

Narratives of Young Fatherhood

Athena Enderstein

Psychology Department, University of Cape Town

Student number: ENDATH001

endath001@uct.ac.za

Supervisor: Dr. Floretta Boonzaier

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Abstract

The field of masculinity studies has proliferated over the past few years, especially in the international arena. However, despite this proliferation very little research has looked at the issue of young fatherhood. The paucity of research on young fathers in South Africa is particularly stark in the context of staggering HIV rates, gender based violence and teenage pregnancy. The aim of this research is to contribute to filling this gap. Narrative interviews were conducted with 10 young fathers between the ages of 18 and 23. A thematic narrative analysis of the data revealed poignant emotional connections that these young men have with their children and the importance they place on fulfilling the role of father. Themes of relationships, families and financial struggles are weaved into these young men's stories about the responsibilities and changes experienced as they enter fatherhood. What emerges is the experience of fatherhood as a rebirth; a transformation which greatly shifts the focus of their lives. Through their narratives, participants draw on both dominant and subversive discourses of masculinity, actively challenging stereotypes of irresponsible young men and absent fathers. The insights offered by these men show the possibility for alternative, positive masculinities.

Keywords: young fathers, fatherhood, masculinities, teenage pregnancy, narrative research.

Narratives of Young Fatherhood

The principle of transformation has become a guiding force in South Africa as its new found democracy evolves. A dominant feature within this process has been the focus on gender, specifically women's rights, in the development of policies and laws geared towards the facilitation of gender equality (Albertyn, 2003). Gender has become the overarching analytical framework in programme and policy development, synonymous with the disadvantages that women and young girls face in a patriarchal context (Barker & Ricardo, 2005). However appropriate this may be in light of the dangerous nature of gender inequalities in the context of HIV/AIDS, the role and experience of men, particularly young men, has subsequently remained unexplored (Barker & Ricardo, 2005).

Concepts of masculinity and manhood are central to the perpetuation of gender inequalities. It is essential therefore that the empowerment of women is paired with an exploration of masculinity. Focus has recently been directed to the study of men and boys and working with them to combat gender inequality based on the understanding that masculinities are socially constructed and constantly changing over time (Barker & Ricardo, 2005). Organizations such as Sonke Gender Justice and Engender Health are geared towards the transformation of men's behaviour in order to reduce gender-based violence and promote gender equality (Peacock & Levack, 2004).

One of the defining aspects of manhood is fatherhood, which has transformative power in the creation of masculine identity. The repositioning of men as partners and fathers can contribute to the construction of positive masculinities which are "peace-loving, democratic, tolerant and respectful" (Morrell, 2006, p. 21). This project aims to provide an account of the experiences of young fathers, to explore how fatherhood is constructed and given meaning by young men themselves. Early parenthood is a "unique window to explore the dialectic between genders and generations concerning idea and practices surrounding manhood and womanhood." (Mkhwanazi, 2006, p. 102).

Current Trends in the Literature

Research around early parenthood is generally investigated from the perspective of young mothers (Pears et al., 2005), while there is a dearth of research on young fathers (Miller, 1997). Adolescent fatherhood is researched predominantly in terms of antecedent risk factors for teenage pregnancy (Pears, Pierce, Kim, Capaldi, & Owen, 2005; Thornberry et al., 1997) and the associated negative life outcomes (Bunting & McAuley, 2004; Fagan, Bernd, & Whiteman, 2007; Giddens & Birdsall, 2001; Wei, Loeber, & Stouthamer-Loeber,

2002). There also appears to be considerable emphasis on the factors which influence paternal involvement (Fagan, Bernd, & Whiteman, 2007).

Risk factors and negative outcomes associated with adolescent fatherhood.

The international literature dwells primarily on risk factors and negative outcomes associated with adolescent fatherhood, relating demographic information and statistical reports of young fathers' behaviour (Allen & Doherty, 1996), with relatively few qualitative studies emerging. The factors involved in early entry into fatherhood have been investigated with a pejorative understanding of adolescent fathers as "costly to society" (Pears et al., 2005, p. 429), with a resulting focus on prevention. Several risk factors for early entrance into fatherhood include having parents who were young, being of low socioeconomic status and achieving poorly at school (Bunting & McAuley, 2004; Pears et al., 2005; Thornberry et al., 1997). In addition, young fathers are more likely than non-fathers to be suffering from emotional and psychological problems, often combined with delinquent and aggressive behaviour (Thornberry et al., 1997; Wei et al., 2002). Research has found that adolescent paternity is linked to childhood aggression and other adverse childhood experiences, adolescent substance abuse, delinquent behaviour and high-risk sexual behaviour (Miller-Johnson, Win, Coie, Malone, & Lochman, 2004; Anda et al. 2002).

Compromised educational and professional opportunities and reduced financial stability have been identified as associated consequences of early parenthood (Bunting & McAuley, 2004). Young fathers are more likely than non-fathers to be involved in delinquent behaviour, be called into court, drop out of school and be involved with drugs and alcohol (Stouthamer-Loeber & Wei, 1998).

Father involvement.

A negative consequence identified for young fathers is being unable to participate in their children's lives which reduces self-esteem and self-confidence (Bunting & McAuley, 2004; Caldwell & Antonucci, 1997). The majority of young parents break up after the child is born, resulting in the absence of fathers in the lives of their children, which young mothers attribute to disinterest (Bunting & McAuley, 2004; ESRC, 1997 as cited in Giddens & Birdsall, 2001). Relationship status and strength of parent alliance appear in the literature as predictors of father engagement (Gavin et al., 2002; Johnson, 2001; Futris & Shoppe-Sullivan, 2007). It should be noted, however, that father absence or presence is a binary measure, and that survey data such as that mentioned by Giddens and Birdsall (2001) does

not account for the variations in involvement between the two extremes (Posel & Devey, 2006).

Lack of young father involvement has been linked to conflict with family members, not being able to provide financially for the child (Bunting & McAuley, 2004), and employment status (Gavin et al., 2002). In fact, qualitative research reveals that young fathers feel great pressure to provide financially and be involved with their new families, and are greatly disheartened when they are unable to do so (Glikman, 2004; Allen & Doherty, 1996). It has been suggested that social support from the families of both parents minimizes the effects of parental stress on father involvement (Fagan et al., 2007).

Teenage pregnancy research in South Africa.

Research on teenage pregnancy in South Africa overlooks the involvement of young fathers bar one study dedicated exclusively to this group: Swartz and Bhana (2009). Mostly, South African literature echoes the risk factor paradigm (See Macleod, 1999a, 1999b, for a full review), drawing on the same methodological and theoretical frameworks as the international literature (Mkhwanazi, 2006; Macleod, 2003). However, South African literature reveals a triadic dynamic of HIV, gender-based violence and teenage pregnancy which does not appear to be present in the international literature (Harrison & O'Sullivan, 2010; Harrison, Xaba, & Kunene, 2001; Kaufman, Wet, & Stadler, 2001; Montgomery, Hosegood, Busza, & Timæus, 2006; Varga, 1997, 2003).

The possibility for quantitative measures of adolescent fertility trends and contraceptive use in South Africa is limited due to the lack of accurate demographic data (Kaufman et al., 2001). Thus, research is predominantly qualitative or conducted using survey methods. The majority of studies reviewed explore early parenthood in terms of how sexual decision making is mediated by contraception, power dynamics in relationships, family structure, tradition and fertility, and the health services. Traditionally research around adolescent childbearing has been focused on young people from impoverished backgrounds (Bakilana & Esau, 2003; Harrison et al., 2001; Jewkes, Vundule, Maforah, & Jordaan, 2001; Kaufman et al., 2001; Manzini, 2001).

Risky behaviour, relationship dynamics and sexual decision making.

There is a great amount of variation within South African research regarding statistics on sexual activity, whereas risky sexual behaviour has been consistently researched as a significant risk factor in teenage pregnancy (Mkhwanazi, 2006; Macleod, 2003). Risky sexual behaviour has typically been associated with reproductive ignorance (Harrison et al., 2001),

supposedly exacerbated by misinformation regarding sexual issues (Barker & Ricardo, 2005; Jewkes et al., 2001). Several antecedent factors are recurrently linked to teenage pregnancy: young people tend to think of themselves as invulnerable to the consequences of risky sexual behaviour; condoms are associated with infidelity; and contraception is assumed to be the responsibility of the young woman (Harrison et al., 2001; Jewkes et al., 2001; Kaufman et al., 2001; Manzini, 2001; Varga, 1997, 2003)

Underlying the focus on 'risky behaviour' is the erroneous assumption that sexual decision-making entails a straight-forward relationship between knowledge, attitudes and behaviour and an uncomplicated view of the 'rational' subject. Within this behavioural paradigm, the concept of early fatherhood is studied predominantly from the perspective of investigating how young men contribute to the risk of teenage pregnancy.

Relationship dynamics in sexual decision-making have been researched as primary risk factors for teenage pregnancy. A notable example of research around the lack of communication and gender power imbalance in relationships, and how this relates to teenage pregnancy, can be seen in Varga (1997). In structured and open-ended interviews with young parents in KwaZulu-Natal, young women and men showed an aversion to condom use, associating it with infidelity, and expressed a belief of invulnerability to HIV. Condom-less sex was described as signifying trust between partners, and young women feared introducing condoms because of accusations of infidelity and consequent abuse, although contraception and HIV prevention was described as the responsibility of woman. In terms of sexual activity, the symbolic nature of sex in establishing *isoka*¹ (player) status among young men was expressed as an incentive for cultivating multiple sexual partnerships.

One of the motivations for the Varga (1997) study was the investigation of both genders in a dyadic understanding of sexual relations. Overall the results indicate that sexual decision-making is generally carried out in the absence of negotiation and that communication between partners is poor. In later research, Varga (2003) finds further evidence of the influence of gender ideals in poor sexual negotiation, which puts young people at risk for adolescent pregnancy. Jewkes et al. (2001) highlighted the association between relationship dynamics and risk of pregnancy. A logistic regression analysis of structured questionnaire data revealed that young women who suffered forced sexual initiation and who were unwilling to confront unfaithful partners were more likely to become

¹ *isoka/pleya*: A Zulu man with multiple sexual partners

pregnant. Associations between these factors and adolescent pregnancy are believed to be mediated through unequal power relations within relationships. Ultimately, the coercion and abuse that young men reportedly use in service of attaining ideals of masculinity are considered the greatest risk factors in early parenthood (Wood & Jewkes, 1997).

Negative consequences of teenage pregnancy.

Echoing trends in international research, South African research has focused on the negative life outcomes associated with early parenthood. Typical research areas include: obstetric outcomes, inadequate parenting, abuse, neglect and relationship difficulties (Macleod, 1999a). These detrimental effects are believed to affect young women far more severely than young men, due to gender-based inequalities (Varga, 2003).

Kaufman et al. (2001) link teenage pregnancy to reduced financial and professional opportunities and the compromise of personal aspirations. Many young fathers elect to deny paternity as a result of the costs incurred by having to pay “damages” or *lobolo*². These economic exchanges allow the father access to his child, or permanent fatherhood in the case of marriage. Teenage pregnancy could compromise *lobolo*, which is also linked to the educational achievement of a woman. Furthermore, young parents might be forced to use money on the child that would otherwise have been allocated to their education. Childbearing later in life and life goals such as marriage may shift due to the experience of early pregnancy (Kaufman et al., 2001).

Research on young fathers.

In most instances, the literature frames young parenthood in a negative light. Exclusive focus on risk factors and negative outcomes positions young men solely as perpetrators of violence and enforcers of practices that place women at risk of early reproduction. Their experiences are consequently rendered unimportant. It seems that the stories that differ from the dominant discourse of men as violent and promiscuous go untold. The gender framework currently in place supplements a single discourse on gender where females are powerless, controlled by aggressive and forceful males (See for example Varga, 1997). The lack of evidence around men in sexual decision-making, negotiation and fatherhood is disconcerting.

The recent publication of Swartz and Bhana’s (2009) research into the experiences of young fathers in South Africa is the first of its kind. It is likely that, following this milestone,

² *damages*: payment for impregnating a woman outside of wedlock

ilobolo: isiXhosa word for bride wealth

others will explore this research area in different ways. Swartz and Bhana's (2009) phenomenological study highlights the responsibility and emotional investment that young fathers feel for their children. The young men from impoverished backgrounds shared what led them to become young fathers and what taking responsibility meant for them. This study highlights the importance that being a financial provider has for young fathers and the socio-cultural context related to this. The participants discuss their own absent fathers as a major motivation for taking a fathering role. Families and relationships are also discussed as both supportive and oppositional. Factors which impede involvement (such as employment, money, multiple partners, mothers' family and personal motivation) are also documented.

This study challenges the existing picture of young fathers as abusive and emotionally divorced from their partners with the juxtaposition of poignant experiences of fatherhood from the young men's perspectives. This lays the ground for future research around young men and fatherhood.

Implications of the Literature

Young men's experiences are a neglected area of research, and where they do appear they are cast as risk factors themselves. The studies reviewed fail to recognise the participants as actors in social systems of meaning, resulting in confusion as to why there is such a marked disjuncture between what young people know and what they practice (Harrison & O'Sullivan, 2010; Harrison et al., 2001).

These studies do not take into account the ways in which young people themselves participate in the construction of identities, and how they may reinforce or resist such constructions (Mkhwanazi, 2006). Fathers may be more present than is assumed or documented (Posel & Devey, 2006). Fathers who take on roles of carer, supporting children and enabling their female partners to work remain unacknowledged, even actively dismissed, because they are not engaging in socially sanctioned male roles (Montgomery et al., 2006).

This project focuses on the lived experiences of young fathers without imposing the binary of risk and consequence, or positioning young men as the primary risk factor. The aim was to explore how order and meaning are made from what has generally been framed as a negative life event.

Aims

The intention of this research is to continue the conversation initiated by Swartz and Bhana (2009) around being young and a father in South Africa. The central aim was to investigate how young South African men talk about their experiences of fatherhood. This

investigation is concerned with the kinds of stories that young men tell about their experiences, and how young fathers construct themselves and others in the telling of these stories. I began this research with the hope of uncovering different accounts of young fathers from those emerging from current research.

Methods

Qualitative research.

The research question asked necessitated a method of inquiry which allowed a holistic, contextualized view of young fatherhood. Of particular interest were the meanings that young men attach to fatherhood and how they interpret their experience. The fulfilment of these objectives was best addressed through the use of a qualitative research methodology (Flick, 2007). This allows for a rich description of the experience of young fatherhood, revealing the recurring themes and concerns which colour the experience (Morse & Richards, 2002).

A social constructionist framework was adopted, whereby the responses of participants are not seen as a means to tap a fixed unitary reality, but rather as constituted through social relatedness. Language is understood, not as a representation of objective reality, but as shaping and producing reality. Personal identity is understood to be formed through prevailing social discourses and constructions of meaning (Terre Blanche, Durrheim, & Painter, 2006).

Narrative approach.

From this framework it follows that the stories that people tell about themselves actively and perpetually construct their identity, motivating the choice of a narrative approach in this research. Different narrative identities are used to tell the world who we are: “The narrator is an active agent who is part of a social world. Through narrative, the agent engages with that world” (Murray, 2008, p. 116). The idea of a narrative as cumulative construction which echoes the interaction between society and the individual challenges “the conventional dualism between individual and society” (Andrews, Day Sclater, Rustin, Squire, & Treacher, 2000, p. 1). I understood narrative as a meaning-making action which serves to restore order to disorder and disruption (Murray, 2008). Thus, telling stories turns disparate parts into a coherent and stable whole. Disruptive life events, such as sickness or pregnancy (Reissman, 1993), are given meaning and understood through telling stories about them. Ultimately the choice to conduct narrative interviews and analysis is based on the understanding that identity is *performed* and that challenging taken-for-granted stories opens up alternative possibilities

for being and action. The transformative power of alternative stories speaks to one motivation for this project, which is to highlight diverse aspects of masculinity.

Because narrative methodology takes into account how individuals are “socialized into their gendered caste” (Gergen, 2001, p. 73), it has been successfully used to investigate gender (Holloway & Jefferson, 1994). Fatherhood is a gender construction. Thus, using a narrative approach is not only appropriate but beneficial because it takes cognizance of the politics involved in the creation of identity. Furthermore, a narrative approach allowed a more temporally continuous picture of the experiences of young fatherhood to emerge, contrasting the fragmented, snapshot view of young people’s experiences which characterizes research around early parenthood in South Africa (See for example Manzini, 2001).

Participants and recruitment.

Ten young males between the ages of 18 and 23 were recruited through convenience sampling, all of whom had fathered a child before they were 21. Participants were recruited primarily through word of mouth and through students and staff at the University of Cape Town. Two participants were also located through the Learners Network, a youth development programme. The sample was kept small due to the time-consuming nature of a narrative analysis and the time constraints imposed by the duration of the academic year (Esterberg, 2002).

The research context was confined to Cape Town and the surrounding areas. Participants were not selected on any other criteria than that of defining themselves as a father between the ages of 18 -23. Six of the participants were ‘Black’, three were ‘Coloured’ and one was ‘White’³. While I didn’t collect indicators of socioeconomic status from the participants nine of them reside in low socioeconomic or working class neighbourhoods.

Data collection methods.

In this study data collection was conducted using one-on-one unstructured narrative interviews to give the participants an opportunity to recount their experiences and express subjective meanings of fatherhood. The interview can be seen as “a powerful way of producing knowledge of the human situation” (Kvale, 2007, p. 9). Narrative interviews

³ Racial categories are extremely loaded because they carry the oppressive legacy of apartheid. I have used inverted commas around these terms to acknowledge the artificiality of racial classification. It is however included here because of the important ways in which apartheid embedded these categories as forms of ‘identity’ and because of the power it still holds in contemporary society.

provide access to the lived experience of the participant and his interpretation thereof, information that would otherwise have been inaccessible.

Procedure.

Participants were contacted telephonically and individual interviews were set up at the participant's choice of location (their own home, my home or an office at the university). The interview began with the reading and signing of consent and any questions that the participant had were addressed.

The interviews were recorded with a digital voice recorder and opened with the following question: "I wanted to ask you if you would tell me about your experience of being a father? Most researchers are looking for particular information but I am just interested in hearing your story. You don't have to feel inhibited in any way, you can just tell me as much as you can about your experience." Moments of reflection by the participants were respected, and only when they expressed a feeling of not knowing how to continue were other questions posed. These questions typically asked for elaboration or clarification of details, which then prompted further insights from the participants. The interviews were transcribed according to the transcription system provided in Appendix A.

Data analysis procedures.

The narrative approach adopted takes the story of the participant as the object of study. Within this framework, a thematic narrative analysis was adopted which focuses on the content of the narrative (Riessman, 2008). This was specifically chosen because it offers the possibility of knitting together themes in a coherent way, thus avoiding the fragmentation of experience into risks and outcomes.

Young people are not considered to participate in the construction of their identities (Andrews et al., 2000); rather they are conceptualized as passive recipients of societal influence (See Varga, 1997). A thematic narrative analysis allowed me to devote some attention to the context in which the narrative accounts are situated. The cultural resources which participants used within their narratives revealed the dominant ways in which fatherhood is constructed (Esterberg, 2002). This type of analysis allows the constant synthesis of themes of individual experience and broader social context to emerge, thus revealing "how stories function socially to create possibilities for group belonging and action" (Riessman, 2008, p. 73). The narrative is defined as the stories that the young men tell about their experiences of fatherhood and what themes these are represented through. Key aspects of thematic analysis were adopted from Braun and Clark (2006). I was also guided by

Reissman's (1993, 2008) writings on narrative analysis. Themes were identified through careful rereading of transcribed interviews, focusing on the interplay between features of biographical account and experiences of fatherhood. As the shape of the data began to emerge, recurring themes, similarity and contradictions were noted. The shared narrative pattern which extended across participants' accounts also became apparent. The aim is to repopulate the report of young parenthood, rendering young fathers more visible (Billig, 1994, as cited in Parker, 2005).

Ethics.

Ethical approval was granted by the Research Ethics Committee of the Department of Psychology at the University of Cape Town. Informed consent was obtained from the participants, detailing the risks and benefits of participation (See Appendix B). The participants were made aware that they could withdraw from the study at any point and that they would have access to the product of the research. Confidentiality was ensured through the use of pseudonyms for participants and access to the transcribed interviews was restricted to myself and my supervisor.

A consideration of reflexivity.

I acknowledge the product of research is some mix of the researchers' and participants' worlds. In this study I have tried to remain cognisant of this reality at each point. Race, class, gender, language and culture are inseparable 'characteristics' which influenced the construction of meaning between myself and the participants. Difference and sameness in the interview context had an impact on what was said, how it was said and what was understood. For example, some participants diverted from their own story to explain cultural norms and expectations to me. These instances will be pointed to in the analysis, where relevant. Both I and the participants contributed to causing certain aspects of the story to be emphasized, and others to be silenced. The following quote illustrates how differences in race and gender may have shaped the exchange between me and the participant:

Thabo: they say that a baby complicates things

Athena: so it changes the relationship?

Thabo: ja, it does changes the relationship because now, you won't understand....it's like a guy thing, but at the end it is quite rare that you see relationships that black people are still with their baby's mother.

My identification as a white female researcher may have played into existing social relations, which positioned me as powerful in relation to the participants. In some cases the

participants asked whether they were giving me what I needed. This points to the intrinsic artificiality of any research and is something that made me profoundly uncomfortable.

I realise that the question I asked may have drawn participatory fathers as participants, privileging their perspective over others. The research question also assumes that the experiences of young fathers are significantly different from those of other fathers. I acknowledge that this might assume early parenthood is a negative life event. I am equally aware that I began this research with the hope of hearing positive stories about young fatherhood and that would have influenced how I approached each stage of the study.

Finally, the transcription and analysis of participants is unavoidably infused with my own interpretations and assumptions about what they said, how they said it and what it means. Bearing this in mind, the following analysis and discussion is a tentative presentation of *my* understanding of *their* words.

Analysis and Discussion

I acknowledge that my reading of these texts is one of many different perspectives that could have been taken. Bearing this in mind I am aware of explicitly drawing on the idea of narrative as a meaning-making device which we use to shape personal and social identity (Murray, 2008). The overarching theme which appears to bind all the stories of the participants is that of life change through choice of responsibility.

The common trajectory follows the disruption of a life with the news of the pregnancy, and the gradual regaining of stability after “taking responsibility” negotiated amongst other life events. Participants may be at different stages of regaining stability but their narratives appear to follow this pattern. Choosing the identity of *father* has had a transformative effect in the participants’ lives. Through the action of taking on this role these young men have shifted the way in which they live life from singular to collective. The recurring narrative pattern is that of rebirth, as Sanda so poignantly puts it: “Ja, I live for him now, I live for him now”.

In order to maintain the narrative coherence of the texts, the structure of the analysis and discussion is presented as follows: the disruptive event of the pregnancy, navigating the effects of disruption and the shifting life focus, then re-establishment of stability in the context of a renegotiated identity. This analysis takes the form of highlighting themes as they play out across the intersection of commonalities and dissimilarities within the stories that these young men tell about fatherhood. Themes common to all the narratives were: relationships with family, partners and friends; financial struggles, working and studying;

responsibility; change and the role of the father in a child's life. What these narratives seem to achieve is a valorisation of the role of a father, thus justifying the participant's assumption of this identity. The participants give the impression that what they make of fatherhood has less to do with age and more to do with personal conviction.

The disruptive power of the pregnancy.

The participants do not talk about how the pregnancy happened; if they do, it is in a passing comment. This is perhaps the greatest deviation from existing research that this project reveals. The antecedent risk factors that led up to pregnancy, which feature prominently in teenage pregnancy research (see Macleod, 1999b, for review) are not mentioned at all by the participants, despite the pregnancy itself sometimes being talked about as a mistake. For the participants the pregnancy is framed as a decisive moment of change. Many of them express having had a sense of foreboding, knowing that they had to tell their parents, on whom they were still completely dependent.

Thabo: the hardest part thing was to accept that I was the father, that was the hardest part at all. Because my parents have expectations on me. Like how am I gonna explain this to my parents?

This negative reaction by the parents generally seems to dissolve in the course of the temporal progression of the narratives, as parents and families are become more positively involved. The initial reaction of families to the pregnancy, however, is one of disappointment. In one case the disappointment of the parents was directly tied to contravention of religious practice.

John: In our community it is really kind of a shame, it is kind of almost...so they...till this day they are still not over it, I still get crap from them.

For six of the participants cultural norms around pregnancies out of wedlock seem to act as a daunting confirmation of the life change they were experiencing. These participants explained to me the cultural process of paying damages. Although this attests to the cultural difference between us it also perhaps allowed them to express the personal significance paying damages had for them.

Families seem to take the place of mediators of the entrance into fatherhood, they police the cultural norms around acknowledging paternity, as damages and *lobolo* is negotiated between families. The linking of families, cultural norms and parenthood is echoed by the South African literature on teenage pregnancy (Kaufman et al., 2001; Varga, 1997, 2003).

Several of the participants talk about the pregnancy as disrupting the practice of their masculinity. Concurrent partnerships form part of the dominant discourse of young men exploring and gaining experience before ‘settling down’ (Harrison & O’Sullivan, 2010). In existing research, cultural norms are strongly linked to early parenthood, as they influence ideas around fertility, promiscuity and parenthood (Varga, 1997). For Thabo having multiple partners is a protective, culturally-sanctioned means to avoid heartbreak.

Thabo: You know how it works *mos*, you have your girlfriend, then you have your *makwapedis*. But with your girlfriend then you understand your risk involved⁴.

The occurrence of a pregnancy disrupts the system of multiple partners. The dynamics of specific gender identities within relationships is echoed in other research around sexual decision-making and teenage pregnancy (Kaufman et al., 2001; Varga, 1997, 2003; Harrison et al., 2001; Jewkes et al., 2001). Having multiple partners is a cultural resource which is drawn on in these narratives to define masculinity; a theme which is found in other research (Swartz & Bhana, 2009; Wood & Jewkes, 1997; Jewkes et al., 2001). Thus it appears that these young men’s experiences of the pregnancy are coloured by gender ideals which influence the relationship that they share with the mother of their child.

The disruptive power of the pregnancy is mediated by cultural norms around pregnancy out of wedlock and telling families appears to have been a highly stressful confirmation of the reality of becoming a father. The acceptance of being a father is spoken of in terms of facing up to the reality and choosing to take responsibility.

Navigating the effects of disruption and shifting life focus.

When talking about the pregnancy and how they came to accept paternity, the participants generally talk about the considerable change that occurred in their lives. The

⁴ *makwapedis*: isiXhosa slang for multiple partners (also referred to as spare wheels)

mos: Afrikaans for like

predominant theme through which this is conveyed in the narratives is that of taking responsibility, which then translates into a shift in life focus.

Taking responsibility.

‘Taking responsibility’ is a strong discourse for young fathers (Swartz & Bhana, 2009). It is interesting that for these young men becoming a father is talked about as a choice. This act of agency within these narratives appears to serve a double purpose: to distinguish themselves from the majority of young men who do not accept paternity (Kaufman et al., 2001); and to give positive value to the identity of *father*. An overriding sentiment among participants is that there is no going back once the pregnancy happened, there is no option to refuse to be a father, as verbalised here

Sanda: I could never think about denying my flesh and blood.

All the participants’ narratives convey the understanding of the pregnancy as a mistake, with some explicitly talking about it in those terms. However, they do not attempt to dwell on this fact, neutralizing it by taking responsibility and not appearing to let themselves entertain regret.

Sizwe: But this thing came, came along, then I have to face it, it is really really tough. I dunno where it will end, I dunno, but I will sacrifice for her. Ja, that is what I told myself.

The words of Sizwe encapsulate what each of the participants mention, namely the need to face what they had done and take up the challenge of being a father. Tebogo and Mandla, for example, dedicate a lot of space in their narratives to describing the issue of ‘taking responsibility’. There appears to be a very motivational tone to what these two participants say, as can be seen in the following lines:

Tebogo: the first thing that I can say is that being a young father is not that you lost your future or that you lost your dreams....as long as you are a person you can deal with, like I said, it is up to yourself, if you believe in yourself you can do anything.

Taking up the challenge and believing in themselves seems to be the way in which disruption is combated. The positive value participants assign to their action is indicated in the paradox that on a personal level paternity is nonnegotiable, whereas on a greater societal level it is talked about as something which is evaded.

Lutho: that is why you see so many children without fathers because some people don't want responsibility.

It seems that taking responsibility is framed as a rare event within the contexts of the participants. In fact, as the literature reviewed demonstrates, men are experienced primarily as absent and neglectful (Morrell, 2004), leaving women to cope on their own with children (Manzini, 2001). Many of the participants affirm their choice to take responsibility in contrast to the behaviour they see in those around them. By distinguishing themselves they seem to be assigning positive value to fatherhood, thus justifying their new identity.

Shifting Focus.

For many of the participants the advent of the baby inspired considerable life change. John and Sizwe relate painful consequences of becoming a father, in that they were rebuked by their religious communities and excluded from certain activities. Other participants talk about having to stop seeing friends, going out drinking and breaking off relationships with other girls. All of the participants talk about a redistribution of focus following becoming a father. The participants talk about how they began to see life through the lense of '*me + child*'.

Sizwe: everything I am doing I am doing it for her. Because I don't want her to suffer, that is a big change in my life, ya.

Becoming a father seems to be transformative, in a positive way. Many of the participants talk about gaining strength and finding joy through this new role. Most often this shift in focus is spoken about in terms of having to allocate money to the child.

Sanda: It is struggling financially. A baby is expensive, a baby is expensive. I learnt that the hard way. Haai, from nappies, food, clothes, medication, everything. It is expensive.

One of the most frequently drawn upon cultural resources to appear in the narratives is that of 'father as provider'. Without exception, the financial aspect of father identity is mentioned as the greatest life change by the young men. The majority of the participants talk about how their spending has changed to incorporate the child and how this often leaves them with no money for themselves. This was spoken about both in present and future terms, instating a temporal continuity which establishes the role and responsibility of the father as ongoing. All the participants mention the struggles associated with paying for the child.

This is consistent with other research which indicates that young fathers feel enormous pressure to provide financially for their children (Glikman, 2004; Swartz & Bhana, 2009). In fact, the financial implications and reduced educational and professional opportunities associated with fatherhood are often cited as a reason for denying paternity (Kaufman et al., 2001). In these narratives the expectation to provide financially appears to be the sole responsibility of fathers. Framing fathers as indispensable, as these narratives seem to do, makes being a father a laudable action for the narrator. John, for example, emphasizes the idea of father as financial provider by contrasting the attitude of the mother of his child to his own.

John: I mean she was excited about having a child. And I was like - we are having a child, this is a massive responsibility, how are we going to pay for it kind of thing....trying to find a balance for him and trying to provide for him. That is always a problem for fathers, they struggle, and I see why.

Participants talk about combating disruption by choosing to take responsibility. They talk about facing up to what they have done while holding on to their hopes for the future. As 'responsibility' begins to take form, life focus shifts to providing for the child and dealing with the consequences of parenthood, most markedly the financial struggles. What follows are accounts of how stability is re-established amongst new responsibilities.

Re-establishing stability.

Re-establishing stability appears to be achieved by renegotiating relationships around the performance of their new father identity. Participants cast their families, partners and friends as enabling or impeding forces in being a father. I understood this as their way of indicating to me, the listener, how important fatherhood is to them.

Talking about families.

Families appear to be part of the ongoing practice of fatherhood. Support is mainly provided by the female members of the father's family. These women pay maintenance and contribute money, buy clothes and toys, look after children, and offer advice and emotional support.

Tebogo: There is only one person I can never stop asking for help from, it is my mother.

Mandla: They are giving me so many advices, you see, they are encouraging me the whole time....my best friend it is my sisters, yabo, that is what I say.

By mentioning the supportive role of families the participants are positioning them as part of the process of regaining stability. Existing research highlights mothers and female family members as playing a substantial supportive role (Swartz and Bhana, 2009; Allen & Doherty, 1996). However, families can also impede the process of stabilization. Difficulties between families and the young parents have considerable influence on the participation of the father in the life of the child. Unsupportive families can significantly impede the involvement of young fathers with their children (Gavin et al., 2002; Glikman, 2004; Swartz & Bhana, 2009).

Simon, for example, talks about how intensely emotional arguments and meetings with the mother's family were necessary before he could re-enter the life of his child. In the case of Grant the family of his partner removed her from his contact and would not allow him to see the child for close to a year. For others, such as John, the predominant theme of his narrative is tension between the two families and how this curtails his efforts to be with his child.

John: My parents will be there and her parents will be there and it is always kind of awkward. Because there is also tension and they (my parents) don't want me to take the child. So bonding with the boy is really hard.

Interaction with the mothers' families seems to be fraught with anxiety for the majority of the participants. Families, whether in the form of support or obstacle, appear to be

an important variable in re-establishing stability, as does the relationship with the mother of the child.

Negotiating interaction with partners.

The relationship with partners in the narratives takes one of two forms, either the father is still with his partner or he is separate from her. Half of the participants are still with their partners and the other half have broken up, the pattern of disruption and re-stabilization is negotiated according to how the participants position their partners. The common thread is that in each narrative the participants describe a choice involved in furthering the relationship after the pregnancy, which subsequently affects how they act out their role of father.

Those who are no longer with their partners talk about the breakdown of the relationship. Despite this, they seem insistent on remaining in the lives of their children, which motivates the reparation of interaction with the former partners.

Sanda: but we are not together anymore and the only thing that brings us together is the baby. You have to get along for the sake of the baby...

The participants are acutely aware of factors which may influence their relationships with the mothers of their children. Things such as getting involved with them again or being involved with other people in the future are carefully considered in terms of a possible compromise in the relationship with the mother and consequently influence the relationship with the child.

Simon: I just don't want to like get intimate or emotionally involved with her again and like distract me from where I really am at. And like imagine we have a little fight or something happens again and then I will be like reluctant to like go to my daughter because of something like that man. I wouldn't want to rob her of that man.

The nature of the relationship between the young parents seems to significantly influence the way in which participants fulfil their role of father. The impact of partner relationship on father involvement is also supported by other research on young fathers (Gavin et al, 2002; Johnson, 2001; Futris & Schoppe-Sullivan, 2007). For the participants still in a relationship with the mothers of their children the re-establishing of stability is a

constant, ongoing shuffle which takes place within the relationship. Stability is jointly re-established by sharing the responsibilities of a child and maintaining the relationship

Lutho: and since then (the birth), ya, ups and downs, ups and downs. Our relationship is very tight, we love being together, when it is just the three of us.

Recounting the stories of their interaction with their former partners is perhaps a way participants convey how important it is to them to be present in their children's lives. The ups and downs that characterize the relationships between the young parents illustrate that the lived experience of the participants is felt to be difficult and tumultuous. In fact, when Sanda was asked what story he would tell of his experience of fatherhood he said:

Sanda: I will start from the beginning from matric and the kinds of things that stand out for me. And then working weekends while I am still at school and then the bond that we share now. Like after the storms and the bond we share now. And the dispute between families and the good and the bad. And the good and the bad, the bad as well.

The tumultuous experience the participants speak about reminds me that story-telling is an order and meaning-making device. One narrative in particular encapsulates this. Simon describes his journey by tracking back and forth between "*feeling like a no good person, like a bad guy,*" and pulling himself up by the hope of being a father to his daughter. These are stories of an ongoing journey; a continuous up-and-down resides within the dominant progressive plot of these young men's narratives.

Renegotiating Identity.

As the young men talk about how they have recovered from the shock of the pregnancy and dealt with unexpected change and new responsibilities, a new identity of *father* begins to emerge. The participants give the impression of justifying the propriety of this identity despite their age by distinguishing themselves from others and emphasizing the importance of a father in a child's life.

Wanting something different.

For many young fathers the primary motivation to play a participatory role in their children's lives is a desire to be different from their own fathers and from the things that they

see in their communities, something which appears in other research too (Allen & Doherty, 1996; Swartz & Bhana, 2009).

Tebogo: I am trying to make it different from my own experience of life. I used to not get much support like from my father you see. So I am always comparing myself to my father.

Families often seem to provide the participants with a negative point of reference. Many of the young men mention absent, neglectful and abusive fathers as the motivation for their involvement with their children. This is consistent with research which found that the parenting intentions of young fathers are powerfully motivated by having experienced absent or abusive fathers themselves (Allen & Doherty, 1996; Glikman, 2004; Swartz & Bhana, 2009).

One of the ways in which these young men seem to validate their practice of fatherhood is through giving their children what they did not have. Throughout these narratives the young men are drawing on the cultural resource of provider and protector discourses of fatherhood. These systems of statements serve to distinguish them from other absent or abusive fathers. Although discourses of father as financial provider dominate, most of the participants say that providing financially is not adequate fulfilment of being a father.

Tebogo: but some of them they just can't manage to be with the babies, some of them they just send money and leave and send money and leave. So that is not 100% support. Because sending money that is like nothing you know. For support you have to be there, like carrying your baby, changing nappies, washing your baby. That is support you see.

Many of the participants talk about how they are different from other young men. Their narratives challenge neglect, abuse and irresponsibility of young men. Some of the participants were adamant about the detrimental effects of partner abuse and expressed their disapproval of it.

Lutho: even abuse, us guys, it is not ok for us guys to abuse women.

For the participants, becoming involved in physical disputes with their partners is a position they have actively chosen to oppose, perhaps deciding to defy a stereotypical masculinity. Research supports the participants' observations that gender-based powerlessness and abuse within relationships is rife (Jewkes et al., 2001; Varga, 1997). These young men seem to show how their identities as fathers are negotiated within a social context. By defining others as 'bad fathers', the participants are defining themselves as a positive contrast, showing how they *are* fathers despite their age.

Role of the father.

Much of the identity of fatherhood appears to be constructed through reference to what the role of a father is in a child's life. These narratives appear to construct a father as essential to the well-being of a child, lending legitimacy to the choice of taking responsibility. Validating this new identity of father, and accepting the life changes that accompany it is achieved through talking about the importance of the presence of a father in the life of a child. In each narrative the different functions of the father are set against the backdrop of the intense emotion that the young fathers feel for their children.

Lutho: I can't even explain how it is...I can't tell you. I was very very very happy when I saw her taking her first steps.... I love that girl very much, I love her a lot. I would give anything, anything just to be with her.

The care that the fathers feel for their children is clearly displayed in the emotionally charged language they use to describe how they feel towards them. Evidence from other studies also points to the poignant emotional connection that young fathers feel for their children (Glikman, 2004; Swartz & Bhana, 2009). These narratives make *being* a father important for the development of the child, thereby justifying their choice of this role.

The current literature assumes that young people are ill-equipped to provide adequate parenting; with young parenthood is often referred to as "a child having a child" (Mkhwanazi, 2006). Tebogo directly challenges this construction in his narrative, explaining that the label of "young father" is inappropriate and that attaching it to him is a way of classifying him pejoratively.

Tebogo: what I am is a human being having the responsibility of another human being.

This insight demonstrates how in this research I have assumed meanings of ‘young’ fatherhood to be fundamentally different from ‘adult’ fatherhood. In the interviews I felt a very real sense of the participants trying to redirect my focus from ‘young’ to ‘father’.

The parenting role of the father appears to be referred to primarily in terms of financial provision, protection and guidance, physical care, and emotional support. The discourses of father-as-provider and protector are once again drawn upon when the participants describe the role they take in their child’s life.

Tebogo: Being a father you don’t have money so you have to work.

Furthering education and securing a job are central aspects of the father-as-financial-provider discourse. For young men financial and employment priorities change considerably when they have a child (Allen & Doherty, 1996; Glikman, 2004; Swartz & Bhana, 2009). Participants talk about attending school or university during the week and then having to work on the weekends in order to have enough money. In many cases supporting the child financially allows the participant ‘access’ to the identity of father, which begins with the payment of damages. Planning for the future of the child is an important aspect of this financial role, framed as an expression of care for the child.

Fathers are spoken about as protectors and guiding forces who will ensure that the child follows the right path. Lutho and Sizwe talk about how the negative influence of families has the potential to spoil a child, and how a father performs a protective function against this. Sizwe removed his child from the family context of his partner because there were tensions in that family. He also speaks about needing to establish his own home with his child to keep her away from the influences of alcoholic sisters. The motivating force behind performing protective and guiding roles is expressed as the desire for their children to have a better life than they themselves experienced.

Simon: like all this bad that has happened to me, then if I could prevent some of it for her then I would really feel like a dad really.

In many cases the contrast is made against people who grew up without fathers and the negative effects this can have, such as promiscuity, drinking and drug abuse.

Simon: I took a step back and realized how important it is for a daughter to have a father. Cos like most of the girls I have dated have father issues.

The importance of a father in the child's life is signified by this function of being a guide. Simon draws on the cultural discourse of women with 'father issues'. He is perhaps attributing the difficulties he has encountered in relationships to the absent fathers of his partners. Simon conveys the idea that his presence in his daughter's life will prevent the development of these kinds of 'issues'.

Although offering guidance is talked about as central to performing the role of a father the participants also express a desire for their children to make their own choices, in terms of studying or choosing which home to live in. Part of offering guidance is giving the child a positive reference point.

Lutho: so you also have to be a good role model and be a good example to your child.

Sizwe: so I must make sure that everything that I do in front of her is good so that she can learn from me.

Almost all of the participants spoke about being a good role model and a good example to their child as an act of parenting. This notion of being a good example as a father is present in other research (Swartz & Bhana, 2009). The majority of the participants mention that they cannot tell their children to not do something that they themselves have done. For the young men themselves it would seem that "being an example" for their child means that they have to be very aware of what they do in their lives from this point onwards. In terms of caring for the child's needs there are two distinct stories. One perspective, from six of the participants, is that the role of father includes looking after the needs of the baby - cleaning, washing, feeding. Sizwe, in fact, explicitly names his caring as taking a mothering role.

Sizwe: but ja, to her I can be a father, and a mother I think, I can be a mother and a father.

For these participants, caring for their child is an important part of being able to own the identity of father. Most research highlights the role of fathers as exclusively financial (see

Swartz and Bhana, 2009); however, other research has shown that men in caring roles have often been rendered invisible because they do not conform to traditional gender roles (Montgomery et al., 2006). These participants show that even young men routinely challenge masculine stereotypes by providing primary care roles.

The second perspective that the narratives present is that it is the role of the mother to provide the care of practical needs. In these cases financial needs are seen as the responsibility of the father, with active parenting occurring only later in life.

John: it is the mother that is the main comforter.

Thabo: and her mother does all the things, nappies, make her sleep, sing lalababa.

For these participants, the role of father is circumscribed to specific tasks which conform to traditional configurations of gender roles. These different perspectives once again show how dominant and subversive scripts are plaited into identity through narrative. This interweaving attests to the complexity of identity construction and the transformative power that assuming fatherhood can have:

Tebogo: I used to say that those things I will never do but changing a baby nappy, washing a baby, I didn't know how to do those things but I just did it because it is something that I care for.

The notion of care taking extends to providing emotional support for children. Providing emotional support is a prominent feature of the 'being there' discourse employed in these narratives.

Simon: I would like to be there for her and provide emotional support and grow this bond....come hug her daddy, come cry by her daddy, like really depend on me.

Giving their children a place to find emotional comfort challenges the conventional understanding of fathers as emotionally absent, positioning the participants as having the potential to be 'good' fathers. Sanda even mentions establishing a friendship with his son so that his child can speak to him about anything.

The different roles that the participants see as part of the fatherhood are often spoken about in a temporal sense, with a lot of reference to past and future needs of the children and what this means for them as fathers. This leaves the stories open ended, with most of the participants saying that they don't know what the future will bring.

Sizwe: I don't know what will happen afterwards, I don't know. Maybe there are still more (challenges) coming, but I am willing to face them. Even the ones that are coming I will face them. I think I am stronger than I was.

Overall this analysis and discussion has attempted to follow the narrative pattern the participants used to structure their stories. The participants talked about the disruptive power of the pregnancy, cultural norms and the influence of families. Navigating the effects of this disruption seems to be achieved through taking responsibility, while distinguishing themselves from young men who do not. The new responsibility entails shifting focus from themselves to the child, resulting in changes and challenges, especially financial ones. Re-establishing stability appears to be bound up in the constant ups and downs in relationships with parents and the mother of the child, which influence the degree of involvement with their children. In constructing a new identity the participants set themselves apart from other young men and their own fathers and tell stories of being a provider, protector, guide, carer and an emotional pillar.

Conclusion

What emerges from this analysis and discussion is a picture of men who contend with dominant discourses of masculinity, at times dipping into aspects of this identity and at other times challenging them outright. These narratives are ultimately a valorisation of fatherhood and a consequent justification for taking this role. These young men show love, care and concern for their children and have invested considerably in their identities as fathers. Through these stories we encounter men who are willing to sacrifice, to change, to be present, to protect, to care and to teach. These narratives challenge the narrow view of masculinity as neglectful, abusive and irresponsible; and affirm the participants potential to be different.

This study attempts to lessen the existing gap in research around young fathers. It highlights how young men talk about fatherhood and what aspects of this experience are most important to them. This perspective brings into the open the interplay between dominant and subversive discourses of masculinity and fatherhood in these young men's experiences,

documenting their awareness of their own socio-cultural context and what this entails for these identities. These participants also show a pragmatic approach to relationships, in service of being a father. This is coupled with an expression of the capacity and desire to care for their children in ‘mothering’ ways. In contrast to existing literature, the participants choose not to dwell on the risk factors that caused the pregnancy, and tend to focus on the positive outcomes of becoming a father. The reality of positive masculinities opens the possibility of including men in work around gender inequality.

Theoretically, this research indicates the complex process of identity construction and the possible contradictory discourses individuals draw on to inform their identities. Furthermore, this research challenges the assumptions about ‘early parenthood’ as a social ill, and more deeply, and about the moral implications of adolescence as a discrete life phase. Methodologically, the narrative approach adopted has been particularly successful in allowing the voices of the participants to emerge, understanding them as actors in social systems of meaning. Practically, this work extends the possibility for gender equality work to include men, providing fuel for future research.

For future research, increased focus on young fathers is recommended, perhaps with more attention to the dyadic interaction between partners in early parenthood. The addition of longitudinal studies and research aimed at developing interventions which focus on supporting young fathers could also be undertaken.

Time constraints imposed by the year-long duration of the Honours course limit the possibilities for an extensive exploration of the research question. More time and resources would have permitted an opportunity to conduct more than one interview with each participant. Given more time, a deeper and more nuanced understanding of young fatherhood may have been possible. Participants also would have been made more comfortable by interviews conducted in their first language.

Despite these limitations this study challenges narrow stereotypes, specifically about young fathers, but generally about young men. These narratives speak to the possibility for transformation, representing a possibility for ways of negotiating life challenges which do not include violence or avoidance. I conclude with a quote from Lutho, who said that if he could say one thing to young men it would be: “Hurting each other is just not okay, you must make South Africa a good place for everyone to live, not just yourself.”

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Appendix A

Transcription Details

The speaker's words are written down verbatim, including grammatical errors. As is consistent with the theoretical orientation of this work the narrative quality of the excerpts has been maintained (Reissman, 2008). For this reason short pauses are not indicated, with only longer ones being designated as follows: (pause)

In the excerpts used in the above text clarification is sometimes needed about who the participants are referring to. This is provided in parentheses within the excerpt as follows: tension and they (my parents) don't want me.

In the case that discontinuous sentences have been used or some of the transcript has been omitted this is indicated by an ellipsis of four points as follows: with their partners....if you

Appendix B

UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN



Department of Psychology

Narratives of young fatherhood

1. Invitation and purpose

You are invited to take part in a research study about stories of young fatherhood. I am a researcher from the Department of Psychology at University of Cape Town.

Procedures

If you decide to take part in this study, I will ask you do an interview with me.

This interview will take place sometime between the beginning of June and the end of August. I will meet you at a place which is most convenient and comfortable for you. The interview will take maximum 2 hours. The interview will explore your experience of being a young father, I am interested in hearing your story.

2. Risks and Inconveniences

There is slight risk involved in participating in this study. Telling your story might cause some distress for you. In the event that you begin to feel uncomfortable you may stop the interview. You can stop the interview at any point without any negative consequences.

Participating in an interview can be time consuming; however every effort will be made to minimize this inconvenience. The interview will be conducted at a location which is most convenient for you at a time which is most convenient.

3. Benefits

This study will offer you an opportunity to share your story and explore your experience. Your story will help to shed light on how young men experience being fathers and will contribute to outlining a picture of men in South Africa.

4. Privacy and confidentiality

I will make sure that the interview and the resulting transcription will be kept private. Your personal information will be carefully looked after throughout the study. Names and other personal identifiers will not be attached to your information.

If at some point this research is published in an academic journal the researcher will make sure that your name will not be used.

As far as possible the interview will be conducted in a private setting where no one else is present.

5. Money matters

If any costs are incurred through transportation these will be covered by the researcher. Care will be taken to minimize the cost to you but you will not be paid for participating in the study.

Contact details

If you have concerns or questions or even complaints regarding this study please contact the following:

Researcher:

Athena Enderstein

endath001@uct.ac.za

076 27 17 424

Research Supervisor:

Floretta Boonzaier, PhD.

Senior Lecturer

Department of Psychology

University of Cape Town

South Africa

Tel. +2721 6503429

Fax. +2721 6504104

6. Signatures

(Participant's name)_____has been informed of the nature and purpose of the procedures described above including any risks involved in it performance. He has been given time to ask any questions and these question and these questions have been answered to the best of the researcher's ability.

Researcher's Signature Date

I have been informed about this research study and understand its purpose, possible benefits, risks, and inconveniences. I agree to take part in this research as a participant. I know that I am free to withdraw this consent and quit this project at any time, and that doing so will not cause me any penalty.

Participant's Signature Date

Declaration

1. I know that plagiarism is wrong. Plagiarism is to use another's work and pretend that it is one's own.
2. I have used the convention for citation and referencing. Each contribution to, and quotation in, this essay/report/project/..... from the work(s) of other people has been attributed, and has been cited and referenced.
3. This essay/report/project/..... is my own work.
4. I have not allowed, and will not allow, anyone to copy my work with the intention of passing it off as his or her own work.
5. I acknowledge that copying someone else's assignment or essay, or part of it, is wrong, and declare that this is my own work.

Signature _____