens the doorway for metaphors to evolve, in this case when speaking about relationships and relationship values.

These values helped them to explain their relationship with the metaphor of Noah's Ark. They see their relationship and marriage as a promise. This symbolises that God is staying faithful to His promises, giving them to each other – like the rainbow of promise in the story of Noah's Ark. They find joy in the friends and family surrounding them that help them build this relationship Ark. Having friends and relatives supporting their life choice of marriage reinforces their decision to get married.

2.6.1.4 Safety checks and filling up

As it was discussed in 2.5.3.4, this part of the route of narrative premarital counselling consists of developing the field of meaning of the couple's relationship metaphor. This is done by:

- Checking if all the values of their relationship are included in their metaphor;
- Exploring how the strengths of their relationship are symbolised in the metaphor;
- Enquiring about the weaknesses of the relationship or discussing which aspects of their relationship they would want to work on and how it would affect their relationship;
- Identifying which "safety features" their metaphor has to protect them from these weaknesses or possible threats to their relationship or which "checks" they can do to make sure their metaphor and relationship is working optimally; and
- Finding out what would be detrimental to their relationship and metaphor.

Ridge and Beth described the challenges to their *relationship Ark* as being too impatient and overly sensitive. A focus on communication will aid their relationship in steering away from rough seas. Discussing issues bothering them aids the communication channels of their relationship in preventing unnecessary conflict. They experience the process of building a house as something that is exciting, but at the same time hindering them from being together. With the house not completed yet, Beth having to live in her mother- and father-in-law's home and not having her own space (or space together with her fiancé), the safety of having an *Ark* of their own and setting the boundaries thereof is a challenge. What helps them overcome this is choosing each other's side when outside factors threaten the relationship boundaries. God gave them a choice on what (which animals) they take with them on their journey, which also aids them in setting boundaries in their relationship.

Water, in the story of Noah's Ark, symbolises the process of being engaged in their relationship metaphor. Water keeps their *Ark* afloat and will bring them to the destination of being married and finalising their farm house. They experience water as a transitional phase in their relationship, bringing them to new possibilities and exciting new realities. God's presence is with them in these transitional phases, and His provision by giving them companions on their journey makes that presence known.

2.6.1.5 On the open road

This part on the route of narrative premarital counselling includes describing the influence of outside sources on the couple's relationship. This could include their relationship with God, family and friends, and is also where the couple's narratives of work are discussed. The conversation on safety checks and filling up will aid this discussion in setting the necessary boundaries that will protect the relationship from outside forces. It is also imperative to exchange views on which outside voices could be trusted to keep the couple true to their relationship values. In this section it would benefit the couple to discuss how their faith influences their relationship – if it was not discussed previously.

In the case of Beth and Ridge's relationship, their "faith story" is already included in their metaphor, indicating that the route of narrative premarital counselling is not intended as a linear process. It is encouraged to allow a natural conversation between the therapist/counsellor and the couple, which could mean that some themes could be discussed earlier or later while "en route". This should allow a natural flow to the conversation.

Ridge and Beth described their friends and family as the birds sent out to scout for a safe direction for their *relationship Ark*. Friends and family have a great influence on their decisions

about staying true to themselves and their relationship values, the feedback they receive from these people in their lives is precious to them.

Ridge and Beth's work narratives

Beth works at an engineering firm and loves her work, but also describe herself as a “clock watcher”. She will only work in the time allocated for work. She keeps herself from working overtime to maintain a healthy work-family balance, and she enforces this principle on the people working under her supervision as well. This decision came out of respect for her relationships as she does not want to neglect the people in her life.

The compensation she gets from her work is another important factor as it helps to provide for their household. She does not want to be seen as financially dependent on her future husband. For her home décor business, she recognises Ridge's help and appreciates his input and the time they spend together. She describes Ridge as a hard worker.

She recognises the influences of her company in her work ethic. One of the company's values is balance, and she tries to implement that into her life and work – even though she explains that the company does not necessarily promote its own values. Her decision to focus on her company's values has invested into the lives and families of the 12 people working under her supervision.

Ridge explains the importance of enjoying your work. He is the manager and co-owner of his workplace and tries implementing specific projects focused on utilising their creativity. In this sense, it links very well with Beth's home decorating business.

Money also plays an important role in his work ethic, and he describes it as a method to earn a living to be able to live his life.

He studied law, for over 11 years, but does not use that degree in his current work environment. He expressed the need to study for a degree in business or entrepreneurial studies to refrain from finding himself in a comfort zone.

Ridge sees his father and grandfather as his inspiration concerning his work ethic. His grandfather used to study under a street light when he did his degree through UNISA, while he had to stay in a zinc shack near the highway. His grandfather bought houses and cars as wedding presents for all his children and businesses for three of his children. His father learnt the same work ethic from Ridge's grandfather and had five different businesses apart from his law practice. He identifies with this internal drive, shared by his father and grandfather, to see and utilise new opportunities.

Beth describes the excitement she shares with Ridge when listening to how his day has been. Over weekends she joins him at his work. His work is also aimed at giving back to the community through supporting schools, homes for the elderly, some families and soup kitchens in the area. The personal satisfaction they get from supporting the community also drives them to keep helping the community.

They experience that their hard work and work ethic help their relationship to grow stronger. The learning experiences at their work help their relationship flourish and keeps them driven. They make space for people on their *relationship Ark* and empower them by inviting them to cruise along on this Ark.

2.6.2 James and Alice

James and Alice met at a creativity conference of Kobus Neethling. James, a paramedic, currently working at his parents' hydroponics business, identifies himself as someone for whom achievement, significance (making a difference) and social matters are important. Alice is a teacher and family, significance, adventure and support are themes in her life which she deems necessary.

They identified the following values and themes in their relationship:

The future is an adventure: They are looking forward to spending more time and significant moments together.

I feel safe: feeling nurtured, cared for and having safety and acceptance in each other's company.

Serenity: Alice feels that, in comparison with her family background, there is not any drama in their relationship. They do not bring any unnecessary issues into their relationship.

Working against time: Alice feels that James is preoccupied most of the time and that she has to fight for time alone with him. James, however, believes that they spend a considerable amount of time together and that **physical touch** ("cuddling") is an integral part of their relationship. Although he is sometimes away from home, busy with work, they spend lots of time driving and conversing.

Children: James expressed a need for having children someday.

Cathedral: described as both a physical and mental place, spirituality and a relationship with God is shared in their relationship. They describe it as the foundation for their relationship.

In one of their drive time conversations, they described their relationship as the *Avatar tree*, describing their connection in their relationship and also a connection with their surroundings. They also have a saying, before they go to sleep, “I will meet you at the tree” that symbolises their relationship bond.

They describe their *Avatar relationship tree* as one with a strong root structure driven by their relationship values. This also symbolises the stability and safety the *Avatar tree* provides them. Their tree has blue leaves, as a sign of the uniqueness of their relationship, and it provides shelter for small forest animals and humans in need of safety.

They experience their relationship as a calming and soothing space, with enough room for rest. This is a long-term and sustainable environment for their relationship to be in.

The tree is connected to the whole forest through the water and nutrients it feeds from. God provides a space for this tree to flourish. Spending enough time with each other, caring for the tree, understanding the parts of the tree and its purpose, patience and enthusiasm, are some of the nutrients that help the tree grow. They describe that the tree should look out for irritability or frustration, insensitivity and unkindness that will inhibit their *Avatar tree*’s growth.

James and Alice’s work narratives

Alice explains that she currently only enjoys teaching for the financial benefit. Although she works well with children and understands how to communicate with them, she does not experience teaching as her passion. She rather sees food as her passion; it excites her.

One of the challenges at her work includes the school headmistress, whom she describes as a “two-headed mean monster”, giving mixed messages and is hard to please because she changes her mind often. She would manipulate people with messages about God and later shout at them. She describes this person as “beyond reasonable”, someone who would not pay her personnel if they resign or would tip over someone’s handbag – in front of their class – if she accused a teacher of stealing her car keys. Alice explains that all life and creativity “has been strangled out of her” by this person.

She currently experiences the conversations with her therapist, boot camp exercise classes and her relationship with James as part of the coping mechanisms she uses to face her work situation. Alice, however, tries to focus on the first two mentioned, as she does not want to bring negative energy into their home, which will put strain on their relationship. She found meaning and support from the *Avatar tree* in the difficult situations at her work. Before seeing her therapist, she felt anxious, insecure about herself, negative and was crying a lot. James

explained that Alice's work environment had an adverse impact on their relationship and that it was the reason why he encouraged her to see a therapist about her negative work environment.

Alice's understanding about her work ethic is of someone who would go the extra mile, who is creative and enthusiastic, but her negative work environment has brought her to a place where she would only do what is expected of her. She is contemplating other career choices and plans on being her own boss.

Her expectations about work include that it would support one financially but also that she would get joy out of her work. Work should be a creative space that is intellectually stimulating. She is thinking about starting her own food business – a lunch delivery service. This will be more intellectually stimulating for her as she would have to work with business plans, financials of the business and it will still give her the opportunity to work with people within a creative environment.

This new venture will also make the *Avatar tree* flourish. Even though they know a new business will also put strain on their relationship, they plan on using their time together in a more focused manner. She explains: "One should work to live, not live to work." Alice sees no meaning in working hard to provide for your family but not having the time to spend, what you have worked for, with them.

James said that most of the things he decided to do have only lasted a year. This is a pattern that had started when he was on his school's sound engineering team and has repeated in other ventures and businesses he has started. He began working on ambulances when he was in matric; in his first year of university he still enjoyed working on ambulances; in the second year of his studies he worked mostly in hospitals and the third year he was working on the road again. When he finished his studies he worked for a year in Klerksdorp, then studied for a year at Tshwane University of Technology, worked for a year at IMS (a paramedic service) and currently works at his parents' business – which he expects to last longer. Looking back he explains that it could look as if there have been many short-term ventures, and he would rather change his direction or career choice than keep going on with something he is unsure about.

Financial gain from working is also an important factor for him; he would not start at a new job if his salary is not matched to his previous one. Professionally, achieving certain milestones and accuracy are important values for him in his work environment. He sees his parents' influence in these work values as his father is set on accuracy and his mother is focused on achieving results.

He experienced his work-life balance as extremely imbalanced. This started at school where he was overworking, and it continued in university. However, he currently experiences that his

relationship with Alice has made a shift in the work-family balance, where he may be spending more time with her than at work. He is starting to feel guilty about spending more time with Alice than at his work.

He explained that his life was never focused on going on holiday or socialising and enjoying a braai with friends. These were things that just happened if there was time for it. He would rather focus on his goals and work hard. Alice experienced it that this work ethic of James originated from his parents. Her father in comparison would rather work to live, where James's father would rather focus on his work and that everything is running smoothly at the work and factory instead of going on holiday. Her father – who also has his own business – would put the business on hold for four weeks and focus on his family and holiday. She sees a difference in the two fathers' priorities.

James rather sees it in the light that sometimes there are important things happening at work which should be focused on, and sometimes the important things happen at home. Although over the past three years his relationship with Alice has enjoyed priority, it does not imply that he is not focusing at work or that he is slacking off. They explain that someone has to buy the fertiliser for their *Avatar tree*, and that is why work will be an important factor in their relationship.

2.6.3 Edward and Candice

Candice and Edward are friends from university, as both completed their degrees in law at the University of Pretoria. Both were at the time of studying in different relationships and later in life found romantic companionship with each other. Candice introduces herself as someone who is an achiever, her completed degree, apprenticeship at a local law firm, success at playing the violin and buying a house with Edward symbolises the successes she has achieved in her life. She also has a very close-knit friend and family structure. For Edward, having justice, friends and family and his relationship with God have a significant influence on his life.

Both had experienced failed relationships, as Candice had to decide on ending a long-term relationship that was detrimental to her and Edward decided to end a relationship that ended up numbing his feelings, caused him a mood disorder and decided to divorce his previous wife. Edward and Candice realised that they shared the same values, and their friendship became a romantic relationship.

These values include the following:

Long road: They plan on walking on a long road together.

Happiness: They enjoy life and each other's company. Spending time together, laughing, holding hands and talking are important factors in their relationship.

Solitude: Spending enough time in each other's company, which includes seeing new places and having adventures of their own.

Spontaneity: Their relationship gives them the space for spontaneity and openness. Candice describes it as something that makes their relationship unique.

Faith: Experiencing a relationship with God together that surprises them and takes their breath away.

Speed race: They have busy and fast-paced lives.

Beautiful home: They enjoy decorating and building their house and lives together.

They describe their relationship as a *Ferris wheel* with bright colours that enable them to see new places from high above. The baskets of a Ferris wheel symbolise the time they spend alone together and sitting in that basket is an adventure for them.

When the *Ferris wheel* moves too fast it could feel like a hamster wheel; it is scary to them, and it feels out of control. This happens when they work too much and too hard, also when they allow an unqualified or ill-equipped technician to service the Ferris wheel. They have decided to set the proper boundaries so that the wrong friends are not allowed within the space of their relationship and that people are not authorised to interfere.

They service their *Ferris wheel* through the faith in God which they share and through healthy communication. The time they spend with each other, having respect and sharing love, are important factors and functions as the grease with which their *Ferris wheel* is serviced.

Candice and Edward's work narratives

Candice and Edward identify time as an essential element in their work-family relation. It reminds Candice of their *Ferris wheel* in the sense that repetition plays a role in her work-life, she also sees this in the routine of having to bring work back to her home. She illustrates the tempo at work as something like a traffic light, which feels like it is chasing her. She tries to manage this work tempo and heavy workload by only bringing work back home on certain days. Edward, however, handles this by creating a barrier between home and work and therefore leaves his work at the office. He feels that planning plays a major role in finding balance between work and family life. He goes to the office early, and that helps him not to feel guilty leaving the work at the office.

The *Ferris wheel* metaphor helps Candice to focus on a balanced work-family relationship and how it influences their relationship if she were to bring work from the office all the time. She, therefore, has decided to respect their date nights and will not bring work home on those evenings to create space for the two of them. Edward explains that the *Ferris wheel* forces them to look at their routines and to decide what works for them as a couple. As the *Ferris wheel* revolves and works it will also need to be serviced, Edward describes this action of working on their relationship and looking at their work-family balance routines as the type of maintenance their *Ferris wheel* needs to keep it working well.

Candice explains that the training she is responsible for at her work requires her to work with different kinds of people. As an attorney, who is also a notary public, she has to work with finances but also with customers who can be difficult at times. She has to be able to function in different fields at her work but finds it very stimulating, and the victories she experiences at work are great – which leaves her with a great sense of accomplishment. It is rewarding to be able to help people buy their first home.

The fact that she works with finances at work helps them to work better with their finances at home as well. This structure that she sees in her life is an influence from her father's side. She has learnt to save up before she buys something and it has an influence on their life currently. She describes this as something that adds colour to their *Ferris wheel* relationship. Edward adds that the variety of colours both add to their *Ferris wheel* enhances their relationship and helps to describe it as an equal partnership.

Edward describes his work story as a long road that he has travelled and that there is still a long road ahead of him to get to the top of his career path. Work pressure can, however, put much strain on people and their relationships, it is, therefore, important to realise how much work one can handle. Teamwork and not having to do all the work on your own will take the strain from your workload. Candice adds that this is something both of them struggle with because you do not necessarily trust everyone in your team.

Edward's work situation feel like a tug-of-war for him, with power struggles that could be emotionally straining, especially when it concerns superiors. He feels that emotional strength is required if you want to survive within a corporate setting, and being emotional is seen as a weakness within such an environment. He feels that he gains more trust in his work setting by approaching situations logically. This has made him a valued employee at work. Candice observes that Edward airs his emotions at home and that he balances his frustrations at work by talking it out with her.

Edward adds that your family life will have an influence on your work ethic, and although it is not always possible, you should not let your emotions from home influence your work. Candice explains that the work environment they both find themselves in (as attorneys) requires of them to approach situations professionally and that it could be detrimental to their field if they become sentimental, emotional or too attached. She illustrates that through her manager's words: "I am not married to you, I only have an emotional responsibility towards my wife, and even that is sometimes negotiable." He sets the tone, concerning emotional attachment, for what is expected of people working at her firm.

Values play an important role for both of them in their work-life. People will respect you for your values if you approach it rationally and within the rules of your company. Edward feels that making calm, rational decisions leads to a better work environment for them, especially in a setting where it could be seen as a situation of "eat or be eaten". He feels that one has to protect oneself at work; for example, you have to cover yourself by sending emails after conversations, confirming that conversation. These differences in values sometimes lead to a feeling of wanting to retract and seclude oneself, but he still feels that hard work will pay off.

Candice feels that the training she gives people is an opportunity for her, where she can enhance other people's lives. This "paying it forward" principle is one of her values that brings her joy, when sharing it in her work environment. This aids in humanising the people at her work and legitimising and listening to the problems they may face, even though their work environment does not always support the emotional needs of individuals.

Candice mentions that her firm shares the successes and thank-you letters they received with everyone in their firm because there are different role players that are involved in finishing tasks. Although some of the office personnel do not deal directly with the clients, their influence in the functioning of the firm should still be acknowledged, and therefore they still need to share in the credit. Seeing these letters of thanks and receiving certificates and gift vouchers as incentives for hard work is important to people's self-worth and helps them experience job satisfaction and feel valued.

Edward identifies his father as his primary influence on his work ethic, especially in the importance of values. He also sees the previous jobs and colleagues he had as influences in his work; a retired director of his played a large role in the way he describes his work-life. Edward looks up to him for the calm way he was able to handle work pressure.

2.6.4 Claude and Jade

Claude is a proud person: the achievement of finishing his engineering degree and certain courses, as well as landing positions at well-known telecommunication companies, are some of the accomplishments that encourage him. He is an inquisitive person that likes learning new skills. He describes himself as a social person, but mentions that meeting and dating Jade has brought him to a place where his social needs have declined and instead have focused on Jade and their relationship. Family ties have a significant influence in his life.

Jade describes herself as a “drama queen”. She started ballet at an early age, and the arts have played a major role throughout her life. Throughout her life, her family has moved a lot, and she has been home schooled. She sees herself as a disciplined and independent person. Her relationship with God has played a critical role in her life and has influenced her to be very active in different churches and church ministries. She expressed the need for Claude to join her at church activities.

The relationship values they share are:

Growing old together: They hope to have a long and happy life together where friendship and love play a major role.

Routine: They love spending time together and finding balance within a routine. Their life, however, feels busy.

Ballroom: They started ballroom classes and enjoy sharing this special activity that is theirs.

Safe space: They are each other's safe space. They are open with each other and allow themselves to be vulnerable with each other. When they are together, nothing else matters. They allow themselves to be silly when they are together.

Stubborn: They tend to bicker over petty issues, but then realise that it is not important.

Claude and Jade describe their relationship as a *Beach*. In the explanation of their relationship metaphor, they started describing the sea. The sea in their metaphor symbolises their family. In the time of preparing for their wedding, the sea leaves lots of debris on their beach. It also washes away their footprints, their identity and ideas they have about how the wedding day should look and feel. They find it difficult to tame and stand up to the sea. The sea has its own impression of what their wedding should look like, and they find it extremely inconsiderate. They experience the sea as one that thinks it knows better than the *Beach* does.

Claude explains that this sea does not only apply to their wedding planning, but it could also be seen as influences from outside that affect their relationship. Although work does not have such a strong emotional influence on their relationship as their family does, it still could influence their relationship. They feel that their boundaries concerning work are better than their boundaries with family.

On their *Beach* there is a slope that prohibits landslides. This keeps their beach safe from work influence. They find it difficult to set boundaries for family because they are afraid of hurting someone, especially concerning their wedding planning where the family has paid for their wedding ceremony. Claude and Jade see this in the light that they are both second children and used to get hand-me-downs. They, however, find that they can choose where they sit on the beach, in order for the sea not to have an influence on them.

As premarital counsellor, I experienced that weddings and the picture a couple imagines for themselves of how a wedding day should look, could form part of the relationship's identity. It is part of the dream a bride imagines for herself. When there are external influences that break down the picture they imagined their wedding to be, it could become be a very personal matter. This intrusion on a couple's boundaries could become something that questions a part of the couple's relationship identity. This action of planning a wedding could be seen as a metaphor for the couple's relationship itself, and when their decisions are questioned by family, it is possible that they can question their relationship as a whole.

One of the strengths of a beach is that it can withstand harsh weather conditions and still remain the beach even though the sea and elements have an influence on it. The sustainability of their beach will enable them in their relationship to stick together through difficult times. Their ideal in their relationship is to be the old couple on the beach walking hand-in-hand. This they will achieve by spending time together on their beach and not walking away from their beach. There are parts of their beach that have not been explored yet. This they will do together as they live their lives and explore their relationship further.

Another factor on their beach that will help sustain and protect their relationship is rocks on the beach that provide shelter. This helps them in keeping their relationship secluded from outside factors, it protects their relationship and is a way of protecting them from the sea as an influencing factor.

The *Beach* is a playful place, and they have fun together on their relationship beach. Playfulness and exercise are important values in their relationship, which they enjoy doing together. It is also a way to express that they challenge each other and encourage each other to grow as individuals. Although the sea was earlier described in a negative light, the sea is part of

the factors that makes the beach the beach – otherwise, it would have been a desert. Playing in the water is part of life, as family is part of life. Jade describes that the sea is welcome in short visits, and therefore their beach will have a notice board stating "No visitors on Sundays" as a way of putting up boundaries for their beach.

Claude and Jade's work narratives

Claude describes the stress of job insecurity at his workplace, where a constant fear of retrenchment is part of the work culture. Jade describes that this creates stress in their relationship, especially when he does not share his fear of retrenchment with her. Job insecurity combined with lacking financial compensation for the work his department does, has a negative effect on his sense of achievement and recognition.

He finds his work challenging. Being intellectually stimulated is important for him and keeps him from getting bored at work. He wonders, however, whether he made the right career choice and if he should not have gone into a financial direction.

He is neutral towards work and has set clear boundaries towards it. He feels that if he has not completed his work within the nine hours he spends at work a day, he is not doing his job properly. Therefore he does not allow or answer calls from work after 16:00 daily. He has set his daily work time from 7:00 to 16:00.

He describes himself as someone with an addictive personality and therefore has deliberately set this work boundary, keeping him from working when he should be spending time otherwise. Keeping to a routine is crucial to him for his personal and family well-being. This has led to him making a stand by not being at a weekly meeting from 16:30 to 18:30 which would result in an eleven-and-a-half hour workday. This resulted in the office changing the time of that particular meeting.

He hopes for a more senior position at his work but does not have a clear plan in mind. His career choices will, however, be guided by their beach and spending enough time with Jade.

Jade also likes routine and would not let her personal or family time be cut short in favour of work. She describes that she "works to live and doesn't live to work". She also does not answer calls from her work after work hours.

She describes herself as a "pakdonkie"¹⁰, that is being misused at her work. This helps her justify setting strict work-family boundaries. Although her job description entails more

¹⁰ An Afrikaans term for someone that tends to take on too much work and people generally take advantage of.

administrative, marketing and management skills, she is used as a somatology therapist, leaving her with too much work to do.

This feeling that too much is being expected from her has frustrated her in the past, but she ignores it currently. Communication between the therapists at her work and the owner has diminished. Being treated like a child has led to the therapists having a stronger bond with each other and leaving their “boss” on the outside. This leads to them making each other negative.

She perceives her boss as someone lacking people and management skills. Explaining negative situations and trying to give positive criticism is met with insecurity and a breakdown in communication. The owner will reprimand her workers in front of clients, which has led to her workers excluding her boss from her own company.

She describes herself as someone having had high aspirations, but that she lost the dream of running her boss’ business because of this negativity. She feels that she has reached a dead end with this career path and needs to re-focus on what is important.

Although other career opportunities have arisen, she chose to use her time and energy on planning their wedding. The travelling costs and time spent building a new career would also have had negative influences on their relationship at that point.

The openness of their beach and the secludedness they have within their relationship helps them to talk about frustrations at work. However, they feel a need for balance and seeing the different influences in perspective. They do this by focusing on certain things at certain times. The boundaries they were able to implement between work and family comes easier than other boundaries on their beach.

2.6.5 Luke and Alexis

Alexis describes receiving her matric certificate and bachelor’s degree as climaxes in her life. As soon as she has finished her degree and started working she enrolled for an honours degree. These were big achievements in her life. She met Luke on a blind date in 2011 and became friends with his friends as their relationship evolved. She also finished her masters in that year and registered as an industrial psychologist. They moved in together in 2012 and were engaged in the following year, the year in which she also enrolled for her PhD. The low points in her story also relate to family and friends, work and achievement, which she identifies as the important themes that drive her.

Luke is the only male among five siblings. After finishing matric in Potchefstroom, he decided to study at the University of Pretoria – which was an exciting relocation for him. After completing

his degree in city planning in 2008, he started working directly after that. He met his core group of friends in 2010, and of the bigger group eight of them are still close friends, among whom Alexis is included. He became an uncle in 2014 and also described this as a highlight. Family, achievement, friendship and independence are themes in his life that he describes as important and influential.

Values they identify in their relationship are:

Long road together: Luke describes that he knows Alexis will walk beside him, no matter what happens.

Sometimes too busy: They both feel that they are running around too much and that their lives are too busy.

Tug-of-war: Having a difference in opinion and stressful wedding arrangements feels like a tug-of-war between them. Alexis describes that she finds it difficult expressing her feelings, she tends to pent up her feelings which could result in an explosion of emotions when she has had enough.

Brings out the smile: Luke describes how Alexis “brings out a smile” in him, when he has a challenging day.

Loyalty: Alexis describes a close relationship of nurturing and protection which will last for a long time.

Caring: Their relationship is one that speaks of love and caring for each other.

Safe: Alexis describes that she experience Luke as her safe place and that she misses him if he has to go away for work.

Future: They plan to build a future together and know that they can trust each other.

Alexis and Luke describe their relationship as a *Lighthouse*. Their lighthouse is like a beacon that always takes them back to their relationship and to what is important. They find this particularly useful in negative times when they need to focus on the essence of their relationship. Like a beacon their *Lighthouse* is strong, it can withstand whatever the elements have to offer, the good and hard times. They describe their relationship *Lighthouse* as a place of safety.

A *Lighthouse* provides light, the core direction of values within which their relationship grows. This links to them walking a long road together. This light will focus on specific goals in their relationship. They choose to shine their relationship on positive things and on solutions for the

problems they may face together. This light brings them clarity, and they also find the light within each other. The steps in the lighthouse indicate movement and growth, although it will always be within the framework of the lighthouse's values.

A *Lighthouse* also has a simple design; Luke emphasises that they choose not to overcomplicate things in their relationship. They do not need the best of everything to be happy. This has an influence on what they see as important for their relationship and how their values will dictate what is allowed within the space of their *Lighthouse*.

With a *Lighthouse* having a single door Alexis and Luke can choose who and what they allow within the boundaries of their *Lighthouse*. They have the right whom they decide to have an influence on their relationship. Letting the wrong type of people or influence into *Lighthouse* could be a liability, with a single entrance and no other exit. Allowing guests would then be a mutual decision for Luke and Alexis concerning the spaces where they are allowed. The key to this lighthouse door, which is held by them, could also open their future through the choices they make.

Their *Lighthouse* also has space for a lighthouse keeper, someone they choose as a reliable outside influence that helps them in selecting where they want their relationship light to shine and to find enlightenment. Such a person could help them replace the light in their *Lighthouse* or in the case of this study they allowed the primary researcher and counsellor as such a person, helping them to shed light on the valuable parts in their relationship.

Their *Lighthouse* is built upon a strong foundation – a rock – which they describe as the value system of their relationship, that helps them through difficult situations (the elements of the wind, rain and snow) that their lighthouse may face. Their family support, trust, respect and support they have for each other form part of this foundation that will keep their *Lighthouse* safe.

Like anything that is kept near the sea, basic upkeep and maintenance are always necessary, and they find this true for their relationship as well. They describe that they do not want to take their relationship for granted and therefore mindfulness plays a role in the upkeep of their *Lighthouse*. Communication is a major factor for them where maintenance to their *Lighthouse* is concerned. Therefore, the need for the relationship to thrive is bigger than a fear of being too critical, which will motivate Alexis to speak up when she feels the *Lighthouse* will benefit from what she feels or has to say. Re-evaluation and realignment of goals and values also form an important part of the maintenance of their relationship.

Luke and Alexis's work narratives

Luke, a city planner, refers to himself as a “pakdonkie”. There is not enough time at work to get everything done. This also has an influence on their relationship. He works from 7:00 to 19:00 each day, which reduces their time together. Alexis does not like that and struggles to understand how he is able to work so much and so hard.

He however describes his work as a learning environment. He gets the opportunity to improve himself and to study further. He wants to make a success of his work, which he feels will have an influence and will improve their family life. In a sense he sees his role at work as invaluable, as he has certain responsibilities and skills which his colleagues do not have. This also puts extra strain on him at work.

He explains the relationship between work and the lighthouse and that the long hours at work cause him to be tired at home and that he does not necessarily have the necessary attention to give when he gets home. He wants to focus on time management and setting boundaries in order to be able to get more done at work and not having it influence their lighthouse.

He says that he tends to refrain from saying “no” to more work or doing his colleagues' work because he does not realise what the impact of the heavy workload will be. The positive effect of saying “no” within the work context will be improved time management and not having the feeling that you are taken advantage of. Saying “no” at work will have an improvement on the lighthouse, to the effect that it will become stronger.

Within Luke's personal values and how he perceives his own value, achievement and independence could be factors that drive him to work so hard. The personal values seen in the light of the relationship values of loyalty, caring, walking a long road together and planning a future together could help Luke to see his work from the perspective of his family life.

Alexis, a lecturer at a distance-learning university, also experience pressure with time at work, but hers is more concerning deadlines that she faces. She expresses a need for time away from work, for both of them to work together on building their lighthouse. She describes her frustration with students' demands and crises she needs to handle because of those demands. This has an emotional impact on her.

In her discussion of work, Luke's work was discussed again, and she mentioned that his work situation is a frustration to her. She expresses the need for a better focus on working together on their lighthouse. This illustrates their need of finding an appropriate balance for their relationship where work and family is concerned. Alexis expresses a need for quality family time, talking with each other after work and spending time eating together – instead of in front of

the television – during the week, will create a stronger relationship bond, instead of only spending time on the relationship over weekends.

I questioned why she identified Luke's work as a problem, given the fact that he enjoys his work. Except for the long hours he spends at work, I wondered whether Alexis projected her own feelings of frustration onto Luke's work situation. Alexis explained that the conversation they share about work is filled with negative emotions Luke has to deal with in his work situation. The negative work stories are, however, not the only work narratives Luke shares with Alexis. It appears that Alexis is concerned with the unjustness and negative impact at Luke's work and the effect it could have on him. He appears to deal with his work in such a way that it does not have a big negative impact on him, except for long hours spent away from home, that he could focus on.

Luke explains that sharing his work frustrations with Alexis creates a safe functioning space for him. I observed that the negative content of what Luke sometimes shares from his work-life influences Alexis in such a way that his work is identified as a monster. Her caring nature towards Luke gets her too concerned with Luke's work situation. Using a room in the lighthouse as a laundry room for such negativity could help them clear the air and deal with the dirt work-life could drag into their living space. This will leave the rest of the lighthouse as a safe and comfortable living environment for them, where they could look out towards the sea and enjoy life together.

2.7 Autoethnographic reflection

2.7.1 Autoethnography

The concept of autoethnography indicates the personal experience in certain circumstances (Brunsdon & Lotter, 2011:3). Ellis' work *Final Negotiations. A Story of Love, Loss, and Chronic Illness* brought this qualitative methodology to the forefront. It allows the self-narrative to be voiced within the academic field (Brunsdon & Lotter, 2011:3). Autoethnography, in narrative research, is a manner of acknowledging the influence of the researcher in the research conducted (Van Den Berg, 2010:17). Although autoethnography could be used as methodology in its own right (Brunsdon & Lotter, 2011:3), it will be used in aid of the social-constructionist epistemology for the use of this study. When taking the position of "subjective integrity" (Freedman & Combs, 1996b:40-41; Pienaar, 2012:8) into account the narrative researcher needs to take into account his or her intention, biases or thoughts on why focus was placed on certain fields. Subjective integrity emphasises the myth of so-called objective study and also acknowledges the influence research enquiry has on the researcher him- or herself (Müller, 2005:86).

Chang (2008:54) indicated five critical areas for autoethnographical study:

1. Has writer focused too much on the self, to the exclusion of others?
2. Has the writing process taken too much attention away from analytical, interpretive and cultural factors?
3. Did the writer only rely on his or her memory in the writing process?
4. Were ethical considerations taken into account when referring to others in the process of writing?
5. Was the term autoethnography used correctly throughout?

Autoethnography allows the researcher to be cognisant of his own voice in the research process and also invites the researcher to open up to new horizons of understanding (Van Den Berg, 2010:18). Brunsdon and Lotter (2011:5) find autoethnography a fitting approach within practical theology, adding to the human experience. Accounting the background of the researcher will add to the authenticity of research as one's own unique background and context leave distinct imprints on how one gathers knowledge and portrays it in research papers (Lake, 2015:684).

2.7.2 Biography as theology

As pioneer in the field of biography as theology, James McClendon (1974) introduced this method of introducing theological ideas in the form of narrative. He formulated seven principles for what he calls "theology of life" (McClendon, 2002:143-171):

1. Narrative is a form of expression, ideal for theology.
2. Stories make it possible to comprehend and fully grasp the theological meaning of the "compelling quality of lives".
3. Narratives enhance the possibility for understanding metaphors inspired by the "compelling lives".
4. It becomes possible to grasp the convictions that shape character. Convictions and principles should be distinguished from each other: the latter are consciously formed, whereas the first are lived unconsciously.
5. As seen through the example of the Confessions of Augustine, theology traditionally had an autobiographical character.

6. The person whose story is being told is part of a community; therefore, one could only be understood if one's participation and place in faith communities and other communities are taken into consideration.

Pearce (2010:4) describes that although biographical or personal life as a topic of study could be seen as a trivial or even self-centred focus of research in certain fields, the work of Rustin (2000:41-49), however, acknowledges the biographical influence on sociology and social studies. Narrative research does not shy away from acknowledging the influence the researcher has when conducting and accounting for research. Pearce (2010:4) recognises the influence personal accounts and experience have in the research process. She describes her own reluctance in acknowledging her own motives for researching the topic she chose for her masters study – feeling that negating her own story would make her research more professional and unbiased, but finally realising how her study gained authenticity by acknowledging her own motives and sensitivities for the research topic she chose.

Lake (2015:684) describes autoethnography as an opportunity for researchers (in his case medical practitioners) to make their concerns public. It is a manner in which one could account for the self, one's own background and biases. It is not merely a “self-indulgent” exercise in “common sense” (Lake, 2015:684). Brunsdon and Lotter (2011:6) adds that self-narrative, that is perceived in the light of Scripture, enhances the understanding of the self. This aids a fusion in the God narrative and the narrative of self.

2.7.3 Autoethnography as part of social construction

When taking social constructionism into account, one has to acknowledge the influence the role the researcher's background and discourse plays in the process of research. Burr (2003:117) explains that discourse plays an integral role in the formation of cognition and identity.

When considering Richter's (2010:34) stance, that the researcher becomes part of the community and part of the reality for the co-researchers, the background and discourse of the researcher needs to be taken into consideration. This accounts for biases and context of the research taking place. In turn, it adds authenticity to the research when the researcher describes his own context and explains the decisions made in the research process.

In the case of this particular study the researcher will do this by reflecting on each chapter, as a form of autoethnography, and will thereby acknowledge his own influence as a stance of subjective integrity (Freedman & Combs, 1996b:40-41). This process of autoethnography will also be utilised in reflection in the last chapter of this study.

2.7.4 The primary researcher's reflection on a route for narrative premarital counselling

Through listening to couples' relationship narratives, and describing and developing those narratives further we have opened the field of meaning for these relationships. Central to the metaphors the various couples have chosen, are the values they found important for their relationship. This creates the parameters in which the couple negotiated a living space to function and grow. Even though some people might find it difficult to use the language used to communicate the values of their relationship, the values the couples have set will still be easily defined through the equally shared goal expressed through their metaphor.

Although a metaphor might be described as a noun, for example "the beach house", working towards respecting the values of the relationship and strengthening the relationship might be explained using the metaphor as a verb: "to beach house". This is the language I would suggest to couples on working towards stronger meaningful relationships: "What are the things that you like to do that creates meaning and help your relationship to grow stronger?", or "What do you do 'to beach house'?" Couples might then remind each other later on: "We need 'to beach house' again to help with the beach house's upkeep."

The metaphor of a beach house is what my wife and I chose to describe our relationship:

- Our open-plan house is inviting and reflects the openness in our relationship, it also does not leave room for clutter.
- The large windows looking out on the sea and beach remind us to be aware of the beautiful things in life and to be thankful.
- The beach is a space for play: we like sharing joy and we try to make time for play.

Although it might sound obvious that a narrative therapist should be committed to approaching his or her life narratively, it does not imply the same for their spouse. My wife, a scientist by profession with a PhD in physiology, does not find the same value in externalisation as I do. Even though she finds the sometimes abstract way of speaking difficult to relate to, she does relate to our beach house and to its values. This does not mean that the metaphor is wasted on either of us, as the intended purpose is reached: creating meaning.

Even if we do not always use the mutual language of our relationship, we have a rich arena of functioning, set by the values of our relationship. We remind each other of those even if "to beach house" is sometimes called: "date night", "paying attention" or "showing appreciation".

As an example: my wife initiated a discussion as to where our son would fit in our beach house, when we found out that we were expecting. This forms part of the negotiations couples are

empowered with when they use an externalised point of reference when talking about their relationship.

It indicates that even though one person in the couple may find it easier to relate to such a relationship metaphor, both parties will have a point of reference they could use in their communication with each other. The relationship values are made more tangible by the use of common language and shared imagery.

CHAPTER 3 INTERDISCIPLINARY DISCUSSION

The sixth movement of Müller's (2004:300-304; 2005:8-9) seven postfoundational practical theology movements focuses on thickening the experience through interdisciplinary investigation. In the metaphor used in the introduction to this study this could be described as the electrical, utility and communication component that forms part of the house, as it creates connections with the world outside the house itself.

In the postfoundational sphere where contextuality and considering the important role of interpreted experience is regarded as another part, "pointing beyond the local community towards an interdisciplinary conversation" is equally important (Van Der Westhuizen, 2010:2). As stated earlier the postfoundationalist perspective is sceptical of the nonfoundationalist (relativist) and foundationalist (positivist) perspectives (Müller, 2009a:203); therefore opening the conversation with other fields of study is important in the process of listening. Van der Westhuizen (2010:2) describes that a postfoundational approach opens conversation to listen to and value interpreted experience from a local situation. A postfoundational notion "values the local experiences about praxis, God and traditions" but also stretches beyond the local, opening to the realm of multidisciplinary.

Müller (2009a:204) explains that in the postfoundationalistic space we are forced to listen to people's stories in real-life situations, and the confrontation of specific and concrete situations helps us move past merely describing the context. This search for a deeper description brings forth a need for looking at a given situation from different angles. A dialogue among various disciplines will free practical theology from the isolated system in which theology functioned, according to Van Huyssteen (2000:427). Transversal rationality (as opposed to universal and multiversal rationality) is implied in the postfoundational sphere and creates the opportunity for theology to interact with these different disciplines in a process of co-creation of meaning (Müller, 2009a:206).

It is, therefore, necessary to investigate the epistemology of postfoundational practical theology that gives practical theology the opportunity to open theological discussion in an interdisciplinary way.

3.1 Postfoundational practical theology

Müller (2004:297) observes the bordering nature of practical theology, with other disciplines: "Apart from all the theological disciplines, the fields of anthropology, sociology and psychology, among others, are neighbours of practical theology." He also notes the development of the narrative approach seen in these fields, as mentioned earlier, as well as in health sciences.

There is, therefore, a need for a connection or a liminal space for these different fields of study to come into conversation with each other. Van der Westhuizen (2010:2) suggests interdisciplinary investigation through the use of postfoundationalism, social constructionism and hermeneutics. In this study, the narrative approach will be used as the hermeneutic key.

Social constructionism and postfoundationalist theology are two epistemological paradigms that can work hand-in-hand. These two paradigms were developed in different fields, but share the same objective: to break free from the modernistic (positivistic) or foundationalist (fundamentalist) science and theology (Müller, 2004:279).

3.1.1 Postfoundationalism

Postfoundationalism should be positioned between fundamentalism (absolutism) and non-fundamentalism (relativism) according to Diller (2007:278) and Van Huyssteen (2000:430). Fundamentalism is based on the premise which supports absolute truths that human knowledge could rely on, and could be seen as naive and uncritical. Foundationalist knowledge is linear and not many questions are asked (Diller, 2007:279-280). Nonfundamentalism or relativism, however, has the potential for everything to be seen as relative and that nothing could be known. Relativism should, however, not be confused with postmodernism (Diller, 2007:286).

Postmodernity, the broader sphere from which postfoundationalism originates, questions the absolute truths on which modernity and foundationalism were built (Meylahn, 2006:984; Brunsdon & Lotter, 2011:5). Furthermore, it sees knowledge as socially constructed and holistic (Van Der Westhuizen, 2008:36-37; Brunsdon & Lotter, 2011:5). Van Huyssteen (1997:2) described postmodernism as a rejection of epistemological foundationalism (fundamentalism) and the positivistic manner in which it dictates truth or knowledge.

Foundationalism has its origin in the Enlightenment. It postulates that knowledge and belief come from a foundation of certainty, which holds the foundation for all other knowledge and beliefs built upon it (Van Der Westhuizen, 2010:1). Müller (2009a:202) explains that foundationalism implies the existence of absolute truths, that should be valid in all circumstances. He says that this overestimation could easily lead to blindness to other possible sources of knowledge.

At the other end of the pendulum, we find nonfoundationalism (or non-fundamentalism) and in its extreme form: relativism (Van Der Westhuizen, 2010:2). Meylahn (2006:985) recognises the danger postmodernism poses if it is not properly nuanced: "Today, within the postmodern paradigm, we have only relative, local cultural-linguistic truths with which to construct temporary temples." This Van Huyssteen (1997a:2) calls nonfoundationalism. Tatusko (2005:114) explains

that nonfoundationalism denies the concept of universal truths and acknowledge the power/knowledge discourses as understood by Foucault. Instead, nonfoundationalism suggests that different rationalities could exist at any given time.

Van Huyssteen (1997:2) describes that fideism is frequently found at the centre of nonfoundationalism: “uncritical, almost blind commitment to a basic set of beliefs. In this sense, fideism can in some cases ironically turn out to be a foundationalism-in-disguise.” Müller (2009a:203) in turn expresses the limitation that nonfoundationalism poses to interdisciplinary discussion, because of the scepticism it possesses of efforts to create mutual understanding. He further says that “constructive discussions are difficult in a situation where everything is relative and subjective.” Brunsdon (2010:9) stresses the epistemological implications for practical theology if it shifts towards a postmodern rationality.

Van Huyssteen (1997) and Müller (2004:297) describe postfoundationalism as a “third way” in response to the overestimation of positivistic facts and knowledge in foundationalism and the extreme relativism or fatalism of nonfoundationalism.

According to Müller (2004:299), Van Huyssteen does not use the term social constructionism but follows a similar line of thought (where knowledge is constructed socially) when arguing for postfoundationalist rationality. Van Huyssteen (1997:4) emphasises a double role of postfoundationalism within theology. Firstly, it acknowledges the context of the epistemic role of experiences that form tradition. The same is valid for epistemic or non-epistemic values that determine an experience of God. At the same time, postfoundationalism tries to move beyond the local community, group or culture in search of liminal spaces for interdisciplinary conversation.

3.1.2 Transversal rationality

Schrag (1994), Van Huyssteen (2000) and others propose transversal rationality as a “responsible and workable interface between disciplines” (Müller, 2009a:204). Interdisciplinary conversation, in the sphere of transversal rationality, is not about protecting intellectual domains or strategies of reason, but opening up new possibilities for different fields of study to connect and learn from each other when focused on a common interdisciplinary problem (Van Huyssteen, 2007:421). Van Huyssteen (2006:19) explains that transversal rationality allows a multidisciplinary conversation that invites different voices and ways of acting to shed light on something, without the voices losing their identity. He (Van Huyssteen, 2007:421) later explained the benefit of interdisciplinary research and transversal rationality in the sense that the shared space it allows for different scientific fields could add to the opening of understanding and “critical self-evaluation”.

In this space, our beliefs are open to critique and evaluation from our Biblical standpoint and interdisciplinary and cross-cultural voices in order to create transversal rationality. Transversal rationality moves beyond static rationality to a dynamic, practical form of reasoning and creates conversation on critical, rhetorical, narrative and descriptive points to co-create new forms of knowledge (Müller, 2009a:203-206). Transversal rationality could be found in various disciplines including theology, mathematics, philosophy and physiology (Van Huyssteen, 2000:429).

In reaction to Jerome Stone's *The Shaping of Rationality* (1999), Van Huyssteen (2000:428-429) explored the possibilities an interdisciplinary notion of rationality creates:

- Contextuality and the embeddedness of our reflection in human culture: in specific scientific or confessional traditions are acknowledged.
- The crucial role of interpreted experience or experiential understanding in epistemology is taken seriously. It also considers how the traditional shapes the epistemic and how the nonepistemic influences our reflection on thoughts about God and how people perceive God's presence in the world.
- It opens up free but also critical interpretation on the roots of our beliefs and in what we find consonant within the Biblical paradigm.
- It could be seen as a skill, enabling us to recognise patterns of our interpreted experience through rhetoric, articulation and discernment.

3.1.3 Practical theology that creates transversal space

By using interdisciplinary reflection in postfoundationalism one realises that reason cannot be contained within the subjective reality of a single science or discipline. Human reason is truly enriched by the co-creation of different disciplines and sources of knowledge (Van Huyssteen, 2000:431). Dreyer (2012:35) postulates that interdisciplinary diversity aids the scientific process in such a manner that it could sustain different practical theological paradigms, whether clerical, academic, narrative or empirical. Both Van Huyssteen (2009:52) and van den Berg (2010:9) stress the danger of interdisciplinary study in that the discipline from which research inquiry originates may dominate the discussion and epistemology. This should be taken into consideration when going into interdisciplinary discussion. Two or more disciplines that meet in the transversal space should enter into dialogue on equal grounds if true interdisciplinary discussion is sought after (Van Wyk, 1997:78; Van Den Berg, 2010:9).

Van Huyssteen (2000:438) suggests that the impact of transversal rationality on theology lies in the open conversation it allows without "imposed 'universal' rules". This invites various fields and ways of understanding to the conversation, which will lead to new and different ways of listening to each other and opening up understanding.

Through the use of interdisciplinary study a broadened source of knowledge, other than the saturated knowledge the social and human sciences normally have to offer theology and practical theology, will be heard. Interdisciplinary investigation opens up the opportunities for theology to engage with economic and managerial sciences, as the researcher will not be confined to a singular methodology of enquiry (Van Den Berg, 2010:9, 11). Müller (2005:73) postulates that practical theology is something that happens where there is a reflection on practice, within the consciousness of God's presence. It needs to stay connected to the basic forms of theological reflection, but at the same time move beyond the rationalistic and modernistic boundaries of its past. Therefore, he sees postfoundationalist practical theology as a necessary contribution to the understanding of practical theology.

It is in the combination of the narrative approach, by inviting couples to tell their stories about their work and family life, and socially constructing a narrative – through interdisciplinary conversation with people from different backgrounds and roles in society (whether it relates to business or family life) – that postfoundational practical theology becomes a valuable space for creating meaning. Within this study, it becomes a sphere where different fields of study or narratives are heard to create new meaning: hopefully, a narrative that others will be able to relate to in their contexts, to create bright stories of the future where people will find meaning in their work and family lives.

3.2 Benefits of the interdisciplinary process

In his article *Transversal rationality as a practical way of doing interdisciplinary work, with HIV and AIDS as a case study*, Müller (2009a:221) listed a few benefits and observations of interdisciplinary study:

- Dialogue from a real, local and contextualised situation can be discussed in an interdisciplinary manner, creating space for new meaning.
- A multifaceted and disciplinary team brings a more holistic view of the description of a situation.
- The unique points of view from different perspectives bring unique contributions – enriching discussion.
- It creates a space for differences and similarities to be acknowledged.
- It supports the idea of co-creation of rationality.
- It opens up transversal communication.

3.2.1 Creating open dialogue

By enhancing the interdisciplinary process Muller (2009a:206), Van der Westhuizen (2008:162), Richter (2010:216) and Meyer (2010:308) added to postfoundational practical theology. I will be building on the process by using the question Müller (2009a:207) initially posed to his interdisciplinary research team: “When reading the story of Sizwe¹¹, what are your concerns?”. I asked my interdisciplinary research team to formulate questions that would be posted back to the couples to answer.

Adding the dialogue between the interdisciplinary team and the co-researchers brings the transversal space intended by postfoundational practical theology to its full potential and will complete the dialogue in this narrative research through the co-creation of narratives. It will, therefore, complete the circle of enquiry intended by interdisciplinary study.

By having the interdisciplinary team posting questions of their concerns in the couples’ narratives the following benefits are achieved:

- Open dialogue is achieved between the couples and the interdisciplinary team.
- Dialogue takes place on equal ground as questions posted from a homemaker or a CEO have equal weight.
- Having the co-researchers answer the interdisciplinary team’s questions opens up new interpretation of meaning and new knowledge is formed.
- The interdisciplinary process in practical theology is enhanced, and this type of dialogue enhances the process of change and meaning practical theology intends to bring.

3.2.2 Opening up the research process

Instead of just consulting literature and thereby confining the research process (Van der Westhuizen, 2008:165), research is opened up by adding contextuality through real-life experience (Müller, 2009a:221). Interdisciplinary discussion adds to the dynamic dialogue of research and aids the research process by “posing new questions from different perspectives” (Van der Westhuizen, 2008:166).

Moving beyond one’s own discipline opens up the process of research by exploring other rationalities (Meyer, 2010:312). It was, therefore, important to open this discussion with the co-researchers and invite other people with different fields and bases of power into the topic of research.

¹¹ Sizwe was the co-researcher in the study conducted by Müller (2009a:207).

3.3 The interdisciplinary process

3.3.1 Identifying the interdisciplinary team

Six people from various fields of study, walks of life or perceived positions of power were identified and approached to take part in the interdisciplinary team. These people included a human resources manager, the business owner of a public relations firm, a female and married homemaker with tertiary education, an ex-teacher who is now a student, a strategy and development manager and a chartered accountant who was a manager at a multinational firm.

These people forming the interdisciplinary team were asked to reflect on the following questions, adapted from Müller's (2009a:227) article on transversal rationality and interdisciplinary research:

- When reading the stories of the couples, what do you think each couple's concerns would be?
- How would you formulate your discipline's unique perspective on these concerns and why is it important that this perspective be heard at the interdisciplinary table?
- Why do you think your perspective will be understood and appreciated by researchers from other disciplines?
- What would your major concern be if the perspective of your discipline might not be taken seriously?

Müller's (2009a:209) original question (adapted here): "When reading the couples' stories what are your concerns?" was added for the couples to reflect on and answer back. This question was asked for the interdisciplinary team to reflect on their own background, in the light of the couples' narratives they read.

3.3.2 Interdisciplinary research method

Adding more co-researchers in the form of an interdisciplinary research team added extra challenges to the research: the challenges of getting the reflections from the interdisciplinary team and getting those concerns back to the couples with their reflections on them made for an extensive process. All the co-researchers were volunteers and did not get remuneration for their participation. Added that each of them experienced their own time constraints, keeping them involved in the process without putting too much strain on them – while still getting what I expected from them – was a challenge.

Using technology in the form of email communication eased this process. I sent the couples' narratives (with their names and some places changed, to protect their privacy) and asked them

to reflect on these narratives by using the questions mentioned above. These questions provided by the interdisciplinary team were also summarised and sent back to them, to correlate that it was a true reflection of their intention before they were sent to the couples for reflection.

The couples, thereafter, reflected on the interdisciplinary team's questions about their concerns that were emailed to them. This reflection of the interdisciplinary team's questions created a full circle of enquiry like in the interdisciplinary research done by Van der Westhuizen (2008:168).

3.3.3 The interdisciplinary team¹²

Mrs A is a housewife with a masters degree in Botany; she is married to X and has three children of whom two are university students, and the other is in high school.

Dr B is a divorced mother of a son (who is married) and works as a strategy and development manager for a government institution.

Mrs C has her own public relations and marketing company. She is the mother of two pre-school children and married to Y.

Drs D is single (never married) and is a human resources manager for a non-profit organisation invested in medical care in rural Africa.

Mr E is a chartered accountant, worked at an international audit firm in London and decided to return to South Africa to improve his work-life balance. Currently, he works for a smaller local auditing firm, after taking a year's sabbatical leave. He is single (never married).

Mrs F quit her job as a teacher to further her studies. She is married to Z, and they have a toddler.

3.3.4 Interdisciplinary questions formulated for all the couples

The initial question: "When reading the couples' stories what are your concerns?" was posted to the interdisciplinary team to reflect on their own stories and background when reading the couples' narratives. The responses were summarised according to the following themes:

3.3.4.1 Communication and conflict

1. How do you as a couple handle it when you are in opposite moods and how does this influence your interaction? (Mrs A)

¹² The interdisciplinary team has been given pseudonyms to protect their identity and to limit any biases should any of the couples know anyone in the interdisciplinary team.

2. How do you manage different conflict styles? (Mrs C)
3. What gets on your nerves about your partner and how do you both handle it? (Dr B)
4. How do you deal with differences in your relationship? (i.e. different spiritualities, values, etc.) (Drs D)
5. What are the opportunities you have to communicate during a normal day? How much communication do you prefer during a normal business day? (Mr E)

3.3.4.2 Work

1. What causes your partner to experience work-related stress and how do you handle this as a couple? (Mrs A and Mr E)
2. What would the long-term impact be on your relationship and family by bringing work to the home? (Mrs F and Dr B)
3. Which options could you consider to relieve work stress, that will impact your work-family balance positively? (Mrs C and Dr B)
4. How would you bridge the gap if you have different work ethics? (Dr B)
5. How would you respond if one of you were offered a job that required frequent travelling? (Drs D)
6. Would you characterise yourself as someone who lives to work, works to live, or neither? What is the impact thereof on your partner? (Drs D)
7. Do you as a couple celebrate your achievements? If yes, please explain how you celebrate? Do you feel you could improve in celebrating achievements? Please elaborate. (Mr E)
8. How do you decide whether the demands of work or family get preference at a given time? (Mrs F)

3.3.4.3 Equality and gender identity

1. How would it affect your identity if your partner were to earn substantially more than you? (Mrs A)
2. How do you think would it affect your relationship, if you ceased earning an income through reasons of job loss or maternity leave? (Mrs A)

3.3.4.4 Background

1. How do the differences in your upbringing and background affect your relationship? (Mrs A)
2. How does having different drivers and definitions of success impact your relationship? (Mrs C)

3.3.4.5 Boundaries

1. As a couple, which of your relationships with family or friends tend to test your boundaries and how do you handle those situations? (Mrs A)
2. What does the role of the broader family play in your lives? (Dr B)
3. What are the activities that drain your energy and time, and what do you do to manage that? (Drs D)
4. What are some boundaries that you need to put in place to maintain a healthy relationship with your partner? (Drs D)
5. How do you differentiate between detrimental and up-building advice from friends and family? (Mrs F)

3.3.4.6 God and religion

1. Do you perceive yourselves as having different spiritualities and if you do, how do you handle the religious differences you have? (Mrs F and Dr B)
2. How would religious differences impact the way you educate your children about God? (Mrs F)

3.3.4.7 Family

1. How would you handle it if your partner changed his/her mind about something you agreed upon before the marriage, e.g. having children, or if one that agreed to be the homemaker decided they want to go back to work? (Mrs A)
2. Which values would you want to see reflected in your children's lives and how is what you are currently doing portraying that? (Mrs F and Mr E)
3. What are you doing together currently to ensure you create the future you imagine for yourself? (Mrs C)

4. Do you have a family growth plan? (Mrs F, Mrs C and Dr B)
5. How do you anticipate would having a child impact the time you have for each other? (Mrs C and Dr B)
6. In order to manage and maintain a work-life balance, do you ever build in some “downtime” (where you focus on recharging) into your schedule? (Drs D)
7. How can more/less technology be used to ensure more quality time? (Mr E)
8. What would you define as quality time in your relationship? How can you ensure that the time that you do get spend together is good quality time? Please provide practical examples from your situation on how you can spend your time together. What boundaries do you need to set to ensure that quality time is not used for other purposes? (Mr E)
9. What career advice would you give your children? (Mrs F)

3.3.4.8 Finances

1. How do you manage your own and your family’s finances and what planning do you have regarding finances? (Mrs C)

3.3.5 Interdisciplinary questions formulated to specific couples

The interdisciplinary team’s questions formulated on the question: “When reading the stories of the couples, what do you think each couple's concerns would be?” were formulated in the following way:

3.3.5.1 Ridge and Beth

1. Do you think the business of busyness is a potential problem in your relationship? (Mrs A)
2. Do you experience/feel that your partner truly treats you as an equal in your relationship? (Mrs A)
3. The spirituality narrative could be a concern or opportunity for this couple. (Dr B)
4. I am concerned that possessions and activities could become the metric by which they measure the success of their relationship. (Mrs C)
5. Failing to complete studies: High unemployment rates, job insecurity and a weak labour market might negatively affect their employment status, given the amount of job

instability/organisational downsizing/retrenchments many South Africans are exposed to in the workplace on an ongoing basis. (Drs D)

6. Their current workloads might contribute to work-family conflict. I wonder how they could manage their time more effectively. (Drs D)
7. The house that is not yet completed might create conflict between them, especially given the fact that both parties could be impatient and overly sensitive individuals. (Drs D)
8. How would struggling to have children impact your relationship? (Mr E)
9. Could compensating too much for impatience and being overly sensitive have an impact on your ability to communicate effectively? (Mr E)
10. Both of them share stories of failing to complete their studies; this can either be something that makes them stronger or make them feel unfulfilled. They could also explore how their spiritual differences have an influence on their relationship? (Mrs F)

3.3.5.2 James and Alice

1. What helps your partner unwind from work-related stress? How could you support each other without making each other's work problems your own? (Mrs A)
2. The narrative of creating enough time for each other could be a concern for this couple. (Dr B)
3. This couple should remain cognisant of the danger in reverting to habits displayed by their parents, rather than a life that reflects their own needs, wants and goals as individuals. What do they want for their relationship and their future children? (Mrs C)
4. Regarding job satisfaction, it seems that Alice is not enjoying her job. This might be a potential source of conflict. What if Alice decides to pursue a different career/decides to become "her own boss"? What impact will this change have on her relationship with James, especially when they choose to have children? (Drs D)
5. I wonder if Alice would also like to have children one day? (Drs D)
6. How could the couple stay cognisant of spending enough time together? (Drs D)
7. They have noted that God provides the space for their relationship tree to flourish. It might become an easy mindset to sit back and let God create this space while they also have

the responsibility in recognising, setting boundaries and utilising this space to let their relationship tree grow. (Mr E)

8. Socialising and taking a holiday was not a priority for James. The opposite seems to be true for Alice. This might have an impact on how each perceives work-life balance. (Mr E)
9. Alice's negativity towards her career is a concern. (Mrs F)

3.3.5.3 Edward and Candice

1. What would the effect on your relationship be if the frustration from work is reflected at home frequently? How would you counter that? (Mrs A)
2. The work and family narrative could be a concern or opportunity for this couple. (Dr B)
3. This couple should remember to make time for not only "not working", but make a dedicated effort to spend quality time together, actively enjoying each other's company (as opposed to "default time" when not working). (Mrs C)
4. Have both individuals dealt with the pain from their previous failed relationships? (Drs D)
5. That a fast-paced life can limit the time Edward and Candice spend together and cause them to live separate lives. (Drs D)
6. Setting routines that are not adaptable to changing situations could impact spontaneity in their relationship and also cause conflict situation[s] to arise. (Mr E)
7. They both experience a lot of work pressure which could impact their relationship in different ways including energy to be spent on the relationship, proper communication, time available to spend with each other, etc. How will they stay cognisant of that? (Mr E)
8. The work-family balance might be a concern for this couple. (Mrs F)

3.3.5.4 Claude and Jade

1. How do you intend to find a balance between staying informed and interested in what happens in your partner's workplace and not being pulled into his/her problems? (Mrs A)
2. The family influence narrative could be a concern for this couple. (Dr B)
3. The health of their relationship should not be based on how well routines, expectations and actions are going according to external parties. They should understand that life does

not always go as planned and that they might need to prepare for steering the relationship through some rocky times in the future. (Mrs C)

4. What the underlying discourses, reflected in bickering over petty issues, could be. (Drs D)
5. How the label “drama queen” that Jade gives herself impacts their relationship. (Drs D)
6. What the impact of job insecurity and instability has on their relationship. (Drs D)
7. Jade is very active at church, which is probably taking up quite a lot of their free time. As Claude is not as involved in these activities, it could lead to him feeling left out and being lower on Jade’s list of priorities. Jade could feel that something as important as church is not important to Claude and therefore their priorities are not aligned. (Mr E)
8. Claude’s constant fear of retrenchment and the fact that he feels he does not receive financial compensation for the work of his department could make him work even harder, and it can become easier in giving up boundaries. (Mr E)
9. The story of sharing their faith with one another might be one of their concerns, and another one might be that of their family not respecting their boundaries. (Mrs F)

3.3.5.5 Luke and Alexis

1. What causes work-related stress for your partner? How could communicating your individual work stories help you grow stronger as a couple? (Mrs A)
2. The work narrative could be a concern for this couple. (Dr B)
3. The relationship seems to fulfil different needs for each one. This might turn into unresolved conflicts about small things that never quite deal with the essence of what they view their different roles and, the importance thereof are in their relationship. (Mrs C)
4. Poor relationships with family and friends might put Luke and Alexis’ relationship at risk. (Drs D)
5. Luke’s busy work schedule and independence might be a source of conflict/negatively affect his relationship with Alexis. How do they intend to bridge this? (Drs D)
6. Alexis seems very dependent on Luke to set a safe space for her. This, in turn, could have Luke feeling that he is solely responsible for Alexis’ happiness. (Mr E)
7. Alexis has had bad experiences with family and friends which could impact the way she experience her relationship with Luke. It will also impact the way in which she

communicates with him and how she acts in conflict situations. Luke on the other hand, enjoys being with friends and being part of the group of friends. This might impact their relationship when prioritising their free time. (Mr E)

8. Alexis appears to have already reached her goals, and it does not seem like she is currently focused on any other goals to strive for. It seems like Luke is trying to better himself by learning more in his job and striving for success in his workplace. These different mindsets might impact their relationships priorities. (Mr E)

9. What would work-family balance be for this couple? (Mrs F)

3.3.6 Interdisciplinary team's perspective on concerns

The second question Müller (2009a:227) formulated for interdisciplinary research: "How would you formulate your discipline's unique perspective on these concerns and why is it important that this perspective be heard at the interdisciplinary table?", was formulated as follows by the interdisciplinary team:

3.3.6.1 Mrs A's perspective

I am a full-time mother who gave up my career as a scientist to raise our children myself since I wanted to do it really well. I had no family support system close by and I believe a committed primary caregiver is critical in the formative years.

I am determined to releasing responsible, well-balanced adults into the world. To achieve this, we as parents have to be well balanced and happy. We have to create a stable environment so our children would know that love is unconditional. We have to come to know ourselves so we can teach our children to know themselves. They need to learn from their parents how to communicate effectively, so that they can express their needs and handle conflict. They need to learn from us how to live respectfully and responsibly.

To achieve that, parents need to invest heavily in their relationship with their partners and their children. That requires time and effort.

3.3.6.2 Mrs C's perspective

As the owner of a small business, it is imperative to me that employees are fully committed to performing at a consistently high level, irrespective of issues that might be impacting on their personal lives.

This requirement may be less stringent for business owners that have enough resources to take up slack when one employee is under-performing. From this perspective as employer and owner of a small business, there is less allowance for personal life issues to have an impact on quality of work.

3.3.6.3 Drs D's perspective

From my perspective as a human resources manager, employees are the most valuable assets in an organisation. Work-family conflict has a profound negative impact on employee wellness. The South African workforce is constantly exposed to negative events (e.g. HIV/AIDS, high unemployment rates, rising inflation and poor socio-economic conditions). These negative events, as well as the looming economic recession, negatively contributes to work-family conflict, as employees are exposed to and affected by various forms of organisational restructuring. These factors contribute to heavier workloads and a growing sense of work-related pressure. As a result, employees struggle to achieve equilibrium between work and life; a settling point where labour and the rest of life's activities reside side by side.

3.3.6.4 Mr E's perspective

In the professional financial world, I have experienced the following regarding balancing work and life:

- Setting goals that are specific, time-bound, but also achievable on a regular basis is key in ensuring work can be prioritised and planned accordingly. This has to be done on a regular basis for goals regarding the work to be performed, technical skills/management/soft skills to be gained and personal goals.
- Professional relationships with and the support of colleagues and those individuals that you are reporting to is vital. This includes trusting these individuals to have respect towards you as an individual and the individuals being open to discussions regarding the workplace and working situation.
- Assisting staff to do career planning, but also understanding and enabling them to follow their career plans will motivate staff to achieve common goals.
- Promotions and recognising achievements are important ways to keep people motivated and focused on their goals. This also includes recognition of staff that went the extra mile or achievements outside of the working environment.
- Flexible working hours and being able to work from home has a significant impact on how people can manage their lives, families and time spent travelling from home to office and back.

- The financial gain for staff and their perception of their remuneration compared to their peers in other companies are key factors for staff to feel valued in the company.
- Intellectual stimulation, training and the exposure new opportunities allow individuals to keep interest in their work.
- A balance between routine work and deadline-driven work will have an impact on how much overtime needs to be done and the individual's experience of his/her workload.
- Good conflict management by senior management will ensure that staff will be open to giving honest feedback when asked for their input, but will also ensure their willingness to speak up.
- Support by management towards other activities outside of the office environment is key in getting staff to know that they are not only machines but seen as individuals. This could include congratulating them on sport or other achievements, wishing them luck on challenging situations, enjoying drinks after work, finding out how a loved one is doing and sending flowers when they are sick.
- Support towards diversity of traditions and religions is also necessary to make individuals feel respected for who they are. This includes being aware of religious events taking place and allowing staff to take religious leave.
- Giving individuals more autonomy in the workplace will enable them to manage their time and also to delegate work to staff working for them.

3.3.6.5 Interdisciplinary team's perspective reflected in the specific concerns they raised

Some members on the interdisciplinary team chose to apply the interdisciplinary questions on the specific concerns they raised. Their reflection on these questions are indicated as follows:

Ridge and Beth

Mrs A's perspective

The habit of always being busy, always having something to do, having some place to be, will cause you to not question yourself having a full-time job and starting a second business on the side, bringing work home or putting a lot of time into travelling or even exercising. If you do not question this, it will take its toll on your health and your relationships.

Do you sometimes wait for relationship time to just magically appear, or make it your partner's responsibility to inform you if he or she has such a need? If you have been raised in an ambitious, goal orientated, perfectionist environment where relaxation and time spent with loved

ones were seldom a top priority, you may have a problem realising the importance of this and will have to learn how to relax and prioritise relationships.

Consider the following: if you state on the one hand that you do not want to be financially dependent on your partner, what role does income play in your self-esteem? How will you handle retrenchment in your relationship? How are you going to handle one partner earning significantly more than the other?

Dr B's perspective

The spirituality narrative appears to be a positive story that they can explore further as a couple. The couple may want to take the opportunity to thicken the spirituality story by describing the story in detail and by using it as an opportunity for discovery. This journey may open up the unique moments to thicken the narrative for them as a team and build on their relationship metaphor.

Mrs F's perspective

My perspective is based on dedicating as much time possible on furthering your studies and even eliminating elements that might hinder your success – in my case, resigning from a well-paid job, which I was extremely passionate about.

When one gets the opportunity for further study, you grab it with both hands and approach it as a once in a life time opportunity. One will always get another chance to seek other job opportunities. It is important for this perspective to be heard because we need to cultivate a generation and/or society that wants to learn more and better themselves through further education.

James and Alice

Mrs A's perspective

Do you realise that your partner's workplace is his/her responsibility and that you cannot become emotionally involved when he/she is stressed about things? That way you may not be helping him/her cope with the situation, but may actually be reinforcing it.

Dr B's perspective

The time narrative appears to be a problem story with some indications of an alternative story that can be explored as a couple. The couple may want to take the opportunity to thicken the problem-saturated story by describing the story in detail and by using it as an opportunity to choose again what kind of relationship they would like to have with the problem story.

Additionally this discovery and journey may open up the unique moments that are indications of the alternative story.

Mrs F's perspective

As a teacher I experience it as important for me to teach children to be passionate about their future career; we need to set an example that the workplace is a missionary field and a calling from God. If one is unhappy in the workplace you tend to focus on the negative aspects and forget your purpose, in this case, as a teacher. By being a passionate teacher you are not only setting an example to children about a positive attitude towards your career but you are also cultivating a culture of wanting to learn more.

Edward and Candice

Mrs A's perspective

Creating work-family balance involves being mindful of what you allow in which space. Balance involves an active focus on not letting work frustration affect family life and vice versa. At the same time family life should be an open environment and safe space with the necessary boundaries in place that allows one to air your frustrations, but not allowing it to impact your family's happiness.

Dr B's perspective

The work and family narrative appears to be an positive story that they can explore further as a couple. The couple may want to take the opportunity to thicken the work and family story by describing the story in detail, and by using it as an opportunity for discovery, and the journey may open up the unique moments to thicken the narrative for them as a team.

My concern will be that the positive story may change to a problem story if not thickened through further discussion on their work-family balance.

Mrs F's perspective

Being passionate about your career and making a success is an honourable feat. From my perspective success could be addictive. When you are praised and feel appreciated it gives you a sense of power. This praise and appreciation isn't always felt at home, driving you in a direction to give more time and effort where you feel most valued.

Striving for success in all spheres of life is important. One can ask if a strong focus on success at work is giving them the benefits they as a couple require for work-family balance.

Claude and Jade

Mrs A's perspective

Part of a relationship is creating a space for each other to feel safe – that comes with a loving relationship. Adults are responsible for their own happiness and can't expect a partner to make them happy. Dumping one's problems on one's partner and expecting them to deal with it is refusing to take responsibility for your own problems, thus refusing to grow up. This places extra stress on a relationship, compromising the safe space you created.

Dr B's perspective

The family influence narrative appears to be a problem story with some indications of an alternative story that can be explored as a couple. The couple may want to take the opportunity to thicken the problem-saturated story by describing the story in detail and by using it as an opportunity to choose again what kind of relationship they would like to have with the problem story (how will they set some boundaries). It may be useful to determine the history of the problem and alternative story. This journey may open up the unique moments that are indications of the alternative story.

My concern will be that the problem story may escalate and that taken for granted beliefs and ideas like: "It feels as if we as second children only received the hand-me-downs", which could form part of a problem story regarding family, if these influences are not explored.

Mrs F's perspective

From my perspective it is extremely important for a couple to have unity in regards to faith. My faith forms part of my foundation and lets me view the world in a particular way. One makes decisions from your belief system, which could create conflict if each is only defending their own view.

Luke and Alexis

Mrs A's perspective

Communication, respect and mindfulness of your partners' needs and values creates a strong bond between a couple. Being able to see that your partner is experiencing stress creates a space of openness and an environment of care. Openly communicating one's needs of support could help a couple in creating a stronger bond.

Dr B's perspective

The work narrative appears to be a problem story with some indications of an alternative story that can be explored by the couple. The couple may want to take the opportunity to thicken the problem-saturated story by describing the story in detail and by using it as an opportunity to choose again what kind of relationship they would like to have with the problem story (the story of work). In addition this discovery and journey may open up the unique moments that are indications of the alternative story.

The other researcher (primary researcher) will understand that the intent of the conversation is that the couple co-generate an alternative story and that they – as a couple and as individuals – each take responsibility for the alternative story. My concern will be that the problem story may escalate and that taken-for-granted beliefs and ideas that inform the problem story are not explored.

Mrs F's perspective

I feel that my influence for this question is the same as with my concerns for Edward and Candice.

3.3.7 Participants' unique interdisciplinary contributions

Müller's (2009a:227) third interdisciplinary question: "Why do you think your perspective will be understood and appreciated by researchers from other disciplines?" was answered by participants in the following way:

3.3.7.1 Mrs A

My role as a mother and a wife is something dear and precious to me. In a world focused on success – measured by many superficial things – a focus on relationships and balance is of immense importance to me. These are some of the values our family wants to convey to our environment and I specifically want to send my children into the world as adults with those values. They need to know that relationships are important and that "showing love" equals "spending time with".

Having a voice at this interdisciplinary table also gives a voice to other mothers and wives that chose to either work from home or not having a career with an official job title, in order to benefit our families. The time we live in, focused on bottom line figures and profit margins doesn't allow a space for these values, making my voice an important one.

3.3.7.2 Dr B

As someone dealing with corporate strategy and facilitation, my background and training in Narrative Coaching will aid the conversation and support the primary researcher in opening up new meanings and exploring thin descriptions. This will help these couples in creating alternative stories and could possibly strengthen their relationships.

3.3.7.3 Mrs C

The interdisciplinary table should, during counselling, be sensitive to the expectations from employers, which may vary between industry and organisational sizes; employers aren't always in a position to be as fair as is needed for a consistently balanced work-life balance.

3.3.7.4 Drs D

Several researchers have identified the link between fostering work-life balance among their employees, since work-family conflict can negatively affect the well-being of staff. Organisations also realise that traditional gender roles have progressed to a unisex model where responsibilities between couples are shared, while pressure at work has increased as organisations aim to increase productivity and save costs.

For this reason, many organisations have implemented various family-friendly policies and practices, such as flexible working hours and compressed work weeks, in order to accommodate overworked, time-deprived and multi-stressed employees. These practices may in turn positively affect organisational effectiveness, as well as reduce employee turnover, since these practices demonstrate the organisation's commitment to their employees.

3.3.7.5 Mr E

The aim of a financial services (FS)/audit company is to (1) optimise profits derived from rendering services and (2) grow their business.

In order to optimise profits the company has to increase fees and/or cut down on cost:

- Increasing fees that are charged to clients is not as easy due to tough competition in the South African market. I have however noticed that clients are much more open to discussing increases in fees if they are experiencing a professional service and that the company is going the extra mile. Fee increases, however, will only take place on an annual basis or when the next project starts.

- The focus where a company can drive profits on a daily basis is therefore on the latter – cutting costs. The total expense of a FS company is highly dependent on the employees that perform the work.
- Cutting employee costs has mainly two legs: paying less per hour for an employee's time and getting the employee to work fewer hours on a project to get the same work done (and in order to give him/her more work).
- It is quite impossible to pay the employee less, except in extreme circumstances. Companies therefore have to focus on getting staff to work more efficiently (fewer hours to perform the same tasks).
- There are many ways in which the company can achieve this. The two main parts in the FS world is training and motivation.
- Investing in technical skills training leads to employees having to spend less time to understand the work due to a quicker learning curve, which is therefore more cost effective.
- Motivating employees leads to employees focusing on going the extra mile and employees taking on the project/workload as if it is their own business. The employee will therefore work as effective and efficiently as possible to make the project a success. Motivation in FS companies are done in many ways which can include bonuses, prizes, goal setting, flexible working hours, staff functions, making them responsible for certain tasks, supporting diversity, intellectual stimulation, work-life balance etc.
- Motivated employees will also go the extra mile towards client relations, which helps building the image of the company. This leads to the company being able to win more tenders that will grow the company.

It can therefore be seen that it is favourable for the company's to have motivated employees with a work-life balance in order to meet their goal to increase profits for their shareholders. The methods used by FS companies to motivate their employees have therefore been tried and tested over the years and found to be effective and could therefore be adapted to be used in other disciplines. It is important for the other disciplines to take into account the reasoning behind the company's way of working with employees so as to understand what is expected of the employees and how to use this get to a win-win for both company (increased profit) and employee (work-life balance).

3.3.7.6 Mrs F

Being a researcher myself, I relate to research and family time being a balancing act – having to spend any available time on research is impossible without the support of your family. You need to have a healthy balanced family life to be a successful researcher.

I also realise that giving up a successful career to focus on studies, might look like a foolish decision to some, but in the long run our family is working towards sustainable success and not short-term success. It is important for us to be part of the change in the world and leave a legacy, thus scaling down in a financial sense to focus on family and studies, will be seen as a wise decision by many other researchers.

From my perspective as a teacher, we should look at the root of where our misunderstood idea of success originates. I believe this is early childhood development.

According to normal child development, a child only needs to start formal reading and writing in grade 1; the trend, however, these days is to put children under extreme pressure as from age 4 to start reading and writing. Forcing and pressuring children when they are not emotionally ready is part of the problem we as a society is creating to focus on the wrong kind of success.

Many pre-schools start with formal education as young as 3-4 years. A child's developmental need in this phase is playing. Through play they learn all they need to know for their age in an informal way.

This pressure for success we as a society perpetuate is affecting the way we raise our children.

3.3.8 Concerns of a failed interdisciplinary discussion

Müller's (2009a:227) fourth interdisciplinary question: "What would your major concern be if the perspective of your discipline might not be taken seriously?" was answered by the team in the following way:

3.3.8.1 Mrs A

Society tends to focus on the working force and often negates the value family structure brings. Being someone that chose to spend my time at home, supporting my husband and children, I bring a unique voice to the table that normally isn't heard in boardrooms or human resource discussions. Having this opportunity in interdisciplinary discussion adds my voice as an equal to the business owner, CEO and manager. The voice expressing family needs is an important one if one considers work-family balance, since I believe one can only perform optimally at work if one is happy at home.

3.3.8.2 Dr B

Dealing with corporate strategy I am involved in facilitating processes that determine the company's – and therefore the workforce's – future. This has an impact on the company employees' work-family balance.

As a narrative coach I try to facilitate stories for the company that negotiates positive and up-building identities for both the company and its workforce. The opportunity to bring hope in the form of re-framed and strengthened identities risks being lost if my contribution is undervalued.

3.3.8.3 Mrs C

My perspective might bring a balance to popular culture and conversations shared by those that have never been solely responsible for business income and people management.

While employers should be sensitive to enabling work-life balance, it's often easier said than done. Those facilitating premarital counselling on work-life balance should therefore be able to represent the voice of the employer, as well as the viewpoints of those more traditionally supported i.e. individual employees and their families.

An unrealistic expectation of employers supporting work-life balance might lead to unintended feelings of entitlement to this elusive balance.

World-views and/or expectations from couples that work-life balance is unconditionally supported by parties external to their relationship and circumstance, might fuel unnecessary arguments on how much time is spent on activities outside work, or how much attention is paid to personal issues during agreed working hours.

3.3.8.4 Drs D

Work-family conflict negatively affects the psychological and emotional well-being of employees, and contribute towards negative work-related attitudes and behaviours (e.g. job dissatisfaction, reduced organisational commitment, etc.). These negative employee attitudes and behaviours may also contribute to reduced work performance, which in turn may affect the organisation's bottom line.

3.3.8.5 Mr E

In answering this question I've focused on the perspective of motivating employees to work effectively.

My major concern would be if companies would not motivate their employees, but overwork them to get as much possible from them, it would be detrimental to both the company and the employees:

- To the company, as the employees would not work on a long-term basis for an employer where they are overworked/under paid and therefore resign (or even be place on sick leave

due stress). The company would then need to invest in appointing new employees or additional employees.

- To the employees, as they would not be motivated to do their jobs which will lead to unmotivated people, depression, negativity, etc.

3.3.8.6 Mrs F

If we cultivate a culture where we sell success as being productive all the time, being over worked, stressed and sleep deprived becomes a sign of success. If that stays the norm we are raising a generation that is going to be burned out early in their lives.

I get the sense that society looks up to people that are overworked, stressed and always busy. A truly successful person is balanced in all spheres of life.

3.4 Couples' reflection on interdisciplinary process

As discussed under 3.2.2 the process of creating open dialogue is enhanced by having the co-researchers reflect on the questions asked by the interdisciplinary team. This adds to the opportunity of creating new knowledge in the postfoundational practical theology interdisciplinary field by enhancing the process of creating more descriptive feedback loops. This opens up new avenues for meaning making for the couples as co-researchers and for this study.

3.4.1 Ridge and Beth's reflection

3.4.1.1 Communication and conflict

Our different styles of handling conflict is still a learning experience for us. We handle the differences we experience through compromise. We are open to each other's differences and allow each other time to focus on what is important for them. For example, one Sunday we go to Beth's church and the next to Ridge's.

We keep communication open throughout the day. We normally communicate through Whatsapp while at work. We exercise, make food and watch our favourite TV shows together.

3.4.1.2 Work

Beth works for a large company and has to handle many issues at work. Ridge is very supportive although Beth does not always tell him about all of the issues as she does not want him to think that she is unhappy. She feels that this will put less pressure on them, when she does not bring negativity home.

Ridge usually gets quiet and would ask for a day to think about work stress to get it sorted out. Beth gives him that time to think, but will usually want to help him make plans to sort things out. They, however, feel that opening up about the different aspects of his work might relieve some work stress for him.

We made a decision not to bring work home and will only do so when there's a work emergency. We have, in the past, been given the opportunity of a job that requires a lot of travel, but declined because spending time together and at home is important to us. Work should support our lives and not the other way around.

We tend to find things to celebrate. We will either pour a glass of wine, bake a cake, put a ribbon on the front door, etc. We will even do this for the dog's birthday! Family is very important to us and will normally get priority over work. We are both lucky in the sense that the culture of our work supports these values.

3.4.1.3 Equality and gender identity

It happened to us previously that one of us was offered a higher salary than the other. We handled this as a team: there is no "I or you" in our relationship, we are a team! We are however making provision should any one of us lose our jobs. We are trying to make an extra income.

3.4.1.4 Background

Being raised in families with similar value systems helps us get along very well with both families.

3.4.1.5 Family

Respect, love and understanding are important values we would like to see reflected in our children's lives. We have a family growth plan and rely on God to fulfil it. We hold on to His will and promise. Although having a child in the house will have an impact on our time, we plan on making enough time for each other.

Creating downtime is important, we visit the farm often where there is no cellphone reception, which allows for some resting time. Having a weekly date night is very important. We do not allow any phones, just the two of us with a glass of wine and a fire.

3.4.1.6 Finances

Both of us have certain responsibilities towards the family finances. We assist each other if things do not work out as planned.

3.4.1.7 Answers to specific questions for the couple

Do you think the business of busyness is a potential problem in your relationship? (Mrs A)

- **Ridge and Beth:** We don't consider this to be a problem, we like being busy – it helps with a sense of achievement. We support each other in busy times. Living on a farm has decreased our stress levels very much.

Do you experience/feel that your partner truly treats you as an equal in your relationship? (Mrs A)

- **Ridge and Beth:** Yes, yes, yes! We are a team! We realised this by working together, it makes us share the effort and success.

The spirituality narrative could be a concern or opportunity for this couple. (Dr B)

- **Ridge and Beth:** We see this as an opportunity and make use of this opportunity to learn from each other. It emphasises the fact that we understand that relationships sometimes need compromise. We both give and we both take at different times.

I am concerned that possessions and activities could become the metric by which they measure the success of their relationship. (Mrs C)

- **Ridge and Beth:** This might be a valid point, but living far away from our friends, makes it difficult for us to measure if we are trying to “keep up with the Joneses”. In Afrikaans there is a saying of having a “loaf of white bread under the arm” and we realise that we are very privileged. We rather measure success in our relationship in the way we treat, love and respect each other.

Failing to complete studies: High unemployment rates, job insecurity and a weak labour market might negatively affect their employment status, given the amount of job instability/organisational downsizing/retrenchments many South Africans are exposed to in the workplace on an ongoing basis. (Drs D)

- **Beth:** Although I'm currently busy finishing my degree, the company I work for doesn't see the fact that I haven't completed my studies in a negative light. If it was an issue they would've gotten rid of me a long time ago.

Their current workloads might contribute to work-family conflict. I wonder how they could manage their time more effectively. (Drs D)

- **Ridge and Beth:** Lots of effort from both our sides have gone into managing this. Our decision not to bring work to home (unless it is really urgent) gives us enough time for and with each other, allowing us to make food together and enjoy our favourite TV shows.

The house that is not yet completed might create conflict between them, especially given the fact that both parties could be impatient and overly sensitive individuals. (Drs D)

- **Ridge and Beth:** Yay! Our house is finished and we were able to move in April 2016. Our house is our ARK and we are so happy to spend time together there. We were too excited to move in and finish this project that we didn't allow time for fighting.

How would struggling to have children impact your relationship? (Mr E)

- **Ridge and Beth:** To be able to have children will be a blessing. We believe that God intended for us to be together. If it is His will for us to have children, that would be great! We rely on God's promises for us.

Could compensating too much for impatience and being overly sensitive have an impact on your ability to communicate effectively. (Mr E)

- Yes, this is something that we still struggle with from time to time. We see ourselves as in the process of figuring out the best way to deal with such situations.

Both of them share stories of failing to complete their studies; this can either be something that makes them stronger or make them feel unfulfilled. They could also explore how their spiritual differences have an influence on their relationship. (Mrs F)

- **Ridge and Beth:** Although we both at some point failed in studies, we still made the best of the situation. Ridge has been a great inspiration to Beth, who will be completing her studies this year! Both of us are successful in spite of our failures. Concerning the question about spirituality: we consider it as an opportunity to learn from one another.

3.4.2 James and Alice's reflection

3.4.2.1 Communication and conflict

We know that the most important thing when one has a bad day, is not to take out the frustration on the other person. We are open and honest about that and normally suggest some de-stressing time to one another to and be alone and centre yourself. Being human beings, we do get into each other's hair from time to time, we see that as part of a normal relationship.

James is more cognitively orientated, and thus Alice knows that if she leaves him alone for 30 minutes he will self-correct his mood by reflecting internally. Alice is emotionally-orientated and James knows she requires a kind ear and warm emotions to correct a bad mood.

We manage different conflict styles by considering each other's personality types. Knowing our personality type makes it easier, but since Alice tends to avoid conflict this can make things a lot tougher as James doesn't consider himself to be a mind reader. James prefers to unpack and reason out any points of conflict where Alice tends to shun any conflict at all. Having been together for seven years has allowed Alice and James to understand how to manage each other during conflict.

Concerning what gets on each other's nerves: James tends to be glued to his phone and everything else then seems to annoy him when he has to "unglue" himself. Alice will then become frustrated and walks away.

3.4.2.2 Work

Alice experiences working at a family-owned business as challenging. Having the responsibility for the family's livelihood and working with family could have disastrous repercussions. Switching off "work mode" when we get home is therefore important, but not always easy. James is frustrated that Alice always wants to leave early from work, and this often means that he also needs to work short hours.

Achievements are a big deal in our relationship, big or small it is celebrated – even if it's just by having a milkshake. Celebrating helps keeping you motivated.

3.4.2.3 Equality and gender identity

Concerning the question if one or both would be in a situation of losing their income: As a couple we are always on the lookout for alternative income streams and having a buffer in case of emergencies, so we are reasonably well prepared. We also know that constantly worrying about money, is not trusting that God will provide – so why worry?

Should one of us stop earning an income, we will pro-actively look at the total household income, and reduce expenses to make it work.

3.4.2.4 Answers to specific questions for the couple

What helps your partner unwind from work-related stress? How could you support each other without making each other's work problems your own? (Mrs A)

- **James and Alice:** Alone time is a very important aspect in any relationship, it is important to know when your partner needs some time to themselves and allow them to it. As a couple that works together, our work problems can occasionally be the other person, knowing that work issues are not personal and they should stay at work is important in our relationship. Therefore we try not to discuss work and these problems when we are home. At home we have to make that switch, we are not colleagues but a couple.

The narrative of creating enough time for each other could be a concern for this couple. (Dr B)

- **James and Alice:** We make time! Working together, we make use of the time when sitting in traffic together and use the opportunity to our advantage. Having a conversation or even just planning the grocery list can be done in this time. Quality time is something completely different, as we try to arrange date nights and weekends where we consciously focus on us as couple.

This couple should remain cognisant of the danger in reverting to habits displayed by their parents, rather than a life that reflects their own needs, wants and goals as individuals. What do they want for their relationship and their future children? (Mrs C)

- **James and Alice:** We already had many discussions about how we envision our future, our relationship and how we would like to raise our children. As a unit and a family we would like to grow spiritually and we are aware of our flaws and our blessings. We focus on living a healthy and balanced life, where we can help better the lives of those around us. We have thus reflected on the bad habits of both our parents and worked through these traits. They will not be passed on to our children.

Regarding job satisfaction, it seems that Alice is not enjoying her job. This might be a potential source of conflict. What if Alice decides to pursue a different career/decide to become “her own boss”? What impact will this change have on her relationship with James, especially when they choose to have children? (Drs D)

- **James and Alice:** Alice has since started a new career in the family business. When her baby arrives she will most likely stay at home permanently and take charge of the couple’s side-line endeavours; making for a much more balanced home life.

I wonder if Alice would also like to have children one day? (Drs D)

- **James and Alice:** Alice is currently pregnant (planned) with a little girl.

How could the couple stay cognisant of spending enough time together? (Drs D)

- **James and Alice:** Answering this could be tricky, as we interpret “enough time” quite differently. James feels that having a nice chat in the car or seeing a movie is sufficient, but over time he has also learnt that Alice needs time dedicated to them as a couple for her to be happy. Having a designated date night, marked on the calendar and setting aside one evening per week to just spend some time together should be a priority.

They have noted that God provides the space for their relationship tree to flourish. It might become an easy mindset to sit back and let God create this space while they also have the responsibility in recognising, setting boundaries and utilising this space to let their relationship tree grow. (Mr E)

- **James and Alice:** God will provide for us. We are God’s hands: in action by listening to the inner voice of God. We do not shun responsibility.

Socialising and taking a holiday was not a priority for James. The opposite seems to be true for Alice. This might have an impact on how each perceives work-life balance. (Mr E)

- **James and Alice:** James is still not completely sold on why taking a holiday is important, but he now uses it as an incentive when we as a couple reach a goal. Work-life balance can be tricky when you are in a family business, so it is crucial to switch off when at home. Taking a holiday becomes important to James when it is the means by which Alice is made happy.

Alice’s negativity towards her career is a concern. (Mrs F)

- **James and Alice:** Alice has changed her career direction, and is working on ideas for the future.

3.4.3 Edward and Candice’s reflection

3.4.3.1 Communication and conflict

We do not experience conflict or a disturbance in the situations where we experience opposite moods. When such situations occur we communicate with each other to get the background of where the other’s mood stems from, in order to understand his/her situation better. Listening is absolutely key to our relationship, as we need our partner to understand our situation. By discussing after listening we have always been able to salvage any situation.

Our relationship values individuality as a value, this keeps things interesting for us! We are open to differences and accept and embrace them. Difference brings balance to our Ferris wheel. With this value, the importance of communication is once again underlined to manage and

reinforce our Ferris wheel in moving forward – round and round. Listening and discussing keeps the Ferris wheel alive and interesting.

As we are both attorneys with strong personalities, arguments could get very opinionated. Both partners want to be right. However, as a wife (Candice) I also have a very vulnerable side and still feel the need to be taken care of, resulting that I need my partner to be the head of our household and be a source of comfort. This might lead to us adjusting conflict strategies in order to understand one another better. Edward feels a need to simplify arguments and wants Candice to be more direct in expressing needs or feelings. By understanding these differences it helps us to communicate better.

We refrain from communicating with each other during business hours as a day is short and working hours aren't always long enough. We prefer to only communicate urgent and important matters and rather discuss detail later when we are at home.

3.4.3.2 Work

Both of us experience a huge workload and work long hours. Although we discuss the stress we experience at work we try to refrain from making it each other's problem. We are aware of the risks in bringing our work into our home, by creating a beautiful living space for ourselves we create distance between home and work. Our family still stays our most important goal and this has a huge influence on prioritising when work or family takes preference.

We find each other in work ethic, although our job descriptions are different from each other. We are currently in the situation where one of us needs to travel frequently for business, which is a difficult situation for us as we need one another. In this situation our work ethic carries us and we try to make the situation as comfortable as possible for each other. With work being an integral part of our lives, we try to be accommodating towards each other.

Celebrating our achievements is important for us, especially acknowledging each other's achievements. We do however feel that we could make more of celebration, but not having enough time for that tends to be a factor.

3.4.3.3 Equality and gender identity

It shouldn't affect our relationship if one of us should suddenly earn more than the other as we adjust our finances in order to balance our joint budget according to our salaries, although money always affects a relationship. Proper planning and support may overshadow these obstacles or lessen the impact. The most important aspect here is support and love, as this is key to survival.

3.4.3.4 Background

We feel the questions in this section was covered in our relationship narrative.

3.4.3.5 Boundaries

We experience that our family tends to test our boundaries as they sometimes interfere or impose their will or needs on us. Even though this comes with love, we need to assess our needs first. We, however, still value the importance of our family as they provide us with security. The advice we receive from family and friends are always considered, but we discuss with each other what advice is useful to our relationship.

3.4.3.6 God and religion

We are fortunate in the sense that our religious beliefs are very similar and acts as a strong source of guidance in our lives.

3.4.3.7 Family

If one of us where to change their mind on something we agreed upon before our marriage it would be a difficult situation for us to handle, as we had a long build-up until we got married. Being friends we shared everything and knew what we wanted.

Frequent travelling or breakaways will help us keep perspective and to touch base with our true selves and our Ferris wheel. We plan on creating down time over weekends. Going to the farm – away from friends, family and contact with the outside world – helps us stay close to each other and reminds us to communicate with each other. Often a perfect fire will do a lot for us.

We do, however, struggle to build in down time into our family life, especially now that there is someone new that needs love and being taken care of. Once again by listening and understanding each other's needs, we try to uphold our needs and values. The values of love, respect and hard work is a natural occurrence in our house which should have a definite impact on our children.

3.4.3.8 Finances

By trying to keep to our budget (we refer back to our budgets continuously) we sustain balance.

3.4.3.9 Answers to specific questions for the couple

What would the effect on your relationship be if the frustration from work is reflected at home frequently? How would you counter that? (Mrs A)

- **Edward and Candice:** We find ourselves in this scenario often. We discuss this with one another to help each other. We often find that our partner's advice and help will lead to a solution at work. By reaching this, we also unwind and relax.

The work and family narrative could be a concern or opportunity for this couple. (Dr B)

- Edward and Candice: Yes, noted.

This couple should remember to make time for not only "not working", but make a dedicated effort to spend quality time together, actively enjoying each other's company (as opposed to "default time" when not working). (Mrs C)

- Edward and Candice: Yes, noted.

Have both individuals dealt with the pain from their previous failed relationships? (Drs D)

- **Edward and Candice:** Yes, by dealing with and discussing previous relationships we both build and strive to a better way forward.

That a fast-paced life can limit the time Edward and Candice spend together and cause them to live separate lives. (Drs D)

- **Edward and Candice:** This can be a possibility. We understand that we need to make time for each other, even if it is a glass of wine just to chat every day. We have numerous chores a day that tire us, but to have even a quick 30 minute chat, to help unwind, is the best.

Setting routines that are not adaptable to changing situations could impact spontaneity in their relationship and also cause conflict situation to arise. (Mr E)

- **Edward and Candice:** We agree. We need adjustable routines to help balance and to create "something new". This results in new spontaneity.

They both experience a lot of work pressure which could impact their relationship in different ways including energy to be spent on the relationship, proper communication, time available to spend with each other, etc. How will they stay cognisant of that? (Mr E)

- **Edward and Candice:** To be aware that time together is needed is the most important step in this process. The routines, however adjustable, must have this as an end goal. Both partners acknowledges work, being healthy and home life. We need to make sure that the balance here is maintained throughout. We both see family as being the most important and need to ensure we are adaptable in creating this.

The work-family balance might be a concern for this couple. (Mrs F)

- **Edward and Candice:** Yes definitely, by having routines and planning we will spend time together. We do however need to ensure that new routines are acceptable and reachable for both of us.

3.4.4 Claude and Jade's reflection

3.4.4.1 Communication and conflict

Communication and respect is very important in our relationship. When we are in opposite moods we carry on with our own tasks, happily knowing that the other is close by. We respect each other's space and adapt. We will talk about things until it is resolved, when moods have cooled down. In situations where we struggle to find resolution we will make compromises in order to grow towards each other. Throughout the day we try to keep communication channels open by making sure that we communicate via Whatsapp or phone calls before and after work and throughout the day.

Some of the frustrations we experience with each other:

- His short temper – I will voice my frustration and he promises to work on it.
- Her tendency to blow a situation out of proportion and make a bigger deal than it actually is – I tend to keep it bottled up for fear of hurting her feelings, until I blow up. If our arguments become heated, we will take time-outs until we have cooled down and can talk it through.

3.4.4.2 Work

We share similar work ethics. Both of us experience work as something that should aid your life, having strong boundaries that work doesn't affect my partner negatively is important for us. Although Claude sometimes expresses that I should take my work more seriously.

He experiences frustration when his work isn't challenging enough or when he feels that he is not remunerated enough, I will normally encourage him and try to keep him positive. When I am treated disrespectfully or do not receive appreciation at work, it tends to get me down. Claude will let me vent and together we normally talk about how to get out of such a negative environment.

Having to work far away from each other will be difficult for us because we are used to spending lots of time together. We therefore try not to work overtime or weekends and try to synchronise our work hours. Our family is a high priority for both of us, therefore we would like to focus more on celebrating achievements.

3.4.4.3 Equality and gender identity

We do not feel that it would have an influence on how we perceive ourselves or each other if one of us were to earn substantially more. If we or one of us were to lose our income it would have a tremendous impact on us, resulting in stress on ourselves and the relationship.

3.4.4.4 Background

He was raised in a family that values relaxation more than my family, who do not know how to sit still. This has taught me to become more laid back and take it easier. Although we find motivation in different things, respect for differing viewpoints allow us to strive towards our individual goals.

3.4.4.5 Boundaries

Her family and his friends tend to test the boundaries of our relationship the most. We deal with this by respecting each other's feelings and creating an environment of compromise when needed. To differentiate between good and bad advice we do not take the things our friends say to heart as easily and we take everything our families say with a pinch of salt, we will discuss it and come to conclusions together. However, our family and close relationships are very important to us, they are part of our support structure and we will rely on them when we have to raise our own children.

Work places a big amount of stress on us as it drains our energy and time. We believe in not taking work home and the importance of having fun together – this is a boundary we have in place to keep our relationship healthy.

3.4.4.6 God and religion

We experience spirituality different, we are in different places in our spiritual journeys; she is patient with him, and he does his best to keep growing. We share the same beliefs but the differences would impact our children in the level of faith they grow up with.

3.4.4.7 Family

If one of us were to have a change of mind about something we agreed upon before the wedding and where to change their mind he is of the opinion that they will have to listen to each other and try and understand why the other feels that way. She said that depending on the seriousness of the matter she might at first be taken aback and be angry initially, then she will also try to understand why the other changed their mind and what he is thinking and feeling about the matter.

We are planning to start having kids in two years' time and want to have two children. We want our kids to grow up in a loving environment where they learn to love by the example we set. Currently we support each other in every task we take on to ensure our relationship stays strong, we are planning to buy a house and build a life with a garden and dogs to ensure our future plans work out. We anticipate that having children will have an enormous impact on our life together, but we plan on work together and sharing the burden. On giving our children career advice later on: we shall tell them to do enough research and consider the aspects of each career, for example when and where they would work, average salaries, market saturation etc.

We make a point of relaxing in the evenings and taking some downtime every available weekend. We try to spend less time on technology when we are together. For example phones are not allowed when we have dinner etc. We try to spend some time in the afternoons and as often as possible over weekends; for example: talking without having the television on, we will sit outside and talk or do activities together: gym, gardening and woodwork. We make a point of separating the time that we watch TV together from the time that we spend together without distractions.

3.4.4.8 Finances

Claude takes care of our family's financial planning, we both understand the value of money and we are both savers by nature, thus we understand that investments are a necessity.

3.4.4.9 Answers to specific questions for the couple

How do you intend to find a balance between staying informed and interested in what happens in your partner's workplace and not being pulled into his/her problems? (Mrs A)

- **Claude and Jade:** We tend to leave our work issues at work, but when a serious issue arises that affects our personal life we try to support each other. It is difficult to not get consumed by the other person being unhappy or under stress.

The family influence narrative could be a concern for this couple. (Dr B)

- **Claude and Jade:** At that point it was a problem because we were planning a wedding and they were paying for it. After the wedding the parents are respecting our boundaries and will only get involved when we ask them.

The health of their relationship should not be based on how well routines, expectations and actions are going according to external parties. They should understand that life does not

always go as planned and that they might need to prepare for steering the relationship through some rocky times in the future. (Mrs C)

- **Claude and Jade:** Our routine provides us with structure and time for work and time for each other. A routine is a personality choice but we are adaptable with unforeseen circumstances and make the best of the situations we encounter.

What the underlying discourses, reflected in bickering over petty issues, could be. (Drs D)

- **Claude and Jade:** As you spend more time together and grow towards each other you tend to get over small issues because for us it is more important to respect each other than being right.

How the label “drama queen” that Jade gives herself impacts their relationship. (Drs D)

- **Claude:** She is an expressive person and I knew that from the start. Her being a “drama queen” is one of the reasons why I love her and that keeps my life interesting and entertaining.

What the impact of job insecurity and instability has on their relationship. (Drs D)

- **Claude and Jade:** It would put our relationship under pressure, but we will support each other and we think it will make our relationship stronger by facing the insecurities together.

Jade is very active at church which is probably taking up quite a lot of their free time. As Claude is not as involved in these activities, it could lead to him feeling left out and being lower on Jade’s list of priorities. Jade could feel that something as important as church is not important to Claude and therefore their priorities are not aligned. (Mr E)

- **Claude and Jade:** When she attends ladies’ dinners at church we feel that we miss each other. Claude, however, supports her and does not feel neglected, the rest of the church activities we do together.

Claude’s constant fear of retrenchment and the fact that he feels he does not receive financial compensation for the work of his department could make him work even harder, and it can become easier in giving up boundaries. (Mr E)

- **Claude and Jade:** Claude feels that he has no interest in investing more of his time with a company that only values the amount of time he puts in at the office and do not value the quality of his work or the fact that he gets the job done. Therefore he would rather seek other opportunities than sacrifice boundaries.

The story of sharing their faith with one another might be one of their concerns, and another one might be that of their family not respecting their boundaries. (Mrs F)

- **Claude and Jade:** Our faith is a journey and we continue to grow together. Our families are only affecting our relationship because of the wedding planning and the role they play in paying for it. They do not affect any other boundaries in our relationship and they resumed in being respectful and supportive towards our relationship after the wedding.

3.4.5 Luke and Alexis' reflection

The lighthouse metaphor is still very much applicable to our relationship. Even though we have grown individually and as a couple since the wedding, the lighthouse is still the safe space that we go to when we have to focus on our relationship.

3.4.5.1 Answers to specific questions for the couple

What causes work-related stress for your partner? How could communicating your individual work stories help you grow stronger as a couple? (Mrs A)

- **Luke and Alexis:** Work-related stress for us is caused by the following factors:
 - Work overload
 - Time pressures
 - Office politics
 - Lack of effective management
 - Lack of effective communication
 - Little or no participation in decision making/autonomy.

Communication allows us to not only “vent” our frustrations and concerns, but it also increases openness and trust in our relationship. We are able to understand what our spouse is experiencing in the workplace and what causes stress, frustration and concerns. Instead of acting out, comprehension and empathy is shared.

The work narrative could be a concern for this couple. (Dr B)

- **Luke and Alexis:** Work is a concern for us. We have, however, learnt to individually deal with the stressors at work. This has had a positive effect on our relationship.

The relationship seems to fulfil different needs for each one of you. This might turn into unresolved conflicts about small things that never quite deal with the essence of what they view their different roles, and the importance thereof are in their relationship. (Mrs C)

- **Luke and Alexis:** Individual differences and needs are inevitable. We have, however, learnt to deal with our different needs and roles, and support each other in our relationship. Our roles in the house have been clearly defined and each one knows what he/she is responsible for. If conflict arises we deal with the issue before it escalates into a bigger issue.

Poor relationships with family and friends might put Luke and Alexis' relationship at risk. (Drs D)

- **Luke and Alexis:** Poor relationships with family and friends do not put our relationship at risk; but it is a source of conflict or disagreement. Alexis' family, for example, is very involved in the couple's relationship, whereas Luke's family is more distant and reserved. Consequently, Luke becomes frustrated, while Alexis feels that she cannot distance family as they play an important part in her (or their) lives.

Luke's busy work schedule and independence might be a source of conflict/negatively affect his relationship with Alexis. How do they intend to bridge this? (Drs D)

- **Luke and Alexis:** First, we have created a safe space where we are able to discuss our work roles with each other. This seems to be effective, because instead of acting out we have learnt to rather support each other and/or provide constructive advice. Secondly, Luke has left the company that he has worked for before our wedding. The new company and position offers him more autonomy and work schedules are not as demanding. A work-life balance is encouraged.

Alexis seems very dependent on Luke to set a safe space for her. This, in turn, could have Luke feeling that he is solely responsible for Alexis' happiness. (Mr E)

- **Luke and Alexis:** True, Luke (as Alexis' husband) plays a very big and important role in Alexis' happiness. As her husband and her living partner her happiness is important to him.

Alexis has had bad experiences with family and friends which could impact the way she experiences her relationship with Luke. It will also impact the way in which she communicates with him and how she acts in conflict situations. Luke, on the other hand, enjoys being with friends and being part of the group of friends. This might impact their relationship when prioritising their free time. (Mr E)

- **Luke and Alexis:** Although individual differences affect our free time, we have learnt to compromise. We have further learnt to make decisions together.

Alexis appears to have already reached her goals, and it does not seem like she is currently focused on any other goals to strive for. It seems like Luke is trying to better himself by learning more in his job and striving for success in his workplace. These different mindsets might impact their relationships priorities. (Mr E)

- **Luke and Alexis:** Both Alexis and Luke have goals that they wish to accomplish within the next two years. Although Alexis is not focused on career progression, she is focused on completing her PhD. Luke seeks self-development and career progression. Although we are striving towards different goals, we still support each other in our decisions.

What would work-family balance be for this couple? (Mrs F)

- **Luke and Alexis:** Work-life balance is created by spending time with each other and family and friends. Although it is sometimes difficult, we try to focus on work during working hours and relax during the evenings and over weekends.

3.5 Autoethnographic reflection

The process of interdisciplinary discussion as set out in the sixth movement of postfoundational practical theology (Müller, 2004:303) has done more than just developing the couples' relationships further and preparing the canvas for pointing beyond the local community (the couples themselves). The questions used were adapted from Müller's (2009a:227) article on transversal rationality and interdisciplinary research:

- When reading the stories of the couples, what do you think would each couple's concerns be?
- How would you formulate your discipline's unique perspective on these concerns and why is it important that this perspective be heard at the interdisciplinary table?
- Why do you think your perspective will be understood and appreciated by researchers from other disciplines?
- What would your major concern be if the perspective of your discipline might not be taken seriously?

In this way we have not only broadened the discussion into the transversal realm; we were invited into the context of the interdisciplinary discussion team as well.

The questions the interdisciplinary team posted and the descriptions of their perspective not only described their individual fields' unique take on work-family balance for premarital couples, they have also placed their own biases on the table. In this way they opened up to stating their own subjective integrity, helping us to point beyond the local community through providing authenticity in where their questions came from.

With certain questions posted by the interdisciplinary team I felt that they focused on subjects that were not particularly issues for the couples, or they would also zoom in on topics that I felt were already re-framed through the narrative process. This made me wonder about the power relations at play in the interdisciplinary process:

- Did the interdisciplinary team understand that they were also, like the couples whose stories they listened to, co-researchers and conversation partners?
- Did the interdisciplinary team understand that the couples still stayed the experts on their own relationship story?
- Were the interdisciplinary team aware of their own relationship with power when reading the stories and posing questions?
- In which way were they aware of their own context and biases when posing these questions?

A few beautiful moments the interdisciplinary team opened up through posing their questions related to the religious and spiritual aspects and experiences of the presence of God. This opened up the fifth movement for postfoundational practical theology study proposed by Müller (2004:303). As some couples have already mentioned their relationship with God and his influence on their relationship, some of the interdisciplinary conversation partners linked up with these stories and did not mind exploring them further. What I found profound in opening the conversation through interdisciplinary study, is that it created a certain type of "faith community". The interdisciplinary team related their own work-family stories to that of their relationship with God, creating an open space for "church" to happen: people learning from each other about God and sharing what they have learnt.

It is through finding this connection that postfoundational practical theology can and does play a significant role in various fields and walks of life. Meeting couples in such a momentous part of their lives has the potential of influencing conversation partners for many years in the future. Having the church or a minister facilitating such an integral part of their relationship story will undeniably have a lasting impact of approachability and openness towards the church community and ultimately with people's relationship with God.

CHAPTER 4 DISCOURSE ANALYSIS

In the previous chapters we listened to and developed couples' relationship narratives. These narratives were brought into conversation with the couples' narratives of work. A PESTLE study was done as literature review on narrative premarital counselling and the element of work-family balance was explored. We also investigated Biblical background on marriage and work and heard the voices of extra-theological enquiry. The interdisciplinary team reviewed the couples' narratives and the couples were given the opportunity to reflect on the transversal rationality process, helping them to develop "alternative interpretations" for their relationship that points "beyond the local community" – thereby enhancing an integrated work-family balance narrative (Müller, 2004:300).

In this chapter we will be unpacking the different discourses involved in the concept of work-family balance, and suggest a workable metaphor for this concept on the route of narrative premarital counselling. We could explain this as the roof of the house of enquiry. Analysing different discourses involved in the triad of this study: the combination of premarital counselling, work-family balance and narrative counselling. The goal is to bring different voices of the research together, in order to extend alternatives that point beyond the local community.

Finally a working metaphor for work-family balance, from a narrative point of view, is introduced.

4.1 Discourse analysis in a socially constructed reality

Starks and Brown Trinidad (2007:1373-1374) explain that discourse analysis finds its origin in linguistic studies, literary criticism and semiotics and focuses on understanding how language is used to enact identity and activity. Like social constructionism it agrees that "language both mediates and constructs our understanding of reality" (Starks and Brown Trinidad, 2007:1374).

Burck (2005:248-249), in turn, emphasises the following principles of discourse analysis:

- Language is used to construct versions of the social world.
- Language is not a neutral and transparent medium of expression; rather it is constitutive.
- Identity is not seen as a fixed entity, but as constituted and reconstituted through discourses and descriptions.
- Discourse is regarded as a set of meanings, metaphors, representations, images and stories and as an institutionalised use of language which places reality in a certain light.
- Discourse analysis is located in a social-constructionist paradigm.

Stark and Brown Trinidad (2007:1376) describe the objective of discourse analysis as understanding what people are doing with their language in a given situation. It, therefore, entails identifying themes and roles as signified through the use of language.

4.1.1 Discourse analysis methodology

Burck's (2005:249) methodology of discourse analysis will be followed, namely:

- Selecting of fragments of "text" that have bearing on the research question;
- Identifying relevant themes;
- Examining the "text" in relation to how language is used to "construct" the ideas or information;
- Identifying variability the inconsistencies found in the constructions and what is assumed; and
- The implications of these discourses.

In the case of this study, the conversations with the co-researchers, together with the PESTLE study, social-science Biblical background and literature on work-family balance, will serve as "text". This is also brought into conversation with the questions formulated by the interdisciplinary team and the answers provided by the various couples.

Discourse analysis's method of examining how understanding is produced – through the use of language and how the story is told – to create meaning and identity, through activity and relationship, is a fitting method of enquiry to understand work-family balance from the perspectives of co-researchers and the interdisciplinary team (Starks & Brown Trinidad, 2007:1373).

4.1.2 Deconstruction of power

Foucault (1972:86) led the conversation of power. He links discourse to knowledge and in turn, sees knowledge and power going hand-in-hand. The power generated through the "unsaid" and implied has an influence on the social norm and what is considered as reality, even today, as discussed in discourse (2.1.3). This affects the different narratives on family and work in our study. Foucault describes a shift in power from "sovereign power" to "disciplinary power", where people are controlled through their own processes of self-monitoring – it makes people blind to the processes of control (as generated by social norms) and adds to a false sense of independence. Foucault (1998:388) explains that the different influences of control on people will dictate how they function and operate.

Burr (2003:67) acknowledges the popular saying “knowledge is power” and the common sense understanding that one’s power is increased by knowledge (whether it is academic, social or financial). She explains that the relationship between knowledge and power looks different from Foucault’s point of view and that knowledge is a predetermined framework of understanding, within a certain situation, for a certain group of people. She states that Foucault links this knowledge to power. Knowledge could therefore be used for power to act or abstain from acting in a particular context or setting.

Caputo and Yount (1993:4-5) interpret Foucault’s stance on power as follows:

Power is the thin, inescapable film that covers all human interactions, whether inside institutions or out ... Power relations are embedded in the very heart of human relationships, springing into being as soon as there are human beings

According to Burr (2003:67, 79) and Freedman and Combs (1996:37-39), power, therefore, does not belong to a person or group any longer – it is not someone’s possession – but is part of the cultural discourse. Cognition and recognition of this power can be used by conversation partners and co-researchers to find unique outcomes within their stories of need, the past and the future – in order to re-author their stories. By examining and questioning the discourse, new power (or freedom) is found by reinterpreting knowledge and therefore also reality (Visser, 2009:20).

Within social constructionism, the existence of “objective facts” is questioned and therefore the opportunity for reinterpretation and new perspectives are endless (Burr, 1998:13). Knowledge, therefore, needs to be understood within discourse. The negative side to discourse, when people are not in search of unique outcomes, is found when people’s future stories are narrowed, and stories of need are formed or sustained. In such ways, realities are limited by individuals’ discourse (Burr, 2003:81-90). Memory is strongly influenced by discourse. The interpretation people have of their past stories will influence their stories of the future, which could either be limiting or freeing (Brown, 1998:77).

Deconstruction in a narrative setting would aid conversation partners in the breakdown of problems that they find themselves stuck in (Brunsdon, 2010:12). The goal of therapy, that considers social constructionism, would, therefore, be focused on questioning power discourse – in this case: the power narratives of work and family. For instance, what is expected of people in the workplace, how do gender roles influence family life and what does the church community expect from couples? In this instance, deconstructing different discourses on family- and work-

life, contains the potential of deconstructing the taken-for-granted beliefs of power in the work-family balance.

4.1.3 Themes of work-family balance in couples' narratives

As discussed earlier, the narrative of each couple is unique. In discussing the couples' relationship stories they were not prompted beforehand on relevant themes or discourses about work and family. The route for narrative premarital counselling was followed, allowing the discourses to surface while the couples told their stories.

Some of the couples aired similar discourses as part of their narratives, but for a few they were the only ones to voice a particular discourse (for example, Claude and Jade talking about job insecurity, Luke and Alexis voicing that work has a negative impact on their relationship, Edward and Candice stressing the importance of teamwork, etc.). The different discourses were divided into groups, to create a broader theme of discourses that premarital couples might encounter when reflecting on work-family balance.

From the discussion with couples on work-family balance the following themes were identified from the different discourses:

4.1.3.1 Boundaries set for work

- Watching the clock (Ridge and Beth; Claude and Jade);
- Time management (Edward and Candice; Luke and Alexis);
- Keeping work's negativity away from home (James and Alice; Luke and Alexis);
- Bringing work home or not (Ridge and Beth; Edward and Candice); and
- Creating boundaries for work (Ridge and Beth; Edward and Candice; Claude and Jade; Luke and Alexis).

4.1.3.2 Work-related stress

- Difficult co-workers or managers (James and Alice; Edward and Candice; Claude and Jade);
- Overwork (James and Alice; Claude and Jade; Luke and Alexis);
- Talking about work's frustrations at home (Edward and Candice; Claude and Jade; Luke and Alexis);
- Job insecurity (Claude and Jade); and
- Work having a negative impact on relationship (Luke and Alexis).

4.1.3.3 Expectations of work

- Creativity in the workplace (Ridge and Beth; James and Alice);

- Respect for relationships (Ridge and Beth; Claude and Jade);
- Sometimes work comes first, sometimes family comes first (James and Alice);
- Teamwork (Edward and Candice); and
- Recognition (Edward and Candice).

4.1.3.4 The positive influence of work on self and family

- Enjoying work (Ridge and Beth; James and Alice; Edward and Candice; Claude and Jade; Luke and Alexis)
- Compensation (Ridge and Beth; James and Alice; Edward and Candice);
- Parents or family's influence on work (Ridge and Beth; James and Alice; Edward and Candice);
- Work's positive influence on family (Ridge and Beth; James and Alice); and
- Achievement (James and Alice; Edward and Candice).

4.1.3.5 The influence of family life on work

- Values that set the tone at work (Ridge and Beth; Edward and Candice; Luke and Alexis).

4.1.4 Themes of work-family balance in interdisciplinary team's reaction

By using the broad themes of discourses the couples used, the questions the interdisciplinary team asked were divided according to those discourses and themes. The interdisciplinary group sometimes reacted to the couple's narratives from their own background; therefore themes might include the interdisciplinary teams' own reflection on their discourses about work and family, while some additional themes were added according to the interdisciplinary team's additional questions.

From the questions the interdisciplinary team asked couples on work-family balance the following themes were identified:

4.1.4.1 Boundaries set for work

- What would the long-term impact be on your relationship and family by bringing work to the home? **(Mrs F and Dr B)**
- How do you decide whether the demands of work or family get preference at a given time? **(Mrs F)**
- The narrative of creating enough time for each other could be a concern for this couple. **(Dr B to James and Alice)**

- This couple should remember to make time for not only “not working”, but make a dedicated effort to spend quality time together, actively enjoying each other’s company (as opposed to “default time” when not working). **(Mrs C to Edward and Candice)**

4.1.4.2 Work-related stress

- What causes your partner to experience work-related stress and how do you handle this as a couple? **(Mrs A and Mr E)**
- Which options could you consider to relieve work stress that will impact your work-family balance positively? **(Mrs C and Dr B)**
- Failing to complete studies: High unemployment rates, job insecurity and a weak labour market might negatively affect their employment status, given the amount of job instability/organisational downsizing/retrrenchments many South Africans are exposed to in the workplace on an ongoing basis. **(Drs D to Ridge and Beth)**
- Their current workloads might contribute to work-family conflict. I wonder how they could manage their time more effectively. **(Drs D to Ridge and Beth)**
- What helps your partner unwind from work-related stress? How could you support each other without making each other’s work problems your own? **(Mrs A to James and Alice)**
- Alice’s negativity towards her career is a concern. **(Mrs F to James and Alice)**
- What would the effect on your relationship be if the frustration from work is reflected at home frequently? How would you counter that? **(Mrs A to Edward and Candice)**
- They both experience a lot of work pressure which could impact their relationship in different ways including energy to be spent on the relationship, proper communication, time available to spend with each other, etc. How will they stay cognisant of that? **(Mr E to Edward and Candice)**
- How do you intend to find a balance between staying informed and interested in what happens in your partner’s workplace and not being pulled into his/her problems? **(Mrs A to Claude and Jade)**
- What the impact of job insecurity and instability has on their relationship. **(Drs D to Claude and Jade)**
- Claude’s constant fear of retrenchment and the fact that he feels he does not receive financial compensation for the work of his department could make him work even harder, and it can become easier in giving up boundaries. **(Mr E to Claude and Jade)**
- What causes work-related stress for your partner? How could communicating your individual work stories help you grow stronger as a couple? **(Mrs A to Luke and Alexis)**

4.1.4.3 Expectations of work

- Regarding job satisfaction, it seems that Alice is not enjoying her job. This might be a potential source of conflict. What if Alice decides to pursue a different career/decide to become “her own boss”? What impact will this change have on her relationship with James, especially when they choose to have children? **(Dr D to James and Alice)**

4.1.4.4 The positive influence of work on self and family

- Do you as a couple celebrate your achievements? If yes, please explain how you celebrate? Do you feel you could improve in celebrating achievements? Please elaborate. **(Mr E)**

4.1.4.5 The influence of family life on work

- How would you bridge the gap if you have different work ethics? **(Dr B)**
- This couple should remain cognisant of the danger in reverting to habits displayed by their parents, rather than a life that reflects their own needs, wants and goals as individuals. What do they want for their relationship and their future children? **(Mrs C to James and Alice)**
- Socialising and taking a holiday was not a priority for James. The opposite seems to be true for Alice. This might have an impact on how each perceives work-life balance. **(Mr E to James and Alice)**

4.1.4.6 The challenging influence of work on family life

- How would you respond if one of you were offered a job that required frequent travelling? **(Dr D)**
- In order to manage and maintain a work-life balance, do you ever build in some “downtime” (where you focus on recharging) into your schedule? **(Dr D)**
- That a fast-paced life can limit the time Edward and Candice spend together and cause them to live separate lives. **(Dr D to Edward and Candice)**
- Would you characterise yourself as someone who lives to work, works to live or neither? What is the impact thereof on your partner? **(Dr D)**
- Luke’s busy work schedule and independence might be a source of conflict/negatively affect his relationship with Alexis. How do they intend to bridge this? **(Dr D to Luke and Alexis)**
- Alexis appears to have already reached her goals, and it does not seem like she is currently focused on any other goals to strive for. It seems like Luke is trying to better himself by learning more in his job and striving for success in his workplace. These different mindsets might impact their relationships priorities. **(Mr E to Luke and Alexis)**

4.1.4.7 General work-family related comments

- The work and family narrative could be a concern or opportunity for this couple. **(Dr B to Edward and Candice)**
- The work-family balance might be a concern for this couple. **(Mrs F to Edward and Candice)**
- The work narrative could be a concern for this couple. **(Dr B to Luke and Alexis)**
- What would work-family balance be for this couple? **(Mrs F to Luke and Alexis)**

As the couples' narratives guided the interdisciplinary team as to which questions they asked, it would be understandable that similar themes on work-family balance surfaced. The five themes both groups identified are:

1. Boundaries set for work;
2. Work-related stress;
3. Expectations of work;
4. The positive influence of work on self and family; and
5. The influence of family life on work.

The themes added by the interdisciplinary group are:

1. The challenging influence of work on family life; and
2. General work-family related comments.

4.1.5 Couples' and interdisciplinary team's work-family balance themes found in traditions of interpretation

In Chapter 2 traditions of interpretation were investigated through a PESTLE study that was used as a literature review, and a social-science study on the Biblical background of marriage and its influence on work in Biblical times was also researched. In this section the themes identified in the couples' narratives and interdisciplinary team's questions and reflection on work-family balance are correlated with the PESTLE study and social-science investigation on Biblical views of marriage and work.

4.1.5.1 Boundaries set for work

Goodwill (Goodwill *et al.*, 2014) indicated the importance of boundaries between the work environment and people's personal lives, as the amount of time spent at work influences people's relationships. The boundaries crossed by technology such as laptops, cell phones and tablets used both in people's personal and professional lives has increased that amount of work time. This has caused psychological, social and physical problems to the workforce and increased *Time Poverty* (Soni, 2013:34-35).

Wellness programs created by corporate institutions might also lead to overstepping the boundaries between people's work lives and their personal or family lives. Kirkland (2014:973) mentions that wellness programs could at times be interpreted as discriminatory in terms of fitness and health goals, if some workers' physical disabilities keep them from performing in this field. The intention to create more balanced workers and relieve stress in the work environment, while improving production, might not result in the economic and health benefits it claims to have, if the individual is not taken into consideration. This might lead to extra stress if wellness programs' demands border on victimisation of a company's workers (Kirkland, 2014:974).

Social-science background on the Biblical Texts does, in fact, provide answers on the field of creating boundaries, although the context of the co-researchers of this study differ vastly from the contexts in the Bible. Morrow (1960:53) described that in Spartan times (640 BC) boys were sent to military school at age seven, lived with other soldiers between age 20 and 30 and could only return to their wives after age 30. As Neyrey (1998:212) indicated, the first century eastern Mediterranean people had set boundaries of where men and women were allowed. Men were allowed in public spaces and was supposed to live "out of doors" and be busy with "male things" with other males. Because of the honour and shame system they did not mix with women. Women lived "inside" and their space was the home. They had to be busy with "female things" in "female places", like taking care of children, preparing food and making clothes. The male and female spaces never mixed (Van Eck, 2007a:89-90).

Times have changed vastly 2,000 years later and both men and women in the western world are part of the working force. In certain eastern areas, this day, these rules – keeping women and men apart, and even not allowing women tuition, to work or vote – are still enforced. This is, however, not part of the scope of this study, and was not mentioned by any of the co-researchers. All of the women that were part of the couples who shared their stories are part of the working force.

If we take into consideration that the paradigm of honour and shame and the kinship system were some of the driving forces in the ancient Mediterranean world, and that Jesus criticised

those systems and the division they created in society, it is imperative that the Church does not support a system that enslaves and marginalises people. In this sense the Church needs to advocate for healthy relationships and families. This could be deduced from the subversive messages and stance Jesus had on the patriarchal and kinship systems (Loader, 2005:142).

4.1.5.2 Work-related stress

In the first-century Mediterranean world women were confined to the space of their homes, where they were allowed to receive guests and make decisions (Dorey, 2005:67). Malina and Rohrbaugh (1992:29) described women as the symbol of shame in the first century Mediterranean world: being embedded in the honour of her husband, she had to be sensitive not to bring shame to their husband or extended family. As stated earlier, Van Eck (2007c:502-503) described that Jesus associated with the marginalised of the patriarchal system and did not entertain the discrimination of people. This type of discrimination, still seen in the workplace today, cannot be condoned by the church and could be investigated in the discourses of couples' work-family narratives.

Today, longer working hours and working under extreme pressure have harmful effects on the non-working areas of people's lives, causing people to neglect their personal lives and leaving them feeling overwhelmed (Thomson & De Bruin, 2007:69). Matheson and Rosen (2012:403) further link poor sleep, high fatigue levels and waking up with worry in the night or high stress levels as an indicator of potential health problems, in addition to an imbalanced work-family relationship. This vicious circle of stress-induced chronic disease has a direct correlation to work performance (Goodwill *et al.*, 2014). Soni (2013:34-36) elaborates that technology and 24-hour communication on work matters adds to work stress, leaving less time for family responsibilities and creating an imbalanced work-family life.

Inequality in the workplace is an extra stressor for people trying to climb the corporate ladder, adding to an imbalance between work and family. It can also be linked to "burnout" where stress levels are not managed (Nyati, 2011:47). The study of Opie and Henn (2013:9) found that women with high levels of conscientiousness – considered as "most desirable to organisations" experience significantly higher levels of work-family conflict.

4.1.5.3 Expectations of work

Although companies introduce wellness programs in the workplace to increase productivity and reduce stress, Coverdill (2000:231-232, 234) identified different elements within companies' philosophy and practice that are counter-productive towards these types of health and wellness programs' implementation and functioning. These include a flexible work hour incentive that is not supported by company culture or a structure that will only benefit people working overtime.

Better support of one's family, better work-family balance and better self-care are seen in workers, if those practices are modelled by their managers (Morganson *et al.*, 2014:238). Sanichar (2004:42) identifies work-family balance as part of a corporate managerial issue that needs to be addressed in the training of managers. They should be equipped with the necessary skills to enforce proper wellness programs in the workplace. Communication and mindful implementation of the different work-family programs available to employees are crucial.

4.1.5.4 The positive influence of work on self and family

In the South African context large corporates in South Africa are implementing health and wellness programs for their employees, that includes a focus on work-family balance. Nestlé South Africa identified various areas to aid the health and wellness of employees and to promote healthy families within their workforce (Goodwill *et al.*, 2014).

a. The influence of family life on work

The Regus work-life balance index states that workers with happier and healthier lives will benefit business growth (Soni, 2013:35). Conflict between work and family is linked to marriage and family stress, lower job satisfaction, fewer promotions and less loyalty towards the workplace (Carroll *et al.*, 2013:531). Corporations in the United Kingdom identify debt and relationship difficulties as the top two problems affecting their workforce (Hancock, 2014).

Another phenomenon detrimental to the success of work-family balance is that the controlled and more predictable work environment – over the home environment disrupted by house and school work, child care, divorce and blended families – could also be more appealing to some. With the ongoing gender war within the corporate setting, less time is being spent at home, and the strain felt on work-family life becomes more prevalent (Coverdill, 2000:234-235).

When looking at the Biblical background of work opportunities people had, one should realise that in the first-century Mediterranean world, people were always embedded in the paternal family (Malina & Rohrbaugh, 1992:28, 30, 241). Children could be born into a state of honour, if they were part of a prestigious family. Honour could also be bestowed upon someone with political power (Malina & Neyrey, 1991:28). The *patria potestas* (patriarchal father authority) in ancient Roman times kept women out of power and had financial implications that kept them dependent on men (Dorey, 2005:70). In the South African context we still struggle with a history of inequality, putting certain people in a better position for achieving success later in life. This could be considered when discussing work with premarital couples.

Another shift in global consciousness on family, includes the role of fatherhood. Field, Bagraim and Rycroft (2012:30) state that South African labour legislation does not recognise the rights of

working fathers and perpetuates the discourse where the husband is the breadwinner and the wife is the primary caregiver. As stated earlier, both men and women, and in this case both parents, are likely to be part of the working force. This places extra stress on women who have to deal with the role of worker, caregiver and wife, leaving little time for self-care (Nyati, 2011:47). Field, Bagraim and Rycroft's study (2012:39) found that internationally gender equality improved in societies that enabled working fathers to share family responsibilities.

4.1.5.5 The challenging influence of work on family life

In a study by Tambling and Glebova (2013:336), 57% of respondents indicated that work-family balance is of concern. Of these couples, 39% indicated that dual-career relationships added to stress and 43% of couples identified spirituality as an issue in their relationship. This indicates a definite need the Church could address in premarital counselling. Couples' need for skills not only to help their relationships survive but to thrive, should reduce the increasing divorce statistics in South Africa and globally (Morgan *et al.*, 2011; Statistics South Africa, 2016:6, 35).

Opie and Henn (2013:3) state that the negative impact work-family conflict has on people's well-being, families, organisations and society alike is identifiable in lower satisfaction, decreased health and increased "burnout". Married women are identified as having a higher risk of this.

4.1.5.6 General work-family related comments

The financial burden on young couples that intend to get married is already great, even without the addition of expensive therapies and other wedding costs (Cherlin *et al.*, 2013:214; Seekings, 2014:73). While it is common practice that Dutch Reformed ministers will see couples for premarital counselling, some of these counselling models are not familiar with the South African context. Only 39% out of a questioned 2,000 Protestant pastors felt competent in marital and relationship counselling in a recent study (Schumm *et al.*, 2010:2). In a study by Tambling and Glebova (2013:335), communication and conflict resolution skills were indicated as the greatest need couples had pertaining to their premarital counselling.

Ministers of religion who are marriage officers are limited to only officiating at marriages for people from their own denomination (Du Toit, 2010:2). South African legislation concerning marriage has moved marriages further away from the church structure (Du Toit, 2010:1).

The General Synod of the Dutch Reformed Church's repeal of their decision on allowing ministers to officiate at civil unions of homosexual congregants (Claassen, 2016:1) has left the church open for criticism concerning the discrimination against homosexual congregants, by not allowing them the privileges other congregants have according to South African marital

legislation (De Vos & Barnard, 2007:798, 810; Department of Home Affairs Republic of South Africa, 2015)

4.1.6 Reflection on themes of identified discourses

4.1.6.1 Boundaries set for work

Time spent at work or overtime taken was indicated as the main theme, together with creating mental boundaries between family time and work in both the couples' and interdisciplinary team's reflection. This relates to ancient Greek practices where boys and soldiers were kept away from their families.

The literature review indicated how technology adds to need for boundaries as cellphones, laptops and tablets – that are both used for personal and business use – let people overstep their boundaries and cause stress and time constraints in family life.

Although wellness programs might have well-intended motives, in pursuit of workers' personal health and well-being, they might add to stress if people feel forced by these programs. As discussed in the effects work has on family life, these programs might in certain fields be overstepping the boundaries between work and personal life, creating an imbalanced work-family relationship.

The boundaries set in the first-century Mediterranean world, prohibiting women from working, not only highlight the need for the Church to be outspoken about the discrimination of marginalised groups in the workplace, but also stress the importance of being mindful and careful not to condone structures that might enslave and demean the working force.

4.1.6.2 Work-related stress

The difficulty of working under certain managers, work stress affecting the couple's relationship, being overworked and job insecurity were the main themes of the couples' and interdisciplinary team's concerns. Themes on marginalised groups that are prohibited from excelling in the workplace or are regarded critically should they focus more on work than family were identified.

The literature review indicated the effects of work-related stress on workers and their families. The negative effects on minority groups that try to achieve in a dominated culture was highlighted by literature and Biblical social-science background has indicated how the dominance of women was abolished by Jesus. Once again the systems that keep structures of dominance and discrimination in place are questioned, indicating an imperative on Christianity not to condone such structures.

4.1.6.3 Expectations of work

The couples' need for proper recognition, teamwork and the influence of management on the team of workers are addressed in the literature review. The importance of modelling values that respect work-family balance from management structures are stressed.

The work-life harmony model of McMillan *et al.* (2011:16) accounts for the unnamed benefits some couples find in their work that add to creating a meaningful work-family balance.

4.1.6.4 The positive influence of work on self and family

Limited literature on the positive influence of work on the self and family, might indicate a one-sided emphasis in the motivation of implementing wellness programs in the working sector. Although the couples might express the positive effects they experience from their work narratives and the interdisciplinary team could encourage them to find meaning in their victories in the work sphere, it might seem that the corporate concern leans towards the output of workers. This raises the question of how the working sector and corporate environment could structure wellness programs that are more focused on benefiting society as a whole.

4.1.6.5 The influence of family life on work

The interdisciplinary group was concerned about the influence parents' modelled behaviour of work-family balance is transferred to their working children. Couples seem to remain cognisant of their personal value systems that influence them in the workplace. In contrast to the previous section on the influence of work on family life, more studies have been done on the negative effects people's personal lives have on the work environment. Although the influence of stress at home on the workplace is investigated, the importance of the workplace's contribution to creating a stressful environment should be examined.

The Biblical social-science investigation highlighted a current pressing matter in the South African context, namely that of the exclusion of certain social groups in the workplace, while other groups are favoured. The mindfulness of inclusion is stressed, which includes the need for families to realise the importance of both parents' presence and their influence on their children's and family's lives. Men's role as fathers is also discriminated against, in the current South African labour legislation, adding more stress on South African families. The important role the Church has to play in creating positive role models and equipping families cannot be stressed enough.

4.1.6.6 The challenging influence of work on family life

The interdisciplinary team identified some questions that indicate the challenges work places on family life. This strenuous influence is confirmed by the literature review, stressing the need for couples to prepare themselves for marriage through premarital counselling.

4.1.6.7 General work-family related comments

Although the interdisciplinary team only indicated some more investigation into some of the couples' work-family relationships, the literature review indicated some of the challenges young couples may face when getting married, together with the need that is expressed by congregational ministers to equip themselves in facilitating conversations about couples' relationships. The current discourses concerning marriage in the Dutch Reformed Church were also highlighted.

4.2 Getting couples ready for the journey ahead

When considering the above-mentioned discourses concerning work-family balance, it is clear that it might seem impossible to "fireproof" relationships against all eventualities. The couple's relationship metaphor should be able to guide them, through the use of the relationship values they chose, to be able to face the journey ahead of them. The discourses mentioned above are related to the co-researchers of this study, but could, however, be extended to a broader context.

As stated earlier, the narrative approach does not function with recipes or models. The use of a metaphor could, therefore, be useful in the understanding of work-family balance in the context of narrative counselling. Although the concepts of McMillan *et al.* (2011:16) are fitting in the context of work-family balance, they could be adapted to fit into the paradigm of the narrative approach. I would like to propose the metaphor of a tandem bicycle to describe the concept of work-family balance. This will add to the contextual nature of the narrative approach, allowing every couple to find the balance that works for their narrative.

A tandem bicycle metaphor would explain that both people in the couple are responsible for the work-family balance in their relationship. Both partners on this bicycle are of equal importance as both work hard at moving the bicycle forward. If one of them, for some reason, does not or cannot use the pedals of the tandem bicycle, it would put strain on the other person and likewise on their relationship. In this sense, it makes room for the fact that both people need to work on the success of the relationship.

As on a tandem bicycle the couple could take turns on who is steering the bicycle. This could be decided on by looking at people's strengths in the relationship. If the husband is more comfortable in cooking meals for the family and the wife is a chartered accountant, it would definitely not make sense for this couple to succumb to stereotypical gender roles in the relationship, if the goal is to move the tandem bicycle forward. Their focus should rather be, what would be the best for their relationship and how would the momentum of their work-family balance move them forward.

If one of the partners is having a difficult time at work and does not manage to spend as much time as they used, or wanted to, with their family, it is evident from the tandem metaphor that the other partner is taking more strain. Both partners are, however, still on the same bicycle and working towards the same goal. It is imperative that the couple perceive themselves as part of the same team. Unlike an individual riding a bicycle who only needs to stay mindful of his or her own efforts, a couple on a bicycle needs to consider the person on the bicycle with them. It means working when you need to, but being able to rest, with the consideration of the other person in mind, if the situation allows for it. In this sense – considering the work-life harmony model of McMillan *et al.* (2011:10) – both work and family life has an influence on the integrated relationship of the couple.

Likewise, the metaphor a couple chooses to give language and meaning to their relationship, could be compared to both riding a bicycle. When external factors have an influence on the riders, they will have to compensate to keep the bicycle moving forward and to maintain the essence of their original metaphor, as in work/life harmony the balance has now changed – sometimes riding a bicycle is easier and at other times it goes uphill. The couple is, however, reminded of their original relationship metaphor and wants to maintain that. The metaphor of riding a tandem bicycle helps us realise that balance is achievable even in situations of high work-family conflict or low work-family enrichment (McMillan *et al.*, 2011:16).

When couples have the concept in mind of balancing, working together and moving the bicycle forward, it will be easier to stay mindful that their relationship could return to what they originally intended, should they steer off course or struggle to keep their balance in a certain situation. It will also help in periods of acute high work-family conflict or low work-family enrichment to compensate for certain tasks and meaning that were previously part of their relationship metaphor and to stay aware of returning to enjoying riding the bicycle together.

CHAPTER 5 POINTING BEYOND THE LOCAL COMMUNITY

As part of the seventh movement of postfoundational practical theology, zooming the view out from our house of narrative enquiry, towards a cityscape in need of narratives that will help couples with their work-family balance and enable pastoral narrative counsellors on a route for narrative premarital counselling will “point beyond the local community” (Müller, 2004:300). This includes extending the conversation beyond the local context of the study with the co-researchers and inviting other counsellors and couples into the conversation. This was done by presenting the route to narrative premarital counselling to congregational ministers at a theological conference and including some of the attendees’ reflection on this narrative journey. A brief summary on how the academic field of narrative research and postfoundational practical theology were extended will also be given.

5.1 Stories of clergy

On 21 September 2016 I had the privilege of presenting the route of narrative premarital counselling at the annual “Lentekonferensie” of the Excelsus centre for continued theological education at the University of Pretoria and the Dutch Reformed Church Universiteitsoord. This conference, attended by mostly Dutch Reformed reverends, gave me the opportunity to invite 40 other reverends as companions on the journey for premarital couples. This was an ideal manner to extend this research to point beyond the local context and empower clergy in the process of narrative premarital counselling.

The presentation was very positively received and clergy voiced their gratitude, especially when realising that externalisation is not merely intended for negative stories, but could be used on positive metaphors, like that of a couple’s relationship. Some of the feedback received is reported below.

5.1.1 Rev Francois Cilliers

Reverend Francois Cilliers, congregational minister at Dutch Reformed Church Unitaspark, gave the following feedback:

The first time I was introduced to narrative premarital counselling was during the Lentekonferensie of September 2016, in a session presented by reverend Pieter Visser. This opened a whole new world to me! The narrative approach is of great value to a minister that frequently has the task of premarital counselling with couples.

The stations on the route of narrative premarital counselling [are] a practical and logical way of presenting this counselling approach: starting with “packing the bags” both relationship partners’ individuality is celebrated. The station “setting course” allows for the development of relationship values and the relationship metaphor of the third station “packing the car” allows the couple to meet each other on equal grounds as co-creators of their relationship metaphor.

The “safety checks” station is a great aid to the counsellor in helping the couple develop areas of growth that presents itself through the couple’s relationship metaphor. It will aid the couple in optimising their metaphor and identifying areas of focus that would benefit or be detrimental to their relationship. The external influences (like work-family balance, families, money and time) that are discussed in the final section called “on the open road” add to a holistic view of premarital counselling.

I find the route of narrative premarital counselling invaluable for counsellors or clergy and the couples that are planning their weddings. It provides comprehensive guide for conversation that adds value to premarital counselling. It is empowering to couples as they are guided to co-create and define relationship values and the stronger and weaker parts of their relationship. It is also invaluable for the counsellor who has the privilege to accompany premarital couples on this journey as he or she is also empowered to help these couples make new discoveries about themselves or their relationship.

5.1.2 Rev Samuel Heine

Reverend Samuel Heine, previous congregational minister at Dutch Reformed Church Kinross had the following observations and critique on the narrative premarital counselling presentation:

The narrative approach can easily be misused and played short for its worth, as all people [have] life stories or narratives. But the narrative approach is a therapeutic method that brings information to the surface in a multifaceted way. As people are the masters of their lives and know the best what is going on in their lives, the narrative approach gives them the opportunity to put a lot of information on the table in a comfortable, non-confronting way. The narrative approach gives the therapist access to story lines, themes, life waves, significant others and a lot more information. The

function of the narrative approach is not always utilised to its maximum potential.

In Pieter Visser's presentation "New narratives for newlyweds – narrative premarital counselling", he uses a narrative approach for the preparation of the newlyweds for their journey as a married couple together. I think that it has good potential for deconstructing old narratives (the ones that they come into the story/journey with) and creating a new shared narrative (the story/metaphor/narrative that they want to pursue). The motor-journey as metaphor is sensible to imagine and to articulate the journey that we as married couples engage in.

The route of narrative premarital counselling that follows the stations is sensible. The stations are meaningful, but I also find it a little limiting. Any journey starts with a beginning and an end, does not matter if you are travelling with purpose or taking the scenic route – where it's more about the journey than the destination. And marriage is a scenic journey that is commenced to get to a specific type of destination – to grow old together "until death do us part"! There is only a handful of people that will purposefully engage in a short-term marriage journey. On this part of his journey, his metaphor could be better defined in purpose.

If the endpoint of the journey metaphor is to strengthen the relationship and to extend the relationship beyond the local context (of this new journey), in my opinion, it could be improved by setting long-term goals and to help them focus on what they really want and will want to achieve together. This can help them to realise that this is a long-term commitment, and that there should be worked towards the end result – till death do us part.

On the aspect of values (setting course and packing the car), it could be of importance to help the couple to prioritise their values. Values are good, but if ... not prioritised, couples could get stuck in a conflict of whose or which values are more important. When a couple can prioritise them beforehand, they engage in conflict resolution, deciding what they really want, what is really important to them, and decide which values they want to pursue together.

I think Pieter has a nice metaphor for the journey of marriage life, but I would like to see a more prominent focus on long-term goals and prioritisation of values.

5.1.3 Rev Braam Smith

Reverend Braam Smith, congregational minister at Dutch Reformed Church Wilgespruit had the following to say about the narrative premarital counselling presentation:

During this year's "Lente in Teologie" conference, one of the modules I chose to attend was on narrative premarital counselling and I was pleasantly surprised by this wonderful approach.

This narrative approach to premarital counselling aims to externalise the relationship, helping the couple to almost "step out of the relationship", in a third-person type of manner. This helps them to objectively reflect on their relationship. The externalising process consists of creating a metaphor for the relationship, this aspect of the approach makes it unique. Unlike just externalising the negative aspects, now the positive aspects of the relationship [are] also externalised – in an attempt to generate a metaphor for the relationship. When used on problems or negative elements, I believe that this is a highly effective way of handling issues in the relationship, because your attention is fully focused on the problem and not on the person. Individuals will feel much safer to express their feelings due to the fact that the person is protected. Externalising positive aspects now gives the couple the opportunity to reflect and discuss the beautiful aspects of their relationship as well.

Furthermore, relationship values [have] to be identified, here cards with images on them [are] displayed and both parties are invited to select cards that represent what they deem as important relationship values. Each party then has the opportunity to explain their relationship values to one another and then a set of relationship values is formed. In my opinion this is a vital aspect of this approach because now, a set of guidelines is formed wherein the relationship has to function. However, another benefit comes to light, and this is that the counsellor has the ability to work with the value system of the relationship, if the cause of a problem within the relationship is due to a value that is not present or not understood it will be easy to identify and rectify.

Once the metaphor and values are described, one can start to create language for the relationship. This language does for the relationship exactly what language was intended to do, help us understand one another. Now both parties can fully understand one another's behaviour without a word even being spoken to explain this.

This approach according to me is the best premarital counselling approach I have ever encountered and since the conference I have not only used it in my profession, but also in my personal life.

5.1.4 Dr Dewyk Ungerer

Doctor Dewyk Ungerer, congregational minister at Dutch Reformed Church Raslow and moderator of the Northern Synod of the Dutch Reformed church, gave feedback on using some of the techniques suggested as part of the route of narrative premarital counselling:

As someone that has probably presented 150 premarital counselling sessions, I found the course presented by Pieter Visser on narrative premarital counselling extremely enlightening. The metaphor of a journey that the couple embarks on is strikingly new and fresh. Personally I also like introducing metaphors, pictures and similes. I find that couples remember much better when it is used. This proposed metaphor will be easily remembered by clergy and couples alike, as it is close to the South African context

Having attended Pieter's discussion at the "Lentekonferensie", I decided on using one of the techniques he introduced as part of his route on premarital counselling. The timeline couples bring to the session on their individual narratives proved to be a handy and powerful tool. This provides much information to both the counsellor and the couple on the individual's needs and own story.

The stories the man chose were almost always on the positive side of the timeline – focusing on what motivates him, whereas the lady's stories tend[ed] more to the negative. She reflected that she did not even realise the impact these stories played in her life. Being able to reflect on the differences they face provided much room for facilitating the conversation. I found this method particularly helpful.

5.1.5 Rev Fay van Eeden

Reverend Fay van Eeden, congregational minister at Dutch Reformed Church Lynnwood had the following observations on the narrative premarital counselling route:

Having 10 years' experience in premarital counselling, I have always felt something lacking in discussions with couples. Pieter Visser's narrative premarital counselling route brings a new dimension and depth to these conversations.

The narrative approach invites couples into a non-threatening space where they can share their values and fears. The metaphor that couples decide upon becomes something they can always refer back to in the future.

5.2 Helping couples find their work-family balance

As discussed in the previous chapter, a narrative approach towards work-family balance cannot dictate a model that couples should implement or counsellors should suggest couples use to create a functioning relationship. It rather strives for a contextual space that allows couples to find **their balance** in the narratives of their relationship. This will make balance unique for each couple, as the contextual nature of the narrative approach allows couples to find what will work for them. The literature used indicated the various demands people face in the workplace and that the need for "balance" between work and family life is a reality, despite the introduction of various corporate wellness programs, flexible work hours and even working from home.

The narrative approach suggested in this study, for couples that want to invest in creating a mindful work-family life, used the metaphor of a tandem bicycle. This indicates:

- Both partners are equally important, as both work hard at moving the bicycle forward.
- Both people need to work on the success of the relationship.
- It suggests the individual strengths of the couple, which should take turns in leading and serving the relationship, according to those strengths.
- It also introduces a further dimension of servanthood, allowing a person to recover or giving more attention to either work or family life, while the other partner keeps the tandem bicycle's wheels moving.
- The incorporation of the route to narrative premarital counselling will aid the couple's communication as they will stay mindful of their relationship values, which guide the tandem bicycle.

5.3 Adding a route for premarital counselling to the field of narrative therapy

As stated in the problem statement (1.1.2), the research gap in the combination of premarital counselling and narrative therapy became evident after thorough searches on various academic databases. This research added a route for premarital counselling to the field of narrative therapy (as discussed in 2.5.3). Narrative therapy as a form of pastoral counselling is contextual (Müller, 2005:75), as the metaphors developed help couples frame their relationship values in a in-context setting (2004:300). This introduced a route of narrative premarital counselling that helps counsellors in investigating the context of individual couples' narratives. By combining the triad of premarital counselling, narrative counselling and work-family balance (as set out in the problem statement) couples were able to formulate their relationship narratives, by lingering at the following stations on the route for premarital narrative counselling:

- Exploring individual values and significant patterns (packing the bags);
- Establishing the couple's relationship values (setting course);
- Creating a metaphor for the relationship (packing the car);
- Strengthening of the relationship metaphor (safety checks and filling up); and
- Using the relationship metaphor to extend beyond the local community (on the open road).

A summary, with possible questions, of the route to narrative premarital counselling that focuses on work-family balance is given below.

5.3.1 Packing the bags (exploring individual values and significant patterns)

Each individual that make up the couple were asked to bring a timeline, indicating their highlights and low points of their life thus far. It included themes outside of their relationship with their partner. The following questions could be posed in this station:

- Which of the stories indicated on your timeline would you link up with one another?
- Which themes (for example achievement, family, friends, work, relaxation) do you recognise in the stories presented?
- Have you seen some of those themes surface in your relationship?
- Which themes does your partner notice?

5.3.2 Setting course (establishing the couple's relationship values)

A set of random cards with different pictures on them were unpacked. These pictures do not have any predetermined meaning connected to them and merely function to stimulate the couple's creativity when talking about their relationship. These questions could be introduced to stimulate conversation on the values the couple share:

- Each person is asked to choose four or five cards that remind them of any of their relationship's values. They could also include some of the aspects they feel they need to work on in their relationship.
- Discuss the different relationship values they identified.
- Create a metaphor or name for their relationship, by including the different values they identified and present the metaphor at their next interview.
- For the next interview also include a story of where they achieved a victory in their relationship.

5.3.3 Packing the car (creating a metaphor for the relationship)

A metaphor is used to externalise the relationship and explore the fine nuances of the identified values. These values are supported through the utilisation of the metaphor and a stronger (more vivid) picture of what the couple expects from each other is established. By using the language of metaphor during communication, the couple will be meeting each other on equal terms as they are co-creators of the relationship's identity.

The process of "packing their relationship car" should prepare the couple for the road ahead. The metaphor chosen should be as vivid, tangible and relevant as possible to them. It should be a metaphor that they can easily remember and one that allows them to explore the identity of their relationship even further. This station is prepared by the couple themselves, before they attend the next session with the narrative pastoral counsellor.

5.3.4 Safety checks and filling up (strengthening of the relationship metaphor)

At the second conversation with the couple, they present their relationship metaphor, indicating the different values of their relationship as aspects of the relationship. The following questions could be used as a guideline in order to strengthen and develop the couple's relationship metaphor:

- Which environment(s) will stimulate growth for the different relationship values? (Each value is discussed individually.)
- What influences on your relationship could have a negative impact on those values?
- How could the negative influences be countered or balanced?
- Which measurements of safety (boundaries) does your metaphor allow and how is that used against negative influences?
- How is God present in your relationship story?
- How could this relationship metaphor strengthen your relationship with God?

The couple presented their story of their greatest relationship victory. To this the following questions are suggested:

- What have you learnt from that situation?
- How has it made your relationship stronger?
- Which aspects of that situation could you implement, should you face another roadblock in your relationship story?

5.3.5 On the open road (using the relationship metaphor to extend beyond the local community)

This part of the discussion on the couple's relationship metaphor will be done in two sessions: one that focuses on the couple's narratives of work and family and another focused on God's presence, as it is understood and experienced in a specific situation. The first is part of the seventh movement (the development of alternative interpretations that point beyond the local community) in Müller's (2004:300) epistemology of postfoundational practical theology and the latter pertains to the fourth movement (a reflection on God's presence, as it is understood and experienced in a specific situation).

In the method used for discussion in this study, the couple was once again asked to choose four or five picture cards from the deck that remind them of challenges and benefits they experience from their work situation. The idea is to invite the couple into a discussion and reflection on the influence their relationship story and their story about work have on each other. Questions arising from the individuals in the relationship's metaphors on work could include:

- What is the impact work has on your relationship?
- What impact would you imagine work would have on your family life? (If the couple is not living together)
- What impact does work have on your family life and day-to-day tasks? (If the couple is living together)
- Are there any positive influences work has on your relationship?
- What are the negative influences work has on your relationship?
- Which aspects from your relationship metaphor could be used to protect your relationship from these negative influences?
- How do your relationship's boundaries help you with these?
- Which aspects could you add to your relationship metaphor to help it grow and flourish?

The fourth meeting between the narrative pastoral counsellor (in this case a reverend, who is also conducting the couple's wedding ceremony), will together with discussing the practicalities of the wedding day, introduce a discussion on God's presence in the couple's relationship.

As the couple has already discussed their relationship metaphor with the researcher, the pastoral narrative counsellor (in this case in the role of the minister) could discuss potential Scripture which all parties could deem fitting with their relationship metaphor. The discussion on the second encounter of how the couple experience God as part of their relationship could be revisited.

Using appropriate parts of the metaphor, the couple has agreed upon, as part of the wedding sermon adds to a more personal experience for the couple and their wedding guests. These questions could arise from the discussion on God's presence in the couple's relationship:

- Considering your relationship metaphor, which Bible Texts do you seem fitting for your wedding sermon?
- What influence, do you as a couple, find for your marriage in this Text?
- How is the presence of God made visible through your relationship?
- Which imperatives do you feel God and this Scripture place on you as a couple?

This route to narrative premarital counselling should be able to help both narrative counsellors and couples to establish core values in the couple's relationship that will aid their communication skills.

5.4 Extending the conversation in interdisciplinary study

The study done allowed for the questions posed by the interdisciplinary team to be directed back to the couples. This allowed them to reflect on the insight from the interdisciplinary team. The conversation extended beyond the local community and allowed them to learn from the insight of the different fields' contexts as well as the real-life experience of the interdisciplinary team. Although other studies might not ethically allow for this to happen, this study was in the fortunate position of allowing the circle of enquiry of interdisciplinary discussion to be closed. This is important to highlight, as the transversal space was allowed to truly emphasise the equality and openness created in a postfoundational approach to practical theology.

5.5 Autoethnographic reflection

The narrative premarital counselling route that focused on work-family balance helped couples formulate stories about their relationships that are unique to them. In that sense one should realise that creating a one-size-fits-all approach to work-family balance for couples is not

feasible. The same could be said of expecting couples to plan 20 or 30 years into the future – we just do not know who we are going to be by that time. With this in mind I find the critique from Rev Heine useful considering the prioritising of relationship values, but feel that the relationship values will guide the couple in their future decisions. This leaves the planning he refers to unnecessary, as the framework for the couple's relationship and future decisions is already set – through their metaphor.

Although the values couples might identify as important when talking about their relationship might be seen as limiting, one should allow for the relationship and the way it is defined to evolve. As people we grow and the couples that take part in narrative premarital counselling are equipped with their own frame of reference and language of their relationship. The couple will be able to decide for themselves if certain decisions fall within the scope of their relationship values. The relationship values should stay the same throughout the couple's relationship and certain parts of it might grow stronger, where others might need to be looked at again.

In the same sense it should be considered that each couple would find their own unique balance. As stated in the reflection on assumptions it needs to be taken into account that people's work ethic and responsibility differs from others. The values embedded in to the relationship narrative will therefore indicate how work-family balance will look for a certain couple, while other couples might need more or less time together or focus on certain aspects.

Considering the metaphor of a tandem bicycle for work-family balance, that was proposed earlier, it would depend on the "fitness level" of the riders or in our case the level of exertion couples are prepared to take on, when getting on their relationship bicycles. Some people ride mountain bikes or like the challenge of an uphill where others prefer taking a leisurely Sunday ride that does not have them breaking a sweat.

The end goal and the story for the long road of the couple's life together will be to stay true to their relationship metaphor and values. These guideposts are the end and the beginning of the meandering road premarital couples will embark on.

CHAPTER 6 REFLECTION ON RESEARCH

As with any story that is told, the main narrative comprises many side-narratives that build on and enhance the main narrative. The aim of this chapter is to reflect on these narratives: the research, revisiting the initial aims and objectives that were set out for this research and describing how that was achieved. Some of my own narratives, as seen in the autoethnographic reflection, are included as well as the assumptions I had before commencement of the research, which will be revisited as part of the subjective integrity of social-constructionist research. An added description of developing interpretations that point beyond the local context for the field of narrative premarital counselling will be considered. This will be done in the form of suggestions for further study and development of the field.

As the process of study is never final and social constructionism teaches us that knowledge is ever evolving, so too these suggestions and final remarks should be considered in the sphere of co-learning. The intention of this study was to invite other narrative counsellors as companions on the journey of helping premarital couples create meaningful relationships.

6.1 Revisiting aim and objectives

6.1.1 Aim

The aim of the study was described as: “To enhance the integration of work-family balance, with the aid of premarital narrative counselling, to facilitate a healthy marital relationship”.

The route of narrative premarital counselling was developed in Chapter 2 under 2.5.3 and described using the following processes or stations:

1. Exploring individual values and significant patterns (packing the bags);
2. Establishing the couple's relationship values (setting course);
3. Creating a metaphor for the relationship (packing the car);
4. Strengthening of the relationship metaphor (safety checks and filling up); and
5. Using the relationship metaphor to extend beyond the local context (on the open road).

The last station (on the open road) was especially added to incorporate the stories of God, in Müller's (2004:303) fifth movement of postfoundational practical theology study, as well as the seventh movement that develops alternative interpretations that point beyond the local context (Müller, 2004:304). This station in our route not only helped couples integrate stories of their

relationship with their work narratives, but helped them consider other factors that might have an influence on their relationship as well. As this helped couples redefine their relationship in terms of other influences and relationships it could be said that an alternative story is formed through that process (Freedman & Combs, 1996b:42-43) and the development of the process for enhancing the integration of work-family balance for premarital couples was reached.

6.1.2 Objectives

6.1.2.1 Primary objectives

The primary objectives were formulated according to the seven movements for postfoundational practical theology (Müller, 2004:300) and initially described under 1.3.2.2

6.1.2.1.1 A specific context is described

The context of the work-family balance of premarital couples was described, relationships between work and the couples' relationships were explored and alternative narratives and meaning were investigated.

Methods used:

- Interviews or premarital counselling sessions were held with five couples.
- Interviews were socially constructed through feedback from the co-researchers or conversation partners.
- Literature review on existing narrative counselling, premarital counselling and work-family balance was done, indicating that no research on the combination of the triad was found.

6.1.2.1.2 In-context experiences are listened to and described

Couples' relationship stories were investigated through narrative counselling to gain an understanding of the in-context experiences of these relationships.

Methods used:

- Couples were helped to formulate integrated narratives on the identity of their relationship and the influence of work and other relationships or factors, through the use of narrative counselling.
- The language couples gained through the externalisation of their relationships helped them to formulate a working method of communication within their relationships.

6.1.2.1.3 Interpretations of experiences are made, described and developed in collaboration with co-researchers

The interpretations co-researchers had on the stories they told about themselves played an integral role in description and development of their narratives.

Methods used:

- Co-researchers were asked to check the primary researcher's summary of the counselling sessions and interpretations and development that was made on their narratives, this feedback loop aided the social-constructionist research process
- An interdisciplinary team reflected on couples' work-family stories as well as the narratives of the couples and also provided the couples with these reflections, thereby extending the process of transversal rationality and interdisciplinary research – which has not been done in other interdisciplinary processes

6.1.2.1.4 A description of experience as it is continually informed by theological and other traditions of interpretation

The primary researcher and his co-researchers collaboratively identified how their relationships are influenced by the discourses concerning family life and work.

Methods used:

- The narrative counselling approach was used to identify different discourses in the narratives of couples' relationships.
- The interdisciplinary team identified the contextual discourses surrounding communication and conflict, work, equality and gender identity, background, boundaries, God and religion, family and finances.
- Literature review on narrative therapy, premarital counselling and work-family balance was done using a PESTLE analysis.
- A Biblical social-science background of marriage and how it pertains to work was done.

6.1.2.1.5 A reflection on the religious and spiritual aspects – experiences of the presence of God

The experiences of God's presence in relationship surfaced in the couples' relationship narratives and through interdisciplinary discussion.

Method used:

- Some couples immediately related to the narrative of God in their relationships and one couple even used the metaphor of a Biblical narrative as the externalisation for their relationship. Some members of the interdisciplinary team related to couples' stories on a level of faith and included that in their questions and reflection.

6.1.2.1.6 A description of experience thickened through interdisciplinary investigation

The transversal space in postfoundational practical theology was used to extend research on an interdisciplinary level.

Methods used:

- An interdisciplinary team from various fields, including female and married homemakers, CEOs, small business owners, professionals, divorcées and human resources were involved.
- The interdisciplinary team reflected on the relationships and work-family narratives of the couples by posting feedback in the form of reflective questions to the initial couples in order to reflect on possible discourses and insights the different fields may add to the discussion of work-family balance.

6.1.2.1.7 The development of alternative interpretations that point beyond the local community

Through co-creation by the primary researcher, the co-researchers and the interdisciplinary team new meaning and alternatives were created for narrative premarital counselling, focused on work-family balance.

Methods used:

- The couples re-framed their own relationship narratives and found alternative interpretations through the use of narrative premarital counselling.
- Couples reflected on the questions posted by the interdisciplinary team, thereby opening up a new avenue for interdisciplinary research through extending the conversation.
- A route for narrative premarital counselling including a focus on work-family balance was formulated.
- The route for narrative premarital counselling with a focus on work-family balance was presented to congregational ministers at a conference for continued theological education.

- Discourses of couples' relationship narratives, the interdisciplinary team's reflection, literature review and Biblical social-science background study on work-family balance was explored through interpretive investigation.

6.1.2.2 Secondary objectives

- A route in narrative counselling for premarital couples was formulated though this study to extend a strategy for counsellors in this field.

6.2 Revisiting assumptions

The following assumptions were taken into account as part of the research:

Families struggle because of work taking too much time from family relationships

Interviews with the couples indicated that long hours at work placed strain on the couples' relationships. Study on time spent away from home indicated that it could affect relationships negatively if couples were not like-minded in considering how much time spent on work was appropriate for them. Work-family balance is negatively affected if the amount of time spent away from home is not outweighed by elements that have a positive effect on the couples' family life and relationship.

Corporate organisations create wellness programs to cover themselves from unnecessary legal action

Many companies introduce wellness programs in aid of workers' job satisfaction. Studies indicated that integrated wellness programs focused on work-family balance has a positive effect on both work and family spheres. The CCMA expects companies to prove that they have met workers' socio-economic needs before laying workers off for a lack of productivity. This includes services considering workers' family life and health.

Parents who are absent from their children's lives create children who are absent from their children's lives.

Some of the co-researchers who indicated that their parents spent a great amount of time at work, also indicated that their work ethic showed similar trends. None of the co-researchers complained about feeling neglected by their parents because of work. As the focus of this study was not on couples with children but on premarital couples, this aspect falls outside the scope of this research.

Wellness programs could help families

Wellness programs and corporate policy focused on work-family balance benefited both business growth as well as improvement in workers' family lives, if corporate culture supported workers to make use thereof. The stress induced by the workplace, however, creates both a negative work and living environment for workers and families.

Premarital counselling will help families with their work-family balance

Reflective discussion on the integration of work and family narratives indicated that couples found a strategy of finding balance in their work and family lives. The shared relationship metaphor aided the couple's communication and conflict resolution. Additionally it helped them to voice their needs and stay mindful of shared values.

6.3 Autoethnographic reflection on research

As part of the autoethnographical influence in my research it would be fitting to reflect on what I learnt through this study. In this reflection I consider the approach for this research, as well as the role of narrative researcher and counsellor. It is also an ideal space to take a glance into the proposed future and consider how this study could benefit through future study or investigation.

6.3.1 The approach

The narrative approach has formed part of my personal and professional approach since completing my masters degree in pastoral family therapy under supervision of Professor Julian Müller. I was excited to further my studies using the same approach under the guidance of Dr Elmo Pienaar, also one of Prof Müller's students. The further integration of this approach, in the sphere of social-constructionist and postfoundational epistemology, by extending the research to other fields of study – through interdisciplinary research – has not only helped this research in pointing beyond the local context, but also opened room for discussion on work-family balance in different spheres to take place.

Although my feeling that the interdisciplinary team did not always consider their voices to be of equal value to those of the conversation partners, both accounts opened conversation into real-life experience on couples' work-family balance. This approach and epistemology helped in the co-creation of knowledge that questions taken-for-granted "truths". Conducting research in such a manner through interdisciplinary research respects the narrative approach by allowing different voices to be heard and helping the researcher (and in this study counsellor as well) step back from the temptation to take up the position of "expert".

I believe that theology and the Church will benefit by listening to people's stories – especially the stories that are not frequently the dominant ones. Therefore postfoundational practical theology is a beneficial and necessary way at investigating how God is present in people's lives.

6.3.2 My position as narrative researcher and -counsellor

As the narrative approach has clear guidelines on working with discourse and power, I never felt that my roles of researcher or counsellor were in competition with each other. The respect for people's stories and inquisitiveness of the narrative paradigm allowed couples' relationship narratives to develop. As seen in the couples' stories, each couple was allowed to develop their own relationship narrative – unique to their relationship and story. This confirmed to me that the narrative route of premarital counselling allowed individuality and identity to be expressed and that couples were not forced into a like-minded and predetermined mould of what it should look like and how relationships and marriages should function.

6.3.3 Joys and sorrows

I initiated this study from my passion for narrative counselling with premarital couples. Allowing people's stories to develop and facilitating a process where one reaches an epiphany or a person's life is changed through a change in perspective gives me great joy. I find it exhilarating to be part of such a process and was therefore glad to realise that there is a gap in the combination of narrative therapy with premarital couples in the sphere of work-family balance.

The postfoundational practical theology field that introduced transversal rationality through interdisciplinary discussion was a great inspiration to me and had me excited about this field of study. To me it meant that practical theology could truly aid different fields and is an ideal opportunity for the Church and theology to engage with other fields. This is something I consider to be part of the missional calling of the Church.

I was, however, saddened to realise that postfoundational practical theology was not included in the curriculum of all the South African theology faculties, as the benefits of interdisciplinary research are numerous.

The excitement in realising that my study allowed me to extend the interdisciplinary process by getting feedback from couples on the interdisciplinary team's reflection was magnified by opening this new avenue in interdisciplinary research.

6.3.4 Personal growth

The contact sessions on narrative research, social constructionism, postfoundationalism, coaching and organisational development I attended, throughout the course of my studies, helped me with the integration between the business world and the church. It is easy for ministers of religion to become disengaged from the world congregants need to function in. Exploring these topics helped me not only become a more mindful pastoral counsellor, it invited me into the world our congregation functions in. For this I am most thankful to my promotor, Dr Elmo Pienaar.

I realised that the skills I developed through the years as a reverend are beneficial to the corporate world. I gained a new respect for my field of study and accordingly gained self-confidence.

Counselling with couples and listening to relationship stories always make me mindful of the privilege I experience, being in a relationship with my wife. Although I sometimes found it extremely ironic that, despite the busy lives my wife and I lead, I am busy studying the work-family balance of couples. I realised that couples – like ourselves – create their balance, even in the most challenging situations (like both being busy with PhD studies, managing PhD studies and pregnancy and in the last stages of my study finishing my PhD while looking after a four-month-old), when they have well-defined relationship values.

6.3.5 Future research

Part of the narrative approach is staying inquisitive; there will always be room for the creation of knowledge – especially when looking from a social-constructionist point of view. There are, therefore, a few areas for future research that could be explored:

- The influence narrative premarital counselling has over a longer period of time for married couples;
- Exploring the power discourses at play during interdisciplinary investigation;
- Extending the conversation of couples counselling and work-family balance into corporate wellness programs; and
- Helping families create family narratives to strengthen shared identity.

Looking back on this learning experience my hope is that couples will build meaningful and lasting relationships through following the route of narrative premarital counselling and that clergy and churches will feel empowered to be companions on these couples' journey.

REFERENCES

Ahmadu, I. 1992. Polygamy: A more Christian marriage alternative: Northern Nigeria: EATWOT.

Ake, D., Wieman, R., Schwaab, A. & Rapole, C. 2017. Premarital Counseling. <http://www.goodtherapy.org/learn-about-therapy/modes/premarital-counseling> Date of access: 28 Jul 2017.

Alcoff, L. 1998. Epistemology: The Big Questions. Hoboken, NJ: Blackwell.

Algemene Sinode van die Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk 2015. Notule 16de vergadering van die Algemene Sinode van die Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk. (*In*. 16de vergadering van die Algemene Sinode van die Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk organised by Afrikaanse Hoër Seunsskool, Pretoria).

Anderson, H. & Goolishian, H. 1992. The client is the expert: A not-knowing approach to therapy. (*In* McNamee, S. & Gergen, K. J. eds. *Therapy as social construction*. London: Sage. p. 25-39).

Anderson, W.T. 1990. Reality isn't what it used to be: Theatrical politics, ready-to-wear religion, global myths, primitive chic, and other wonders of the postmodern world. San Francisco, CA: Harper & Row.

Audi, R. 2010. Epistemology: A contemporary introduction to the theory of knowledge: New York: Routledge.

Ballard, P. & Pritchard, J. 1996. Practical theology in action. London: SPCK

Barnett, R.C. 1999. A new work-life model for the twenty-first century. *The annals of the American academy of political and social science*, 562(1):143-158.

Basas, C.G. 2014. What's bad about wellness? What the disability rights perspective offers about the limitations of wellness. *Journal of health politics, policy & law*, 39(5):1035-1066.

Bleicher, J. 1980. Contemporary hermeneutics: Hermeneutics as method, philosophy and critique. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.

Blundell, S. 1995. Women in ancient Greece: Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Botha, P. & Van Rensburg, F.J. 2002. Seksuele reinheid voor die huwelik in Korinte in die eerste eeu nC. *Verbum et ecclesia*, 23(1):52-66.

- Brayford, S.A. 1999. To shame or not to shame: sexuality in the Mediterranean diaspora. *Semeia*(87):163.
- Brief, A.P., Schuler, R.S. & Van Sell, M. 1981. Managing job stress. New York: Little, Brown.
- Broecker, M.S. & Guddemi, P. 2007. Toward Batesonian sociocybernetics: from Naven to the mind beyond the skin. *Kybernetes* (7/8):905.
- Brown, S.D., Pujol, J. & Curt, B.C. 1998. As one in a web? Discourse, materiality and the place of ethics. (In Parker, I., ed., Social constructionism, discourse and realism.. London: Sage. p. 75-90).
- Browning, D.S. 1995. A fundamental practical theology: descriptive and strategic proposals: Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press.
- Browning, D.S. 2003. Marriage and modernization: how globalization threatens marriage: Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans.
- Brunsdon, A. 2010. 'n Narratiewe benadering tot die pastoraat: kritiese opmerkings na aanleiding van die huidige teologiese debat. *Acta theologica*, 30(2).
- Brunsdon, A.R. 2009. Troos as unieke uitkoms in 'n pastoraal-narratiewe benadering tot roumart. *HTS: theological studies*, 65(1):1-7.
- Brunsdon, A.R. & Lotter, G.A. 2011. Outo-etnografie as selfhulp vir predikante met bedieningsmoegheid: verkennende opmerkings. *Verbum et ecclesia*, 32(1):1-7.
- Budlender, D., Chobokoane, N. & Simelane, S. 2004. Marriage patterns in South Africa: methodological and substantive issues. *Southern African journal of demography*, 9(1)1-25.
- Bullough, V.L. & Bullough, B. 1977. Sin, sickness, and sanity: A history of sexual attitudes. New York: New American Library.
- Burck, C. 2005. Comparing qualitative research methodologies for systemic research: the use of grounded theory, discourse analysis and narrative analysis. *Journal of family therapy*, 27(3):237-262.
- Burns, G.W. 2005. 101 healing stories for kids and teens. Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley.
- Burr, V. 1998. Overview: realism, relativism, social constructionism and discourse. (In Parker, I., ed., Social constructionism, discourse and realism. London: Sage. p. 13-26).
- Burr, V. 2003. Social constructionism. London: Routledge.

- Cain, C., Holland, D., Lachicotte, W. & Skinner, D. 1998. Identity and agency in cultural worlds: Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Campbell, A. 2000. The nature of practical theology. (In Woodward, J., Pattison, S. & Patton, J. eds. The Blackwell reader in pastoral and practical theology. Hoboken, NJ: Blackwell. p. 77-88).
- Campbell-Reed, E.R. & Scharen, C. 2013. Ethnography on holy ground: how qualitative interviewing is practical theological work. *International journal of practical theology*, 17(2):232-259.
- Caputo, J.D. & Yount, M. 1993. Foucault and the critique of institutions. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Carcopino, J. 2013. Daily life in Ancient Rome: the people and the city at the height of the empire. Redditch, Worcestershire: Read Books.
- Carlson, D.S., Kacmar, K.M., Wayne, J.H. & Grzywacz, J.G. 2006. Measuring the positive side of the work–family interface: development and validation of a work–family enrichment scale. *Journal of vocational behavior*, 68(1):131-164.
- Carroll, S.J., Hill, E.J., Yorgason, J.B., Larson, J.H. & Sandberg, J.G. 2013. Couple Communication as a mediator between work-family conflict and marital satisfaction. *Contemporary family therapy*, 35(3):530-545.
- Casey, K. 1995. The new narrative research in education. *Review of research in education*, 21:211-253.
- Chambers, D.L. 2000. Civilizing the natives: marriage in post-apartheid South Africa. *Daedalus*, 129(4):101-124.
- Chang, H. 2008. Autoethnography as method: developing qualitative inquiry. Walnut Creek, CA: Left Coast Press.
- Cherlin, A., Cumberworth, E., Morgan, S.P. & Wimer, C. 2013. The effects of the great recession on family structure and fertility. *Annals of the American Academy of political and social science*, 650:214-231.
- Chow, E.N.-L. & Berheide, C.W. 1988. The interdependence of family and work: a framework for family life education, policy, and practice. *Family relations*, 37(1):23-28.

Claassen, G. 2016. Besluit van die buitengewone vergadering van die algemene sinode van die Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk op 10 November 2016 [e-mail]. 11 Dec. 2016.

Clasen, F., Bartlett, A., Carstens, C. & Schoeman, F. 2010. Handleiding vir die erediens. Wellington: Bybel-Media.

Clark, S.C. 2000. Work/family border theory: a new theory of work/family balance. *Human relations*, 53(6):747-770.

Coontz, S. 2006. Marriage, a history: how love conquered marriage. Harmondsworth: Penguin.

Coverdill, J.E. 2000. Of time, work and family. *Qualitative sociology*, 23(2):231-240.

De Bruyn, P.J. 1982. Voorhuwelikse geslagsgemeenskap: 'n teologies-etiese studie. *In die skriflig/in luce verbi*, 16(64):3-16.

De Vos, P. & Barnard, J. 2007. Same-sex marriage, civil unions and domestic partnerships in South Africa: critical reflections on an ongoing saga. *South African law journal*, 124(4):795-826.

Demasure, K. & Müller, J. 2006. Perspectives in support of the narrative turn in pastoral care. *Nederduitse Gereformeerde teologiese tydskrif*, 47(3 & 4):410-419.

Department of Home Affairs Republic of South Africa (DHA). 2015. Marriage Certificates. <http://www.dha.gov.za:8087/index.php/civic-services/marriage-certificates> Date of access: 8 August 2015.

Diller, K. 2007. Does contemporary theology require a postfoundationalist way of knowing? *Scottish journal of theology*, 60(3):271-293.

Dingemans, G.D. 1996. Practical theology in the academy: a contemporary overview. *The journal of religion*, 76(1):82-96.

Dorey, P.J. 2005. Genesis 2: 24-Locus Classicus vir monogamie? 'n literêr-historiese ondersoek na perspektiewe op poligamie in die Ou Testament. Pretoria: University of Pretoria (Thesis – PhD).

Dreyer, J.S. 2012. Practical theology and intradisciplinary diversity: a response to Miller-McLemore's "Five misunderstandings about practical theology". *International journal of practical theology*, 16(1):34-54.

Dreyer, J.S. 2014. The narrative turn in practical theology : a discussion of Julian Müller's narrative approach : original research. *Verbum et ecclesia*, 35(2):1–9.

- Du Toit, B. 2010. Die Registrasie van Huwelike by die Departement van Binnelandse Sake [e-mail]. Date unknown. 2010.
- Dunn, R.L. & Schwebel, A.I. 1995. Meta-analytic review of marital therapy outcome research. *Journal of family psychology*, 9(1):58-68.
- Edwards, C. 2002. The politics of immorality in ancient Rome. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Elgin, C.Z. 1998. 4 Epistemology's ends, pedagogy's prospects. *Facta philosophica*, 1:39-54.
- Elliott, J. 2005. Using narrative in social research: qualitative and quantitative approaches. New Delhi: Sage.
- Ferguson, E. 2003. Backgrounds of early Christianity: Hoboken, NJ: Eerdmans.
- Field, C.G., Bagraim, J.J. & Rycroft, A. 2012. Parental leave rights : have fathers been forgotten and does it matter?, *South African Journal of labour relations*, 36(2):30-41.
- Firet, J. 1988. Het agogisch moment in het pastoraal optreden. Kampen: J. H. Kok.
- Forster, D.A. 2010. African relational ontology, individual identity, and Christian theology: an African theological contribution towards an integrated relational ontological identity. *Theology*, 113(874):243-253.
- Foucault, M. 1972. The archaeology of knowledge. London: Tavistock.
- Foucault, M. 1998. The history of sexuality. (In Mcneill, W.F.S. ed. Continental philosophy. Malden: MA: Blackwell. p. 380–390).
- Freedman, J. & Combs, G. 1996. Narrative therapy. The social construction of preferred realities. New York: W.W. Norton.
- Freedman, J. & Combs, G. 2002. Narrative therapy with couples... and a whole lot more!: A Collection of Papers, Essays and Exercises. Dulwich Centre Publications.
- Frone, M.R. 2003. Work–family balance. (In Quick, J.C. & Tetrick L.E., eds. Handbook of occupational health psychology. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association. p. 143-162).
- Frone, M.R., Russell, M. & Cooper, M.L. 1992. Antecedents and outcomes of work-family conflict: testing a model of the work-family interface. *Journal of applied psychology*, 77(1):65-78.

Gadamer, H.-G. 1975. Truth and method. New York: Continuum.

Ganzevoort, R. 2008. Teaching that matters: a course on trauma and theology. *Journal of adult theological education*, 5(1):8-19.

Ganzevoort, R.R. 2004. What you see is what you get. Social construction and normativity in practical theology. (In van der Ven, JA and Scherer-Rath, M. eds. Normativity and empirical research in theology.. Leiden: Brill. p. 17-34).

Ganzevoort, R.R. 2009. Forks in the road when tracing the sacred: practical theology as hermeneutics of lived religion.

<http://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/summary?doi=10.1.1.489.9830> Date of access 1 September 2017.

Ganzevoort, R.R. 2012. Narrative approaches. (In Miller-McLemore, B.J. ed. The Wiley-Blackwell companion to practical theology. Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley. p. 214-223).

Ganzevoort, R.R. & Roeland, J. 2014. Lived religion: The praxis of practical theology. *International journal of practical theology*, 18(1):91-101.

Gergen, K.J. 1994. Mind, text, and society: self-memory in social context. (In Neisser, U. & Fivush, R, eds. The remembering self: construction and accuracy in the self-narrative. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. p 78-104).

Gergen, K.J. 1998. Constructionism and realism: How are we to go on? (In Parker, I. ed. Social constructionism, discourse and realism.. London: Sage. p. 147-155).

Gergen, K.J. 2003. Social construction. London: Sage.

Gerkin, C.V. 1991. Prophetic pastoral practice: a Christian vision of life together. Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press.

Goldenberg, H. & Goldenberg, I. 2012. Family therapy: an overview. Boston, MA: Cengage Learning.

Goodwill, C., Phillips, B. & Jowitt, V. 2014. Panel discussion: The challenges of making employees healthy. Panel discussion at the Discovery Vitality Summit. Sandton, Gauteng. 2 Aug. 2014.

Gordon, J. 2012. The truth about work/life balance. New York: Baseline.

- Gräb, W. 2005. Practical theology as theology of religion. Schleiermacher's understanding of practical theology as a discipline. *International journal of practical theology*, 9(2):181-196.
- Gräb, W. 2006. Religion als Deutung des Lebens: Perspektiven einer Praktischen Theologie gelebter Religion: Gütersloh, Germany: Gütersloher Verlag-Haus.
- Graham, E. 2000. Practical theology as transforming practice. (In Woodward, J., Pattison, S. & Patton, J. eds. *The Blackwell reader in pastoral and practical theology*.. Hoboken, NJ: Blackwell. p. 104-117).
- Graham, E. 2006. Pastoral Theology in an age of uncertainty. *HTS: theological studies*, 62(3):845-865.
- Greenhaus, J.H. & Beutell, N.J. 1985. Sources of conflict between work and family roles. *Academy of management review*, 10(1):76-88.
- Greenhaus, J.H. & Powell, G.N. 2006. When work and family are allies: a theory of work-family enrichment. *Academy of management review*, 31(1):72-92.
- Greenhaus, J.H., Collins, K.M. & Shaw, J.D. 2003. The relation between work–family balance and quality of life. *Journal of vocational behavior*, 63(3):510-531.
- Gribble, R. 2011. The everything guide to Catholicism : a complete introduction to the beliefs, traditions, and tenets of the Catholic Church from past to present. Avon, MA: Adams Media.
- Grimell, J. 2017. Reflections on spiritual themes in a narrative psychological investigation of a secular Swede: practical theology's potential contributions. *Practical theology*, 10(1):88-100.
- Grzywacz, J.G. & Carlson, D.S. 2007. Conceptualizing work—family balance: implications for practice and research. *Advances in developing human resources*, 9(4):455-471.
- Guerra, A. 2002. Family matters: the role of Christianity in the formation of the western family. Saint Paul, MN: Paragon House.
- Hancock, C. 2014. Designing ways to make it easier to be healthy and how to put these ideas into action. Conference presentation at the Discovery Vitality Summit. Sandton, Gauteng. 2 Aug. 2014.
- Haugaard, C. 2016. Narrative therapy as an ethical practice. *Journal of systemic therapies*, 35(1):1-19.

- Hawkins, A.J., Blanchard, V.L., Baldwin, S.A. & Fawcett, E.B. 2008. Does marriage and relationship education work? A meta-analytic study. *Journal of consulting and clinical psychology*, 76(5):723-734.
- Heidegger, M. 1988. Gesamtausgabe, volume 63: Ontologie (Hermeneutik der Faktizität). Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann.
- Heitink, G. 1999. Practical theology: history, theory, action domains: manual for practical theology. Hoboken, NJ: Eerdmans.
- Herlihy, D. 1985. Medieval households. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Hermans, C.A.M. 2002. Social constructionism and practical theology: an introduction. (In Hermans, C.A.M., Immink G., De Jong A. & Van Der Lans A., eds. Social constructionism and theology. Leiden: Brill).
- Hertlein, K.M. & Webster, M. 2008. Technology, relationships, and problems: a research synthesis. *The journal of marital and family therapy*, 34(4):445-460.
- Hickson, H. 2016. Becoming a critical narrativist: using critical reflection and narrative inquiry as research methodology. *Qualitative social work: research and practice*, 15(3):380-391.
- Hill, E.J., Hawkins, A.J., Ferris, M. & Weitzman, M. 2001. Finding an extra day a week: the positive influence of perceived job flexibility on work and family life balance. *Family relations*, 50(1):49-58.
- Human, L. 2003. Fiction writing as metaphor for research: A narrative approach. *Practical theology in South Africa - Praktiese teologie in Suid-Afrika*, 18(3):40-58.
- Jain, S. & Nair, S.K. 2013. Research on work- family balance: a review. *Business perspectives & research*, 2(1):43-58.
- Janse van Rensburg, N. 2015. Mediaverklaring: Moderamen. In Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk (Ed.) (p. 2). Hatfield.
- Johnson, A.J., Haigh, M.M., Becker, J.A.H., Craig, E.A. & Wigley, S. 2008. College students' use of relational management strategies in email in long-distance and geographically close relationships. *Journal of computer-mediated communication*, 13(2):381-404.
- Kendall, P.C., Flannery-Schroeder, E.C. & Ford, J.D. 1999. Therapy outcome research methods. (In Kendall, P.C., Butcher J.N. & Holmbeck G.N., eds. Handbook of research methods in clinical psychology (2nd ed.). Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley. pp. 330-363).

- Kiefer, O. 1934. *Sexual life in ancient Rome*. London: Routledge.
- King, P.J. & Stager, L.E. 2001. *Life in biblical Israel*. Philadelphia, PA: Westminster John Knox Press.
- Kirkland, A. 2014. Critical perspectives on wellness. *Journal of health politics, policy & law*, 39(5):971-988.
- Kitching, R.B. 2008. *The traumatic experience of divorce and its impact on women*. Pretoria: University of Pretoria (Dissertation – MA).
- Kloppenborg, J. 1990. Alms, debt and divorce: Jesus' ethics in their Mediterranean context. *Toronto journal of theology*, 6(2):182-200.
- Knouwds, F. 2000. *Bou 'n tip-top huwelik*. Cape Town: Lux Verbi.BM.
- Koch, P.C. 2016. Premarital instruction: a Lutheran perspective. *Logia*, 25(2):11-21.
- Lake, J. 2015. Autoethnography and reflective practice: reconstructing the doctoral thesis experience. *Reflective Practice*, 16(5):677-687.
- Leman, K. 2009. *Have a new husband by Friday: How to change his attitude, behavior & communication in 5 days*. Grand Rapids, MI: Revell.
- Lewis, S., Rapoport, R. & Gambles, R. 2003. Reflections on the integration of paid work and the rest of life. *Journal of managerial psychology*, 18(8):824-841.
- Loader, W. 2005. *Sexuality and the Jesus tradition*. Hoboken, NJ: Eerdmans.
- Lohse, E. 1976. *The New Testament environment*. Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press.
- Louw, D.J. 1985. *Sin in lyding: 'n teologiese besinning rondom kruis en opstanding*. Cape Town: Lux Verbi.
- Louw, D.J. 1996. *Liefde is vir altyd: 'n huweliksgids vir verloofdes en getroudes*. Cape Town: Lux Verbi.
- Louw, D.J. 2012. A theological model for pastoral anthropology within the dynamics of interculturality: cura animarum and the quest for wholeness in a colo-spirituality. *In die skriflig*, 46(2):1-9.
- Lyons, D. 2003. Dangerous gifts: ideologies of marriage and exchange in ancient Greece. *Classical antiquity*, 22(1):93-134.

- Lyotard, J.F. 1984. The postmodern condition: A report on knowledge. Vol. 10. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press.
- Macallan, B. & Hendriks, H.J. 2012. A post-foundational practical theology? The pastoral cycle and local theology. *Dutch Reformed theological journal / Nederduitse Gereformeerde teologische tydskrif*, 3:194-205.
- Malina, B. 1979. The individual and the community-personality in the social world of early Christianity. *Biblical theology bulletin*, 9(3):126-138.
- Malina, B. & Rohrbaugh, R.L. 2003. Social-science commentary on the synoptic gospels. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press.
- Malina, B.J. 1986. Interpreting the Bible with anthropology: The case of the poor and the rich. *Listening*, 21:148-159.
- Malina, B.J. 1981. The New Testament world: insights from cultural anthropology. Louisville, KY: John Knox.
- Malina, B.J. 2001. The New Testament world: insights from cultural anthropology. Louisville, KY: John Knox.
- Malina, B.J. & Neyrey, J.H. 1991. Honor and shame in Luke-Acts: pivotal values of the Mediterranean world. (In Neyrey, J.H., ed. The social world of Luke-Acts: Models for interpretation. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson. p. 25-65).
- Malina, B.J. & Pilch, J.J. 2006. Social-science commentary on the letters of Paul. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press.
- Malina, B.J. & Rohrbaugh, R.L. 1992. Social-science commentary on the Synoptic Gospels. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press.
- Malina, B.J. & Rohrbaugh, R.L. 1998. Social-science commentary on the Gospel of John. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press.
- Markman, H.J., Renick, M.J., Floyd, F.J., Stanley, S.M. & Clements, M. 1993. Preventing marital distress through communication and conflict management training: a 4- and 5-year follow-up. *Journal of consulting and clinical psychology*, 61(1):70-77.
- Markman, H.J., Whitton, S.W., Kline, G.H., Stanley, S.M., Thompson, H., St Peters, M., Leber, D.B., Antonio Olmos-Gallo, P., Prado, L. & Williams, T. 2004. Use of an empirically based

marriage education program by religious organizations: results of a dissemination trial. *Family relations*, 53(5):504-512.

Marsman, H.J. 2003. Women in Ugarit and Israel: their social and religious position in the context of the ancient Near East. Vol. 49. Leiden: Brill.

Matheson, J.L. & Rosen, K.H. 2012. Marriage and family therapy faculty members' balance of work and personal life. *Journal of marital and family therapy*, 38(2):394-416.

Matthews, V.H. & Benjamin, D.C. 1993. Social world of ancient Israel, 1250-587 BCE, Peabody, MA: Hendrickson.

McClendon, J.W. 2002. Biography as theology: How life stories can remake today's theology: Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock.

McClendon, J.W.J. 1974. Biography as theology: how life stories can remake today's theology. Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press.

McMillan, H.S., Morris, M.L. & Atchley, E.K. 2011. Constructs of the work/life interface: a synthesis of the literature and introduction of the concept of work/life harmony. *Human resource development review*, 10(1):6-25.

McQueen, L. & Zimmerman, L. 2006. Using the interpretive narrative research method in interdisciplinary research projects. *Journal of nursing education*, 45(11):475-478.

Menken-Bekius, C.J. 1999. Rituelen in het individuele pastoraat: een praktisch-theologisch onderzoek. Kampen: J. H. Kok.

Meyer, J. 2010. The spiritual and psychosocial gender specific stories of adolescent orphans affected by HIV and Aids in the absence of a father figure: a postfoundational practical theological approach. Pretoria: University of Pretoria (Thesis – PhD).

Meylahn, J.-A. 2006. Postfoundationalism, deconstruction and the hope that motivates research in practical theology. *Hervormde teologiese studies*, 62(3):983-999.

Mills, S.D. & Sprenkle, D.H. 1995. Family therapy in the postmodern era. *Family relations*:368-376.

Mol, A. 1981. Kom ons wen saam. Pretoria: Femina Uitgewers.

Morgan, A. 2000. What is narrative therapy? An easy-to-read introduction. Adelaide: Dulwich Centre Publications.

Morgan, S.P., Cumberworth, E. & Wimer, C. 2011. The great recession's influence on fertility, marriage, divorce, and cohabitation. (In Grusky, D.B., Western B. & Wimer C., eds. The great recession. New York: Russell Sage Foundation. p. 220-245).

Morganson, V.J., Litano, M.L. & O'Neill, S.K. 2014. Promoting work–family balance through positive psychology: a practical review of the literature. *The psychologist-manager journal*, 17(4):221-244.

Morris, M.L. Conversation on work/life harmony [interview]. 20 May 2010.

Morrison, M. 2012. History of PEST analysis. *RapidBi* (Vol. 2014.). <http://rapidbi.com/history-of-pest-analysis/> Date of access: 10 October 2016.

Morrow, G.R. 1960. Plato's Cretan city: a historical interpretation of the Laws. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Müller, J.C. 1996. Om tot verhaal te kom: pastorale gesinsterapie. Pretoria: Raad vir Geesteswetenskaplike Navorsing.

Müller, J.C. 1999. Companions on the journey. Johannesburg: Logos Electronic Publishers.

Müller, J.C. 2000. Reis-geselskap: die kuns van verhalende pastorale gesprekvoering. Cape Town: Lux Verbi.

Müller, J.C. 2004. HIV/AIDS, narrative practical theology, and postfoundationalism: the emergence of a new story. *Hervormde teologiese studies*, 60(1 & 2):293-306.

Müller, J.C. 2005. A postfoundationalist, HIV-positive practical theology. *Praktiese teologie in Suid-Afrika*, 20(2):72-88.

Müller, J.C. 2009a. Transversal rationality as a practical way of doing interdisciplinary work, with HIV and AIDS as a case study. *Praktiese teologie in Suid-Afrika*, 24(2):199-228.

Müller, J.C. 2009b. Passie & spasie: lewe in die gesin. www.griffel.co.za: Griffel Media.

Müller, J.C. 2011a. (Outo) biografie as teologie. *HTS theological studies*, 67(3):58-63.

Müller, J.C. 2011b. Postfoundational practical theology for a time of transition. *Hervormde teologiese studies*, 67(1):1-5.

Müller, J. & Schoeman, K. 2004. Narrative research: A respectful and fragile intervention. *Sociale Interventie*, 13(3):7-13.

- Müller, J.C. & Stone, H.W. 1998. Intercultural pastoral care and counseling: resources from narrative therapy and brief pastoral counseling. *Verbum et ecclesia*, 19(2):325-341.
- Müller, J.C., Van Deventer, W. & Human, L. 2001. Fiction writing as metaphor for research: a narrative approach. *Praktiese teologie in Suid-Afrika*, 16(2):76-96.
- Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk. 2010. Handleiding vir die erediens. Wellington: Bybel-Media.
- Newsom, C.A. & Ringe, S.H. 1998. Women's Bible commentary. Philadelphia, PA: Westminster John Knox Press.
- Neyrey, J.H. 1991. The symbolic universe of Luke-Acts: "They turn the world upside down". (In Neyrey, J.H., ed. The social world of Luke-Acts: models for interpretation. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson. p. 271-304).
- Neyrey, J.H. 1998. Honor and shame in the Gospel of Matthew. Philadelphia, PA: Westminster: John Knox Press.
- Ngcongco, M. 2016. The dialectics of mobile communication in South African romantic relationships. *Journal of African media studies*, 8(1):75-90.
- Noy, D. 2000. Women in the Greek world. Lampeter: University of Lampeter.
- Nullens, P. 2015. Zorgen voor een eigenwijze kudde. Utrecht: Boekencentrum.
- Nyati, F. 2011. Work life balance is important : wellness – more to life. *HR future*, 12(1):47.
- Opie, T.J. & Henn, C.M. 2013. Work-family conflict and work engagement among mothers: Conscientiousness and neuroticism as moderators, 39(1).
http://reference.sabinet.co.za/webx/access/electronic_journals/psyc/psyc_v39_n1_a9.pdf Date of access: 10 October 2016.
- Opperman, R. & Snyman, F. 2005. Ervaringsleer kook. Pretoria: Groep 7 Drukkers en Uitgewers.
- Osiek, C. & Balch, D.L. 1997. Families in the New Testament world: households and house churches. Philadelphia, PA: Westminster John Knox Press.
- Osmer, R.R. 2008. Practical theology: an introduction. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans.
- Park, S.K. 2010. A postfoundationalist research paradigm of practical theology. *Hervormde teologiese studies*, 66(2):1-6.

Parrott, L. & Parrott, L. 2006. Saving your marriage before it starts: seven questions to ask before – and after – you marry. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.

Patterson, C.B. 1991. Marriage and the married woman in Athenian law. (*In Pomeroy, S.B. ed. Women's history and ancient history. Carolina, NC: University of North Carolina Books Press Books. p. 48-72).*

Pattison, S. & Woodward, J. 2000. An introduction to pastoral and practical theology. (*In Woodward, J., Pattison, S. & Patton, J. eds. The Blackwell reader in pastoral and practical theology. Hoboken, NJ: Blackwell. p. 1-19).*

Patton, M.Q. 1990. Qualitative evaluation and research methods. London: Sage.

Pearce, C. 2010. The crises and freedoms of researching your own life. *Journal of research practice*, 6(1):2-16.

Pembroke, N. 2013. Divine therapeia and the sermon: theocentric therapeutic preaching. Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock.

Pienaar, H. 2015. The misnomers of spiritual 'directing' and 'coaching'. *Acta theologica*, 35(1):153-173.

Pienaar, H.E. 2012. Overture to practical theological facilitation. *Nederduitse Gereformeerde teologiese tydskrif*, 53(3 & 4):241-255.

Pienaar, H.E. 2014a. An epistemology of facilitation: A Julian Müller story. *Verbum et ecclesia*, 35(2):1-12.

Pienaar, H.E. 2014b. PhD and Masters discussion group in postfoundational practical theology focusing on business praxis. PhD and Masters discussion group. Merenski Library, University of Pretoria. 3 Jun. 2014.

Pienaar, H.E. 2016. Narrative coaching. First contact week of Masters and Doctorate students in the Organisationa Praxis Program. NG Wierdapark, Centurion. 7 Mar. 2016.

Pienaar, H.E. & Müller, J.C. 2012. The practical theologian as decentred but influential facilitator. *HTS: theological studies*, 68(2). <http://dx.doi.org/10.4102/hts.v68i2.1307>

Pieterse, H.J.C. 1993. Praktiese teologie as kommunikatiewe handelingssteorie. Pretoria: RGN-Uitgewers.

- Pitt-Rivers, J.A. 1977. *The Fate of Shechem: or, the politics of sex: essays in the anthropology of the Mediterranean*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Powers, J. 2000 . *Ancient Greek marriage*. Medford, MA:Tufts University Press.
- Prinsloo, J.D. 1999. 'n Diskoers in narratiewe pastorale huweliksverryking. Bloemfontein: Universiteit van die Oranje-Vrystaat.
- Reiss, S. 1991. Expectancy model of fear, anxiety, and panic. *Clinical psychology review*, 11(2):141-153.
- Richter, A. 2010. Addressing the psycho-spiritual bereavement needs of HIV and AIDS orphans and other vulnerable adolescents : a narrative pastoral care approach. Pretoria: University of Pretoria (Thesis – PhD).
- Ricœur, P. 1976. *Interpretation theory: discourse and the surplus of meaning*: Fort Worth, TX: Texas Christian University Press.
- Ricœur, P. 1984. *Time and narrative Vol. I* (K. McLaughlin & D. Pellauer, Trans.). Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
- Ricœur, P. 1988. *Time and narrative Vol. III* (K. McLaughlin & D. Pellauer, Trans.). Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
- Riley, P. 2016. *Civilizing sex: on chastity and the common good*. London: Bloomsbury.
- Roy, G. 2016. Impact of mobile communication technology on the work life balance of working women – a review of discourses. *Journal of contemporary management research*, 10(1):79-101.
- Rubin, H.J. & Rubin, I.S. 1995. *Qualitative interviewing: the art of hearing data*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Rustin, M., Chamberlayne, P., Bornat, J. & Wengraf, T. 2000. Part 1: Issues of methodology and theory: Chapter 1: Reflections on the biographical turn in social science, pp. 33-52: Abigdon: Taylor & Francis).
- Sanichar, A. 2004. The strategic implications and management considerations of work / life programs,
http://reference.sabinet.co.za/webx/access/electronic_journals/jcman/jcman_v1_a3.pdf Date of access 1 October 2016.
- Satlow, M.L. 2001. *Jewish marriage in antiquity*: Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Schnabel, L. 2015. Toward a standpoint hermeneutic: the case of the evangelical gender subordination debate. *Claremont journal of religion*, 4(1):86-112.

Schoeman, W. & van den Berg, J.-A. 2016. Practical Theology exploring interdisciplinary practices: The quest for engaging with lived religion in the South African context. (In Venter, R. ed. Theology and the (post) apartheid condition: genealogies and future directions. Bloemfontein: SUN-Media. p. 213).

Schrag, C.O. 1994. Transversal rationality. (In Stapleton, T.J. ed. The question of hermeneutics. New York: Springer. p. 61-78).

Schumm, W.R., Walker, A.B., Nazarinia, R.R., West, D.A., Atwell, C., Bartko, A. & Kriley, A. 2010. Predicting the short- and long-term helpfulness of premarital counseling: The critical role of counseling quality. *Journal of couple & relationship therapy: innovations in clinical and educational interventions*, 9(1):1-15.

Scott, S.B., Rhoades, G.K., Stanley, S.M., Allen, E.S. & Markman, H.J. 2013. Reasons for divorce and recollections of premarital intervention: Implications for improving relationship education. *Couple and family psychology: research and practice*, 2(2):131-145.

Seekings, J. 2014. The social and political implications of demographic change in post-apartheid South Africa. *Annals of the American academy of political and social science*, 652:70-86.

Soni, P. 2013. The struggle to juggle : work-life balance at a private company in Durban, South Africa, 11(1).

http://reference.sabinet.co.za/webx/access/electronic_journals/jomad/jomad_v11_n1_a3.pdf

Date of access: 10 October 2016.

Stahmann, R.F. 2000. Premarital counselling: a focus for family therapy. *Journal of family therapy*, 22(1):104.

Stahmann, R.F. & Hiebert, W.J. 1997. Premarital and remarital counseling: the professional's handbook. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Stanley, S.M. 2001. Making a case for premarital education. *Family relations*, 50(3):272-280.

Stanley, S.M., Amato, P.R., Johnson, C.A. & Markman, H.J. 2006. Premarital education, marital quality, and marital stability: findings from a large, random household survey. *Journal of family psychology*, 20(1):117-126.

- Stanley, S.M., Markman, H.J., Prado, L.M., Olmos-Gallo, P.A., Tonelli, L., St Peters, M., Leber, B.D., Bobulinski, M., Cordova, A. & Whitton, S.W. 2001. Community-based premarital prevention: Clergy and lay leaders on the front lines. *Family relations*, 50(1):67-76.
- Starks, H. & Brown Trinidad, S. 2007. Choose Your Method: A Comparison of Phenomenology, Discourse Analysis, and Grounded Theory. *Qualitative Health Research*, 17(10):1372-1380.
- Statistics South Africa. 2016. Marriages and divorces 2014. <http://www.statssa.gov.za/publications/P0307/P03072014.pdf> Date of access: 26 September 2016.
- Statistics South Africa. 2017. Key findings: P0307 – Marriages and Divorces, 2015. http://www.statssa.gov.za/?page_id=1856&PPN=P0307&SCH=7035 Date of access: 13 August 2017.
- Stone, K. 1996. Sex, honor, and power in the Deuteronomistic history: London: Bloomsbury.
- Struwig, F. & Stead, G. 2007. Planning, designing and reporting research. Cape Town: Pearson Education South Africa.
- Swart, C. 2013. Re-authoring the world. Randburg, South Africa: Knowres Publishing.
- Tambling, R.B. & Glebova, T. 2013. Preferences of individuals in committed relationships about premarital counseling. *The American journal of family therapy*, 41(4):330-340.
- Tatusko, A. 2005. The tacit media pedagogy as praxial critique: A critique of postmodern theory for higher education curriculum. *The teachers college record*, 107(1):114-136.
- The Commission for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration. 2015. The Commission for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration. <http://www.ccma.org.za> Date of access: 30 January 2015.
- The Southern African Association for Pastoral Work. 2017. The Southern African Association for Pastoral Work (SAAP). <http://www.saap.za.net> Date of access: 12 August 2017.
- Thomson, L.A. & De Bruin, K. 2007. Personality as predictor of life balance in South African corporate employees. *Journal of contemporary management*, 4(1):68-85.
- Tracy, D.W. 1981. The analogical imagination: Christian theology and the culture of pluralism. New York: Crossroad.

University, N.W. 2016. NWU Ethics application form: Theology. Potchefstroom: North-West University.

Van Aarde, A.G. 2001. The “cause of Jesus” (Sache Jesu) as the Canon behind the Canon. *HTS teologiese studies*, 57(1/2):148-171.

Van den Berg, J.A. 2010. An (auto)biographical theologia habitus – futures perspectives for the workplace. *Acta theologica*, 30:01-158.

Van den Berg, J.A. 2014. Reaching beyond: Blogging a digital autobiographical practical theology. *Verbum et ecclesia*, 35(2):1-6.

Van der Westhuizen, Z. 2008. Mentorship narratives in a local congregation : a postfoundational practical theological study. Pretoria: University of Pretoria (Thesis – PhD).

Van der Westhuizen, Z. 2010. Transversality and interdisciplinary discussion in postfoundational practical theology: reflecting on Julian Müller’s interdisciplinary guidelines. *Hervormde teologiese studies*, 66(2):1-5.

Van Eck, E. 1995. Galilee and Jerusalem in Mark's story of Jesus: a narratological and social scientific reading. <https://repository.up.ac.za/handle/2263/50107> Date of access: 10 October 2016.

Van Eck, E. 2007a. Die huwelik in die eerste-eeuse Mediterreense wêreld (I) : vroue in 'n man se wêreld. *HTS Theological studies*, 63(1):81-101.

Van Eck, E. 2007b. Die huwelik in die eerste-eeuse Mediterreense wêreld (II): Huwelik, egbreuk, egskeding en hertrou. *HTS Theological studies*, 63(1):103-128.

Van Eck, E. 2007c. Die huwelik in die eerste-eeuse Mediterreense wêreld (III): Jesus en die huwelik. *HTS Theological studies*, 63(2):481-513.

Van Huyssteen, J.W. 1997. Essays in postfoundationalist theology. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans.

Van Huyssteen, J.W. 1997a. Essays in postfoundationalist theology. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans.

Van Huyssteen, J.W. 2000. Postfoundationalism and interdisciplinarity: a response to Jerome Stone. *Zygon*, 35(2):427-439.

Van Huyssteen, J.W. 2006. Alone in the world? Human uniqueness in science and theology. United States of America. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans.

Van Huyssteen, J.W. 2007. Response to critics. *American journal of theology & philosophy*, 28(3):409-432.

Van Huyssteen, J.W. 2009. The philosophical roots of public theology. (In Pieterse, H.J.C., Thesnaar, C.H. & Nell, M. eds. A faithful witness: Essays in honour of Malan Nel. Wellington: Bible Media BM. p. 49-65).

Van Wyk, A. 1997. "Theology" and interdisciplinary co-operation with other sciences. *Practical theology in South Africa*, 12(2):75-86.

Visser, P.J. 2009. Van laslappies tot kwilt: 'n narratiewe benadering tot hersaamgestelde gesinspastoraat. Pretoria: University of Pretoria (Dissertation – MA).

Waumsley, J.A., Houston, D.M. & Marks, G. 2010. What about us? Measuring the work-life balance of people who do not have children. *Review of European studies*, 2(2):3-8.

Wayne, J.H., Musisca, N. & Fleeson, W. 2004. Considering the role of personality in the work–family experience: Relationships of the big five to work–family conflict and facilitation. *Journal of vocational behavior*, 64(1):108-130.

Werbel, J. & Walter, M.H. 2002. Changing views of work and family roles: A symbiotic perspective. *Human resource management review*, 12(3):293-298.

Wheeler, B.L. 2005. Music therapy research: Barcelona Publishers.

White, M. 1993. Deconstruction and therapy. (In S. Gilligan & R. Price eds., Therapeutic conversations. New York: Norton. p. 22-61).

Whitty, M.T. 2005. The realness of cybercheating: men's and women's representations of unfaithful internet relationships. *Social science computer review*, 23(1):57-67.

Wiklund, L. 2010. Metaphors—A path to narrative understanding. *International journal for human caring*, 14(2):60-69.

Wiklund-Gustin, L. 2010. Narrative hermeneutics: in search of narrative data. *Scandinavian journal of caring sciences*, 24(s1):32-37.

Wilson, R.E. 2015. Positioning within a cultural context: using Ricoeur's preunderstandings as a heuristic for narrative data analysis in exploring identity, structure, and agency. *International journal of qualitative studies in education*, 28(8):887-905.

Wittgenstein, L. 2003. Knowledge as a language game. (In Gergen, M. & Gergen K.J., eds. *Social construction*. London: Sage. p.18-20).

ANNEXURES

Annexure A



Julie 2014

Vir wie dit mag aangaan,

Hiermee word erken dat ds. Pieter Visser, in diens van NG Wierdapark met die toestemming van die Kerkraad van NG Wierdapark mag dag inskryf en deelneem aan doktorsale nagraadse studie by die Noord-Wes Universiteit.

Verder erken ons dat hy sy langverlof vir die studies sal aanwend, asook dat hy die terrein en gronde van NG Wierdapark mag gebruik om onderhoude te voer en narratiewe pastorale berading te bied aan lidmate en nie-lidmate van NG Wierdapark vir die doel van sy nagraadse studie.

Die uwe,

Jan Cilliers

Kerkraad Voorsitter

NG Wierdapark

N.G. Wierdapark, h/v Piet Hugost & Kortst, Wierdapark, 0157
Selfoon: 082 565 9435 | **Huis:** 012 653 5766 | **Kantoor:** 012 654 7944
epos: pieterjvisser@gmail.com | **www:** <http://www.ngwierdapark.co.za>

Annexure B



NORTH-WEST UNIVERSITY
YUNIBESITI YA BOKONE-BOPHIRIMA
NOORDWES-UNIVERSITEIT

North-West University

Faculty of Theology

Department of Practical Theology

Researcher: Pieter Visser

PO BOX 50317

Wierdapark

0149

pieterjvisser@gmail.com

Dear Participant,

I am a reverend in the Dutch Reformed tradition engaged in a doctoral study on the work-family balance within the context of premarital counselling.

PURPOSE OF THE RESEARCH:

In South Africa more and more companies are introducing wellness programs. There are however various reasons prohibiting these programs from truly benefiting workers and families. It is well documented that work-family balance is an important consideration for corporate institutions and families alike. Another important factor is couples expectations of marriage and how they will find balance in their marriage relationship. I will be conducting interviews in order to explore how the work and family environments could reach an optimal balance or value structure where both parties are benefited.

I would like to invite you to join me in the research. You will be considered as a co-researcher in the study and anonymity will be upheld. Your participation in this research does require your informed consent. This informed consent letter needs to be signed by yourself and a witness. Please also advise me if I need to obtain consent from the organisation that you represent – where applicable.

METHOD OF RESEARCH AND RIGHTS OF RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS

If you are part of the couple co-researcher team: the research will be conducted by the means of couple interviews with myself, you and your future spouse. I would like to hear your relationship story and especially where it pertains to work or family relationships. The interviews will be audio recorded, and notes will be taken.

If you are part of the interdisciplinary team: the summaries of couple's stories, with their identities protected will be provided to you and you will be required to reflect on the interviews of the couples from your discipline and perspective. This feedback in the form of email communication will then be resubmitted to the couple team for further narrative discussion and reflection.

You are required to grant me permission to use the contents of our interviews in the research study. The study will culminate in a thesis and a journal article. Your name will be substituted with a pseudonym and any identifying information kept confidential. It is also your right to choose at any time to withdraw from the research (including withdrawing the information in the interviews that may already have been held), without it having any negative consequence to you or your partner.

During the course of the interviews you may also choose to not answer any of the questions or to choose to have any of your answers withdrawn from the research. There will be four initial interviews of about one hour in duration. There will be at least one subsequent interview, in the form of interdisciplinary feedback, for the purpose of follow-up and also to inform you of the outcomes of the study. Unfortunately there is no financial compensation for participating in the study. Including yourselves there will be five couples and six interdisciplinary team members involved in this study.

The content of the interviews will be discussed with my supervisor Dr Elmo Pienaar and an interdisciplinary team of professionals.

POTENTIAL RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS

While there are no foreseen risks in the interview process you may experience sensitive feelings, emotions and memories. I will be there to support you in the interview process.

The North-West University operates under strict ethical guidelines, which will be adhered to strictly in this research, and the entire research process will be monitored by my supervisor. The research is done under the ethical code upheld by the North-West University.

POTENTIAL BENEFITS OF THE STUDY

It is my firm belief and hope that with your participation we will be able to make a contribution towards improving the wellness of employees in the workplace. I hope that this study can pave the way for families to find meaningful relationships in the midst of demanding work and home schedules.

Should you have any queries now or during the course of the research please do not hesitate to contact me on 082 565 9435 or on email pieterjvisser@gmail.com.

You are also welcome to contact the National Health Research Ethics Council at 012 395 8125 or on their website: <http://www.nhrec.org.za/>

With kind regards and appreciation,

Pieter Visser

Co-researchers consent:

If you have read this consent form and understand the information, and you voluntarily agree to take part in this study, please sign your name below. Your signed consent is an agreement to participate in the study and for the contents of the interviews to be used in the research.

_____	_____	_____
Participant's name	Participant's signature	Date
_____	_____	_____
Witness' name	Witness' signature	Date
_____	_____	_____
Researcher's name	Researcher's signature	Date

Annexure C



NORTH-WEST UNIVERSITY
YUNIBESITI YA BOKONE-BOPHIRIMA
NOORDWES-UNIVERSITEIT

North-West University

Faculty of Theology

Department of Practical Theology

Researcher: Pieter Visser

PO BOX 50317

Wierdapark

0149

pieterjvisser@gmail.com

CONFIDENTIALITY AGREEMENT

Work-family balance in narrative premarital counselling: a postfoundational practical theological approach

I, _____, have been approached as member of the interdisciplinary team in the above-mentioned study.

As per the informed consent form I signed, the summaries of couple's stories, with their identities protected will be provided to me and I will be required to reflect on the interviews of the couples from my discipline and perspective. This feedback in the form of email communication will then be resubmitted to the individual couples for further narrative discussion and reflection.

I agree to:

1. keep all the research information shared with me confidential by not discussing or sharing the research information in any form or format (e.g., disks, tapes, transcripts) with anyone other than the Researcher(s).

2. keep all research information in any form or format (e.g., disks, tapes, transcripts) secure while it is in my possession.

3. return all research information in any form or format (e.g., disks, tapes, transcripts) to the Researcher(s) when I have completed the research tasks.

4. after consulting with the Researcher(s), erase or destroy all research information in any form or format regarding this research project that is not returnable to the Researcher(s) (e.g., information stored on computer hard drive).

_____	_____	_____
Participant's name	Participant's signature	Date
_____	_____	_____
Witness' name	Witness' signature	Date
_____	_____	_____
Researcher's name	Researcher's signature	Date