

BLACK MINeworkERS' CONCEPTUALISATIONS OF FATHERHOOD: A  
SOCIOLOGICAL EXPLORATION IN THE SOUTH AFRICAN GOLDMINING  
INDUSTRY

by

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I declare that BLACK MINeworkers' CONCEPTUALISATIONS OF FATHERHOOD: A SOCIOLOGICAL EXPLORATION IN THE SOUTH AFRICAN GOLDMINING INDUSTRY is my own work and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

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## ABSTRACT

The main question posed in this study is: *How do black mineworkers in the goldmining industry conceptualise and experience fatherhood in present-day South Africa?* The following four subsidiary research questions were formulated to address this:

- *How do the respondents characterise fatherhood?*
- *What are the respondents' own recollections of being fathered?*
- *How do migrant and resident respondents' experiences of fatherhood differ?*
- *What influence do biological mothers or female partners have on father-child relationships as described by the respondents?*

The scripting perspective chosen underscores this study because it is a multilevel approach that takes the fathers' social milieu into account without ignoring their agency. This perspective focuses on three levels – cultural scenarios, interpersonal and intrapsychic scripting.

During 2002 a qualitative study was undertaken by way of in-depth interviews conducted with 30 respondents, with ten being re-interviewed in 2003. These interviews were augmented with general observations and fact-finding interviews conducted with key informants.

In terms of the first research question regarding the way in which the respondents characterise fatherhood, it was found that the breadwinner role is salient. However, traces of patriarchy and the so-called “new fatherhood” are often intertwined with the economic aspect of fatherhood.

The respondents' own recollections of being fathered were found to include a stern disciplinarian pattern ("father is like a lion"), a "bad fatherhood" pattern and a "good fatherhood" pattern.

Resident respondents related more involvement with their children compared with migrant respondents, although varying degrees of distant and involved fatherhood could be detected amongst the migrant respondents. Resident respondents conveyed active involvement in father-child activities such as giving guidance to children and playing with them.

Some respondents have little contact with those children they fathered with a woman other than their current partner. Female partners tend to hinder any type of relationship with children born as a result of adulterous relationships but children born from previous relationships may be taken care of. However, respondents who openly stated double standards regarding sexual practices for men and women tend to take care of all their biological children and show little concern for their wives' views.

**Key terms:** fatherhood; mineworkers; scripting theory; migrancy; family; masculinity; southern African mining industry; qualitative research; migrant workers; patriarchy.

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### ***List of abbreviations***

AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
AMWU	African Mine Workers' Union
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
HSRC	Human Sciences Research Council
NRC	Native Recruiting Corporation
NUM	National Union of Mineworkers
RDP	Reconstruction and Development Programme
TEBA	The Employment Bureau of Africa
UASA	United Association of South Africa
WNLA	Witwatersrand Native Labour Association (also referred to as WENELA)

# **Chapter 1**

## **Introduction**

### **1.1 Statement of the research problem**

This study focuses on the conceptualisations of fatherhood of black mineworkers within the context of the goldmining industry in South Africa. From the late nineteenth century the goldmining industry of South Africa has been associated with the notorious forced migrant labour system. When this system was at its peak, the majority of black mineworkers saw their families, and hence their children, on average only once a year, while for the rest of the year the mineworkers lived in single sex hostels on the mines. However, various changes took place in the political and labour arenas in South Africa towards the end of the twentieth century, and these changes in turn led to practical adjustments in the everyday lives of black mineworkers, for example, black mineworkers today have more flexible leave schedules; they have various housing options, and travel between their workplaces and homes has become less cumbersome. This in turn has led to a further diversification of family and household arrangements. The fact that not all black mineworkers have to live in the single sex hostels anymore implies that, in certain cases, contact with their children may be on a daily basis if they live with their children. Yet, many mineworkers see their children less frequently, and in certain cases, still only once a year. Using such diverse domestic conditions as the context of reference, the aim of this study is to explore the way in which black mineworkers experience fatherhood. The general research question of this study is, therefore: **How do black mineworkers in the goldmining industry conceptualise and experience fatherhood in present-day South Africa?**

The research focus on *black* mineworkers is due to historical reasons: it has been well documented that black and white mineworkers had very different experiences

as workers on the goldmines (see for example Moodie [1994: 49] and Beittel [1992b: 197ff] for the strict racial divisions on the mines). The goldmines operated within a society that emphasised racial categories, and the mining industry thrived on the cheap labour provided by black migrant workers. The political and economic changes in the late twentieth century in South Africa had a dramatic effect on the lives of these exploited black mineworkers, whose lives had been dictated by legal restrictions. Racial categories impacted on the lives of all people living in South Africa during the apartheid era because everybody was assigned to a particular racial group. The historical effect of these racial categories still impacts on the lives of mineworkers in present-day South Africa. In this study the term “black” therefore stems from the racially divided context of the time.

The following four aspects will be the focus of this study and they are addressed by four subsidiary research questions:

Although fatherhood has become a popular area of research, there is no universally agreed upon definition of the term. Researchers distinguish between biological, economic (breadwinner) and social fatherhood (Burgess & Russell 2003; Morrell 2006). Not all biological fathers are involved in their children’s lives, although conversely many men, despite never having fathered children, take on social responsibilities towards children such as living with them, teaching them and playing with them. Other men never spend time with their biological children, but do contribute financially towards their upkeep and/or provide shelter/houses for them – in other words, they fulfil the economic role of fatherhood. Bearing the different aspects of fatherhood in mind the first of the four subsidiary research questions of this study is: **How do the respondents characterise fatherhood?** The focus is therefore on the definitions of fatherhood as provided by the respondents.

Certain of the respondents were themselves the sons of migrant workers, while some of them either never knew a father or were raised by more than one father

figure. Their childhood recollections were explored to find out whether men consciously or unconsciously redefine the fatherhood practices to which they were exposed. This resulted in the formulation of the second subsidiary research question: **What are the respondents' own recollections of being fathered?**

The mining industry has undergone drastic changes over the course of more than a century. At present certain men live with their families (or at least some family members) on a daily basis, while others see their families only when they take leave (either on a monthly or an annual basis, or at other intervals). In order to take cognisance of these variations, the third subsidiary research question was formulated as follows: **How do migrant and resident respondents' experiences of fatherhood differ?** The aim in this case is to gather information about the experiences of men who live with their children, and to compare this with the experiences of men who live away from their children for the greater part of their working lives.

Research on fatherhood in various contexts (see Bruce et al 57; Marsiglio 1995b: 86; Seltzer & Brandreth 1995: 168) reveals the importance of the relationship between the male and female partners in determining father-child relationships. The fourth subsidiary research question thus asks: **What influence do biological mothers or female partners have on father-child relationships as described by the respondents?**

## **1.2     *Relevance of this investigation***

The practical and theoretical value of this study is considered by looking into research into fatherhood in general in South Africa, and into research into fatherhood as it relates to the goldmining sector in particular; as well as at comparable studies on fatherhood in other parts of the world.

*1.2.1 Filling the gap*

The last three decades have seen a proliferation of studies on fatherhood internationally (Cowan & Bronstein 1988: 341; Marsiglio 1995a: 1; Lewis & Lamb 2004: 45), and, despite the fact that research in this area is lagging behind in South Africa, the body of research is increasing steadily. Although social research focusing exclusively on fatherhood was rare in South Africa certain anthropological work has been carried out and provides an insight into fatherhood by analysing the effects of migrancy on family and tribal life. In these studies patriarchy, fatherhood and general parenting patterns are analysed from the vantage point of specific tribes (see, for example, Harries [1994] on Mozambique; Murray [1981] on Lesotho and Mayer & Mayer [1974] on the Xhosa-speaking people in the Eastern Cape). Apart from these in-depth studies, other studies carried out in urban settings also describe certain aspects of fatherhood. The work of Ramphele (1993) on hostel dwellers, for instance, illustrates the way in which space constraints may force changing patterns of behaviour amongst men in respect of their children. Jones (1990) also presents parenting practices in a hostel environment from the vantage point of children, as does the work of Ramphele (1996). Although the work in these studies has contributed to the understanding of fatherhood within the South African context, the primary aim was not to gain an understanding of fatherhood per se.

From the beginning of the twenty-first century there has been an increase in research focusing specifically on fatherhood within South Africa. For example Smit (2000a: 656-657) undertook research into the role of white South African men in the household and as fathers. In Smit's study a non-probability sample of 400 respondents was drawn in the Gauteng province, and a pattern emerged similar to that found in many Western societies, namely a trend towards greater involvement on the part of fathers. Research into fatherhood amongst black males provides some indications that a similar pattern to that found by Smit is developing amongst young, black, male professionals (Morrell 2001: 32).<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> See a more detailed discussion of South African literature on fatherhood in *Chapter 3*.



The launch in 2003 of the fatherhood project by the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) placed fatherhood firmly on the main research agenda in South Africa. This initiative on the part of the HSRC has drawn considerable media attention, for example, through a travelling photograph exhibition. For the first time in South Africa a conference focusing exclusively on fatherhood was held in 2004 in Durban (HSRC: <http://www.hsrc.ac.za/fatherhood/index.html>). This has resulted in heightened public awareness of the different aspects of fatherhood. In 2006 a book entitled, *Baba? Men and fatherhood in South Africa* was published by the HSRC – the first time in South Africa that various studies focusing on fatherhood had been drawn together.

Therefore this particular study contributes to the growing literature on fatherhood in South Africa, but within the specific context of the goldmining industry. To my knowledge no research has ever been done specifically on fatherhood amongst black mineworkers. The significance of this study therefore lies primarily in researching a category of men who have been underresearched with regards to fatherhood.

### *1.2.2 Practical value*

The mining industry is a well-researched area in Southern Africa, but the focus has been mainly on the “world of work” (cf. Burawoy 1972; Wilson 1972; Van Onselen 1976; Gordon 1977; Lang 1986; Crush, Jeeves & Yudelman 1991; Allen 1992, 2003a, 2003b; James 1992; Moodie 1994; Crush et al 2001). The family life of mineworkers has occasionally been the object of research (cf. Mbatha 1960; Clarke & Ngobese 1975; Erasmus 1979; Moodie 1992; Hanks & Liprie 1993; Harries 1994; O’Laughlin 1998; Alexander 2001), but the issue of fatherhood, especially from the point of view of the father, has received little attention. Although men have therefore often been the subject of research within the goldmining industry, it was seldom in relational terms.

Whereas De Beauvoir (1949) lamented the fact that women were often primarily perceived as wives, sisters and daughters, men are seldom analysed in terms of these relational capacities. Yet these relations are significant on various levels, not least because they affect the physical and emotional wellbeing of children and partners. For example, since many mineworkers are the sole breadwinners of families, their views on children may determine whether children are clothed and fed, and whether it is possible to afford school fees. Moreover, knowledge about the mineworkers' conceptualisations of fatherhood may provide an insight into the importance of men in other matters affecting children, such as children's career aspirations and prospects, the affection and concern fathers may or may not have for children; in short, the degree of importance accorded to children by their fathers.

The housing policies of the mining industry determine the type of housing mineworkers are able to afford. The type of housing chosen by mineworkers influences whether or not they will be able to live with their children, and some of the implications of these arrangements will be analysed in this study. On a practical level this study may be used within the mining sector by trade unions and mine management when considering housing policies for the future.<sup>2</sup> Even though this study focuses on the goldmining sector, other mining sectors (such as the booming platinum mining industry) are faced with similar inherited practices, and the findings of this study may therefore be applied to the mining industry in general.

Although this research focuses on fatherhood amongst mineworkers who often do not reside with their children, residential divisions amongst families is not an uncommon phenomenon in many societies. There are many reasons why men do not live with their families – these include military service, imprisonment, seasonal

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<sup>2</sup> Copies of this study will be given to Harmony and the National Union of Mineworkers respectively to facilitate this contribution.

work, and divorce (cf. Wilson 1972: 120-143; Manchuelle 1997: 2; Rabe 2001: 277-278; Bustamante 2005; Roy 2006). Furthermore, it is not always possible for families to relocate to the areas where job opportunities are available. The result is that families are often residentially divided, and usually in such cases children live with their mothers rather than with their fathers. The main reason in industrialised countries for the residential division of families because of work commitments is that more women have entered the job market instead of remaining full-time housewives, and that heterosexual couples may not find suitable employment close to one another. Nowadays women are less likely than their counterparts in previous years to leave their employment in order to live with their partners, as the couple may need both salaries. In addition, women are becoming more career-oriented. The nonresidential father is therefore not an uncommon phenomenon, and this includes nonresidential fathers living away from their families because of work commitments. Many children therefore live away from their fathers, and the insights gained from research into migrant mine fathers may cast light on comparable research into fathers not residing with their children on a daily basis within other contexts.

Similarly, knowledge gained from fathers within the mining sector who do live with their families may be compared with other studies on residential fathers. This study therefore has wider implications than merely South African mineworkers as fathers.

This study is thus of importance not merely because there is a dearth of knowledge on mineworkers as fathers, but because it may be used to inform policy, the results may be compared with research into fatherhood in other settings in order to enhance insights into fatherhood generally, and because of the sociological significance of fatherhood for the wellbeing of children.

*1.2.3 Theoretical value*

The research questions of this study imply that the views of fathers on fatherhood have been explored without providing respondents with a narrow definition of fatherhood. Views on a caring mother who should be financially supported by her children's father were often promoted in the 1950s, 1960s and even 1970s, when the nuclear (or conjugal) family was seen as the family of preference, as this type of family was believed to be well suited to industrialised societies (cf. Viljoen 1996). The latter view has now been denounced as middle-class, Westernised ideology and not culturally sensitive or even practical for many people. The aim in this study is, however, not to define "good" or "bad" fatherhood in terms of some benchmark of fatherhood, but rather to search for insight into and understanding of the way migrant and resident men in the goldmining industry view fatherhood. What do they consider to be a good father? How does the relationship with his children's mother influence a mineworker's views and actions towards his children? How do men conceptualise fatherhood as sons (when they were children), and how do they conceptualise fatherhood as fathers (now that they have children)? These questions are explained and formalised by the four subsidiary research questions which were previously discussed.

The term "motherhood" is plagued by similar problems to the term "fatherhood" when attempting to define the term. Walker (1995: 424) states that "there appears to be a powerful but unexamined assumption at work, that motherhood is so familiar an institution and experience that it does not need rigorous definition". Biological motherhood is often assumed to be natural, and biological mothers are mostly perceived to be the "real" mothers. Downe (2004: 165-178) reflects on this assumption by illuminating the reactions of people to her own status as a stepmother. She had to encounter various beliefs that she may not be regarded as a genuine mother as she had not gone through the rites of biological motherhood. Accordingly she pleads for acceptance of wider categories of motherhood.

Just as it is not possible to reduce a definition of motherhood to mere biological motherhood, neither is it possible to describe fatherhood in terms of biological fatherhood only. The economic aspect of fathering (the breadwinner role) as well as social fatherhood (taking care of and/or interacting regularly with children in a meaningful way) should also be distinguished (Burgess & Russell 2003; Morrell 2006). In this study these three aspects of fathering (biological, social and economic) will thus be analysed in order to contribute to a wider conceptualisation of fatherhood.

### **1.3     *Approaching a study of fatherhood***

The theoretical and methodological approach of this study will be outlined below by focusing on the scripting perspective and on the qualitative approach respectively.

#### **1.3.1    *Theoretical approach***

In this study, the scripting theory will be applied to the study of fatherhood in a way that is similar to Marsiglio's (1995b) application of this theory in the United States of America. The scripting theory was chosen for this study on fatherhood as it takes into account the fact that fathers live in worlds where there are certain cultural expectations and norms regarding fatherhood (i.e. cultural scenarios). There are also practical circumstances and relationships influencing the fathers (i.e. interpersonal scripting); and a personal way of expressing themselves as fathers (i.e. intrapsychic scripting). The term "script" (as applied in the scripting approach) is used to explain the ways in which people understand their own behaviour (Simon & Gagnon 1986: 98). This approach is thus well suited to direct the research questions exploring the way in which men conceptualise fatherhood, because the approach takes into account the social milieu of fathers without ignoring the agency of these fathers.

### *1.3.2 Methodological approach*

The nature of the research questions requires that in-depth and nuanced information be obtained from the mineworker fathers. Such information requires contextual qualitative research methods, and therefore the in-depth interview was chosen as an appropriate research tool. The interview is ideally suited for such an enquiry, as it involves a flexible method whereby specific themes may be addressed; while at the same time allowing the interviewees to add their own views and experiences at any time (cf. Denzin 1989: 102-103; Mason 2002: 62-63; Neuman 2003: 390-392).

Fieldwork for this study was undertaken during 2002 and 2003 at a mineshaft (Cooke 3, at Harmony, Randfontein) southwest of Johannesburg. In 2002 I conducted 30 in-depth interviews with mineworkers – at times with the help of translators. Ten of the original 30 men were then re-interviewed in 2003, again at times with the help of translators. I transcribed all the interviews together with my fieldwork notes within a week of conducting the interviews.<sup>3</sup> These interviews were augmented by general observations and fact finding interviews with key informants.

I did not provide a definition of fatherhood during these interviews, but asked probing questions to ascertain the respondents' understanding of fatherhood. I focused on aspects such as which children they regarded as their responsibility and their definition of a good father, and obtained descriptions of interaction between themselves and their children. From these answers depictions of fatherhood emerged that formed the basis for further discussion.

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<sup>3</sup> Because of the long time periods that elapsed between the interviews and finalising the thesis I stayed in contact with the mining industry during 2004 and 2005 by attending a mining conference in 2004 and studying the newest agreements on housing between the major trade unions and the Chamber of Mines. Although the interviews were conducted during 2002 and 2003 little has changed in the mining sector during this period with regard to housing. One of the significant changes in the mining sector is the growing numbers of female mineworkers of which Harmony is a forerunner, but since these women are mostly from the immediate mining environment, their presence does not impact significantly on the housing policy. The slow pace of change in this respect in the mining industry implies that conclusions drawn from data have an extended period of validity.

#### **1.4 Outline of the thesis**

*Chapter 2* of this study provides an historical overview of the goldmining industry in South Africa, and the way in which this industry has impacted on the family lives of mineworkers. Three broad historical periods have been identified, the first of which encompasses the development of the goldmining industry from 1886-1971. The main gold reef of the Witwatersrand was discovered in 1886, and the development of the mining industry in the early years and the entrenchment of labour relations during this period have been outlined. The second period begins in 1972, from which time the gold price was determined by market forces alone. The impact of longer labour contracts on the family lives of mineworkers is highlighted in this section. The last period commences in 1994, when the new democratically elected government came to power in South Africa. I have made use of a literature review to focus on the impact of labour and political decisions on family life during these periods.

*Chapter 3* contains an analysis of the concept of fatherhood, starting with an outline of the distinctions between biological, economic and social fatherhood. This study is guided theoretically by the scripting perspective. This perspective consists of three aspects, namely the cultural scenario, interpersonal scripting and intrapsychic scripting. The discussion of these three aspects is interwoven with a literature review on broad themes of fatherhood.

The methodology used in this study is described in *Chapter 4*, beginning with an explanation of the qualitative basis of the study. Thereafter the research design is discussed with a brief description of the research environment, the sampling method used, in-depth interviews, the data analysis employed and the validity of the study. This is followed by a reflection on the field process – a discussion which includes ethical considerations, the researcher as an outsider, and the role of the translators. The chapter concludes with an overview of the research setting.

The research questions *How do the respondents characterise fatherhood?* and *'What are the respondents' own collections of being fathered?'* are addressed in *Chapter 5* by focusing on the relationship between the respondents and their own fathers/father figures. The respondents' reported experiences of their own fathers/father figures are discussed, and certain fatherhood patterns identified.

The research questions *How do the respondents characterise fatherhood?; How do the migrant and resident respondents' experiences of fatherhood differ? – and What influence do biological mothers or female partners have on father-child relationships as described by the respondents?* are taken up in *Chapter 6* which focuses on the migrants who were interviewed, and in *Chapter 7* which concentrates on men who reside with their families. Household patterns and the relation of these patterns to fatherhood practices are also taken into consideration. In both chapters the fatherhood patterns identified in *Chapter 5* are further explored. Expressions of good fatherhood are also analysed and compared in these chapters. The ways in which fatherhood is experienced on a practical level are described and compared. In *Chapters 6 and 7* the reported relationships with wives, girlfriends, ex-wives and ex-girlfriends are scrutinised on an individual level, with particular emphasis on the ways in which these relationships impact on fatherhood. From these individually reported relationships, certain patterns are identified and analysed further.

In *Chapter 8* I return to the research questions and link them with the patterns identified in the previous three chapters. Comparisons with other research in the field are also summarised in this chapter. The limitations of this study are analysed together with suggestions for future research and policy recommendations.



## **Chapter 2**

### **A historical orientation to the goldmining industry in South Africa**

#### **2.1 Introduction**

Mining has been associated with Africa since prehistoric times (Lang 1986: 1-3), but it was the main gold reef that was discovered in 1886 on the Witwatersrand that changed the face of the (South African) landscape and the economy forever. Smaller gold deposits had been found in 1873 at Pilgrim's Rest and Barberton in the Eastern Transvaal (now Mpumalanga) in 1884, and in the late 1940s in the Orange Free State (now the Free State), but the discovery of this major reef in the Witwatersrand very soon made South Africa the largest gold producer in the world (Wilson 1972: 14; Wilson & Thompson 1982: 146; Allen 1992: 132; Davenport & Saunders 2000: 95; 607; 615). However, although South Africa is the largest supplier of gold in the world it has only "low-grade gold-bearing ore". The profitable mining of such low quality gold deposits was made possible by vast numbers of poorly paid, unskilled workers (Crush et al 1991: 1) the majority of whom were black.<sup>4</sup> Without these workers South Africa would have been only a minor supplier of gold. These workers built the wealth of South Africa without detracting significantly from its profits.

The aim of this chapter is to focus attention on the wide-ranging implications of the goldmining industry on the black workers' family lives and fatherhood. These workers were housed in single sex hostels, away from their families, for the duration of their contracts with the mines. The length of these contracts varied, as will be shown below. The impact of these working conditions on men in their roles as sons, fathers and husbands/partners has been downplayed by mine

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<sup>4</sup> In 1982, for instance, of the 484 888 people employed on the goldmines approximately 92% were black (Allen 2003b: xxi).

management. Employers generally discriminate against women because of their family obligations, but in the case of mining in South Africa, black men were exploited by diminishing their family obligations. The division between the private (family and home) and the public (work) spheres of black male labourers in twentieth-century South Africa was forcibly set up and sustained by means of the migrant labour system. Although developments in the goldmining industry in South Africa have been well-documented, systematic accounts of the relationship between the industry and the mineworkers' private lives are scarce and sketchy. An historical overview of the relationship between the goldmining industry and mineworkers' family lives is therefore needed in this study.

In this chapter such an historical overview of the goldmining industry in South Africa is divided into three periods, namely 1886-1971, 1972-1993 and 1994-2005.<sup>5</sup> The first period begins in 1886, with the discovery of the main gold reef on the Witwatersrand. During this period the system of migrancy was established and became entrenched in the mining sector. A discussion on this period will illuminate the way in which families adapted to these circumstances.

The second period begins in 1972, when the regulation of a globally fixed gold price was discontinued and market forces alone determined the gold price. The outcome of this change was a dramatic rise in the gold price, which resulted in turn in wealth accumulation and investment in the industry. More specifically, the increase in the gold price meant higher wages for black workers, additional money being available for research, and the development of mining technology. This meant that poor grade ore could be mined more profitably, and additional employment opportunities were created (Wilson 1972: 194; First 1983: 49; James 1992: 18-22). In short, the goldmining industry boomed during the 1970s and early 1980s. The improved salaries of this period assisted families financially, but the characteristically long contracts of this period usually meant that families saw husbands and fathers who were employed on the goldmines only once a year.

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<sup>5</sup> *Addendum 1* contains a timeline that provides a useful orientation to this chapter.

Families had to adjust to coping without the presence of economically active men in their lives. After this economic boom period the declining gold price from 1983 onwards, along with the widespread strike action on the mines during 1987, indicated the end of the “golden era” which the industry had been enjoying.

The third period begins in 1994 with the holding of the first democratic elections in South Africa. Under the new government new policies were put in place, and these policies in turn impacted on the working and the family lives of the mineworkers.

The relationship between the South African goldmining industry and mineworkers from other southern African countries (especially Lesotho, Swaziland, Mozambique, Malawi and Botswana) played an integral role in the three historical periods discussed above. These relationships will be dealt with particular attention to Mozambican mineworkers, since a substantial number of the respondents in this study came from Mozambique.

## **2.2 *The development of the goldmining industry (1886-1971)***

The first period of goldmining in South Africa was characterised by a scramble for cheap labour. This quest to find labour at the lowest possible cost to the industry was the main reason for employing migrant black labour. Men were thus separated from their families, and divided families became synonymous with mine employment. Within these contexts fatherhood took on specific meanings.

### **2.2.1 *Early beginnings***

In the Witwatersrand area the gold particles were unevenly embedded in the rock of the main gold reef. Individual diggers struggled to extract this gold and it soon became clear that it would be possible to mine the gold more successfully by

drilling, blasting and sinking shafts in order to remove the vast quantities of sunken, gold bearing ore. This would entail large numbers of manual labourers together with considerable capital investment. On 5 October 1889 the Witwatersrand Chamber of Mines<sup>6</sup> was formed, demonstrating that mining companies took control of the burgeoning industry from early on. The Chamber was a forum for the mine management structures from different companies to represent their combined interests. However, the industry continued to struggle, as the gold price was fixed in London by the Bank of England and, unlike the other mining industries, the supply-and-demand principle could not operate freely. This resulted in a narrow profit margin, and it became apparent that the only way to mine profitably would be to cut labour costs to a minimum. This process was refined by monopolising the recruiting system in order to prevent different recruiters competing for black workers (Crush et al 1991: 7; Allen 1992: 134, 140ff; Chamber of Mines: <http://www.bullion.org.za/welcome.htm>).

There was a huge demand for cheap labour within the mining industries, but these industries also had to compete with the vested interests of the agricultural and railway sectors which also required cheap sources of manual labour. The result was continuous shortages of labour in all these economic sectors.

The early development of the gold mining industry took place when South Africa was still a British colony, and most of the white miners were of direct European descent. In 1902, 90% of white miners in the Transvaal came from Europe, and, in particular, from the tin mines of Cornwall in Britain. The control of the mining industries was therefore in the hands of the British, and they attempted to secure labour from other southern African countries, such as Portuguese-controlled Mozambique and German-controlled South West Africa (now Namibia).<sup>7</sup> A deal

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<sup>6</sup> The Chamber has gone through several name changes over the years: Witwatersrand Chamber of Mines: 1889-1896; Chamber of Mines of the South African Republic: 1897-1901; Transvaal Chamber of Mines: 1902-1952; Transvaal and Orange Free State Chamber of Mines: 1953-1967 and Chamber of Mines of South Africa: 1968-until now (Chamber of Mines: <http://www.bullion.org.za/welcome.htm>).

<sup>7</sup> South West Africa also developed mining operations (especially in the diamond industry) based on migrancy along similar lines to South Africa. This resulted in fewer workers leaving for South Africa

was eventually struck with the Portuguese authorities in Mozambique, and first the Rand Native Labour Association, and later WENELA,<sup>8</sup> was given the monopoly to recruit workers in Mozambique. By 1887 it was estimated that at least half the able-bodied men in southern Mozambique<sup>9</sup> were working on various South African mines, and in 1903 Mozambicans comprised 73% of the total black workforce on South African mines. In return, a fixed sum of money was paid to the Portuguese government for every Mozambican worker working in South Africa. Initially, contracts of twelve months were set up with individual workers, but in 1909 it became possible for workers to extend such contracts to a period of two years. From 1914 they were recruited on 18-month contracts (Allen 1992: 154-156, 172). The recruitment of labourers also took place within South Africa itself, and the rural areas were targeted by the Chamber's Native Recruiting Corporation (NRC), formed in 1912, in order to meet this objective (James 1992: 1).

As a result of the fact that the Mozambican mineworkers had long contracts of 12 months or more, they constructed a relatively stable labour force, and therefore became the most skilled of the labourers – many of them becoming “boss boys”.<sup>10</sup> The Mozambicans earned higher wages in South Africa than they could earn at home, where forced labour (the infamous *xibalo* or *chibalo*) had been imposed on them, and this led to Mozambicans “volunteering” for work on the mines of the Witwatersrand. Certain families even fled Portuguese rule and established themselves in British Amatongaland (Swaziland today) and in the

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compared to other neighbouring countries, even though the South African goldmine wages were higher than the wages paid on South West African mines (see Gordon 1977: 9-10).

<sup>8</sup> WNLA/WENELA is the Witwatersrand Native Labour Association, which is the labour recruiting organisation of the Chamber of Mines operating mainly beyond the South African borders (Crush et al 1991: 6 & First 1983: 5).

<sup>9</sup> First (1983: xxiii) describes how, in 1897, a dual economy was set in place in Mozambique, where the southern part became a labour reserve for South Africa, and workers in the northern part worked on plantations for Chartered Companies.

<sup>10</sup> “Boss boys” was a widely used term to denote black supervisors on the mines. However the terminology and structure on the mines nowadays are quite different due to socio-political changes, and the level of ‘boss boy’ is best compared to that of team leader (see descriptions of respondents in this study).

Transvaal (First 1983: xxiii-xxiv; Crush et al 1991: 5-6; Allen 1992: 156, 186; Harries 1994: 170).

These agreements formed the basis of the migrant labour system on the mines – a system that evolved over the decades to come. Yet, despite the agreement with the Mozambican authorities regarding migrant labour, there were still continuous shortages of labour. South African blacks avoided the mines either because of their own experiences or because of the stories told by others of conditions on the mines. In addition large numbers of workers from further north (Malawi and northern Mozambique – also referred to as the “tropicals” – see explanation below under 2.2.2) died from pneumonia on the South African mines. In order to address the labour shortages, mine recruiters resorted to bribing local chiefs and entrapping families into becoming indebted to the mining houses in order to obtain the necessary labour (Allen 1992: 157-162). Furthermore, the mines were set up in such a way that they were able to exploit family, kin and tribal structures. Men were allocated rooms or sleeping halls according to their ethnic categories. Trade unions were suppressed, and *indunas* (ethnic representatives) and *isibondas* (room representatives) were used to help recruit men and to maintain order at the mines (First 1983: 97-98; James 1992: 4).

Other events, such as the Anglo-Boer War of 1899-1902, also disrupted mining operations severely. In the aftermath of the war, following the example of the Australian goldmines, Chinese labourers were imported to work on the goldmines. In 1906, when the British government withdrew the right to recruit Chinese workers, the 63 695 Chinese workers who had arrived on three-year contracts to work on the mines of the Witwatersrand had to be repatriated. By 1906 the Chinese represented 34% of the unskilled workers on South African mines (Allen 1992: 173-176; Davenport & Saunders 2000: 237).

The final departure of the Chinese in 1910 made it clear that a systematic approach was needed to ensure a continuous supply of labour to the mines. The

Chamber of Mines adopted two approaches which it followed simultaneously (although favoured sequentially, depending on the circumstances), namely, by *systematically recruiting workers north of the borders of South Africa* while also appealing to the *South African government to force South African blacks by way of legislation to become part of the cash economy by entering wage labour*. These two aspects will now be discussed in greater detail because the demands of labour (with the help of the state) increasingly controlled the lives of the mineworkers, and this in turn impacted on the kinship and family life of the workers.

### *2.2.2 Labour from neighbouring countries and legislation in respect of South African workers*

WENELA was instrumental in bringing workers from the northern border regions to South Africa. Since 1913 there had been a ban on the recruitment of the so-called “tropicals” to work in South Africa, because they had died in large numbers from pneumonia, tuberculosis and other lung diseases. The so-called “tropicals” came from countries north of the 22° southern latitude, and these countries included the northern parts of Mozambique, Southern and Northern Rhodesia (Zimbabwe and Zambia respectively today), Bechuanaland (Botswana today); South West Africa (Namibia today); Tanganyika (Tanzania today) and Nyasaland (Malawi today). This ban on the “tropicals” was lifted in the early 1930s when the mines claimed that pneumonia could be treated effectively.<sup>11</sup>

New discoveries of gold in the 1930s and 1940s (also in the Orange Free State) negated the mine owners’ assumption in the 1920s that the gold industry was declining (Crush et al 1991: 33-45). Despite the poor conditions on the mines, they still offered better prospects for labourers than other options such as farming, mining in Rhodesia (see Van Onselen 1976) and the Witbank collieries

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<sup>11</sup> It was, however, only in the 1940s when sulfa drugs and penicillin were introduced that pneumonia could be treated effectively (Crush et al .1991: 43).

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(see Alexander 2001: 511). This meant that many men left their families to migrate to the goldmines. The development of the railway system contributed to a more steady flow of workers recruited by WENELA. Some jobseekers travelled on foot to WENELA depots and were then rejected by the mine recruiters on medical grounds. Certain of these rejected workers proceeded to work on farms for less pay until they became strong enough to pass the medical examination of the goldmines. The blacks from outside the southern African borders enjoyed even fewer rights than South African blacks, and employers from the different sectors, including agriculture, willingly employed them (Crush et al 1991: 45-54).

There was growing dissatisfaction with the migrant system in the migrants' homeland countries (Southern Rhodesia in particular). The National Party (which came to power in South Africa in 1948) was unsympathetic to this dissatisfaction, since this form of migrancy counteracted permanent black urbanisation. The governments of Nyasaland and Northern Rhodesia had argued as early as the 1930s that the large numbers of young male migrants to the mines were disrupting local family life. This argument was seen by some as a pretext on the part of local employers within Nyasaland and Northern Rhodesia to regain control over labourers. WENELA counter-argued that men returned to their homelands with cash and deferred pay for their extended families. WENELA also guaranteed repatriation, which did not necessarily follow "unregulated migrancy". Migration from the tropical areas to the South African goldmines continued to increase, with minor slumps, until well into the 1970s (Crush et al 1991: 45-54). Yudelman, Crush and Jeeves (1986: 115) refer to this practice as "the traditional low-wage, foreign dominated labour system". The local labour complement on the South African mines declined from 41% in 1960 to 28% in 1970. The longer contracts of foreign workers meant that the mining industry's labour supply became steady (Crush et al 1991: 72-73).

The South African government helped the mining industry in respect of the second approach favoured by the Chamber of Mines by forcing South African



blacks into wage labour by means of legislation. There were three categories of laws that forced black people to join capitalist production in urban areas while at the same time forcing them to leave their families (specifically dependants such as children) behind in the reserves (later called the homelands):

- Firstly, laws were passed to regulate the purchase and occupation of land (homes of the rural families from where miners originated). These laws included the 1913 Land Act, which restricted Africans' access to land to the Reserves, which comprised less than 8% of the country<sup>12</sup> (Allen 1992: 213).
- Secondly, laws were passed to regulate the working conditions of mineworkers. These laws included the Mines and Works Act of 1911, which ensured the colour bar for different positions (Davenport & Saunders 2000: 634), as well as the earlier Glen Gray Act of 1894, which stipulated that adult black men had to pay taxes if they were “not working” (Wilson 1972: 147).
- Thirdly, laws, such as the pass laws and the Urban Act of 1923, were passed to regulate the movement of mineworkers (in fact, all black people) between their homesteads and their workplaces.

Increasingly the state apparatus of the time thus regulated where mineworkers could live, work or walk.

### *2.2.3 Concern versus disregard for black mineworkers and their families*

Allen (1992: 185-224) explains the above regulations of African workers in terms of the “Poverty trap”; the “Legal trap” and the “Land trap”: By the time the Union of South Africa was formed in 1910 the mining industry had become an integral part of the South African economy, and increasingly the mining industry dictated

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<sup>12</sup> See Van Onselen (1996) for a detailed discussion of the Maine family's struggle for survival with sharecropping.

the economy of the country to serve its own purposes. It was not possible to make a decent living within the reserves, as there was simply not enough fertile land for everybody. Accordingly a dependency on the wage economy developed early in the twentieth century, and this escalated in the ensuing decades. Many families in the reserves owned neither land nor stock, and even those families who did own either land or stock could not make a reasonable living.<sup>13</sup> Many perceived the reserves as labour reservoirs with absent adult men – places where poverty-stricken women, children, old and disabled people lived under appalling conditions.

In order to address the harsh conditions associated with mine labour, the black trade union movement started to organise itself actively in the period shortly before the Second World War. In 1942 all strike action on South African mines was outlawed to prevent the disruption of mining during the war. However, after the war had ended in 1945 there was no longer any justification for the 1942 ban on strikes. The African Mine Workers Union (AMWU) expanded rapidly after 1943 and, when met with opposition, resorted to organising workers in a more subversive manner. A major strike by an estimated 70 000 black mineworkers for better wages and improved hostel conditions erupted on 12 August 1946. Approximately 1000 strikers were arrested and nine people died, which is an indication of the force with which the strike was met. Black unionisation had suffered a severe blow, the effects of which were felt for almost three decades (Crush et al 1991: 55-59; Moodie 1994: 212-214). Labour conditions on the mines, together with the effect thereof on the families of labourers, remained more or less unchanged for the ensuing years.

South African black workers increasingly preferred to work in manufacturing industries because of better wages and employment conditions. Although the Chamber did not want to pay better wages to black mineworkers, despite

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<sup>13</sup> An example of the poor conditions is the 1937 infant mortality rate in the Transkei, which was 284 per 1000 live births, even worse than the average of 172.8 per 1000 live births in British Tropical Africa (Allen 1992: 222).

pressure from the mineworkers and neighbouring countries, the Chamber could not continue to ignore the plight of black mineworkers and their families. In the late 1940s and 1950s respectively, the Fagan and Tomlinson Commissions reported on the poor conditions in rural black communities in South Africa. By the 1950s the Chamber had come to realise that the collapse of these communities would endanger the labour supply to the mines. In response to the diminishing number of “local” black mineworkers in the early 1950s, Ernest Oppenheimer (from Anglo American) proposed partial labour stabilisation (implying that mineworkers would settle with their families near the mines) for the Free State mines, but this proposal was never taken up with any seriousness. In addition, the National Party was now in control, and this proposal was not in line with the Party's policy of separate development (Crush et al 1991: 61-62). One could argue that Oppenheimer's proposal came with too little too late to change a system that had, by this time, developed a momentum and a structure of its own (with vested government interests).

#### *2.2.4 Migrancy and family life*

In this section the relationship between migration and the family life of the black mineworkers will be dealt with more directly. The previous synopsis of the mining industry serves as a background for an understanding of what happened to the mineworkers and their families. A central issue is whether migrancy was favoured only by management or whether mineworkers, together with their family and kin structures, preferred it as well. Although mine management structures did, at times, debate different housing options, they continued with the option of hostel accommodation and the concomitant migrant system. It will be argued here that different categories of mineworkers and their families had different preferences in respect of migrancy at different times.

Before turning to the debate on whether black families preferred migrancy or not, it is important to note that the mining sector neither invented migrant labour to

combat labour shortages, nor did it act in isolation, because migrancy continued in many other places in the world, as is illustrated by the following description by Manchuelle (1997: 2):

When it began, roughly around 1960, Black African migration in France presented all the characteristics of a labor migration. This term must be defined: Labor migration designates an economically motivated, temporary form of migration. Labor migrants are generally young men from rural areas, often unmarried. They have no plans to settle abroad but shuttle between their villages and places of employment (cities and more developed agricultural areas), a movement often described as 'return' or 'circular' migration. Labor migrants are an important proportion of the world's labor force, especially in developing areas, and more especially in sub-Saharan Africa: in 1965, the economist Elliot J. Berg estimated the number of migrant laborers in West Africa to be about one million, or half of its labor force. In fact, all of the main export producing regions of Africa – the 'peanut basin' of Senegal; the 'cocoa belt' of Ghana, the Ivory Coast, and Nigeria; the 'copper belt' of Zambia; and the mining regions of South Africa and Zaire – owe their economic success to the in-migration of temporary laborers. Black African migration to France was thus connected to a wider phenomenon of labor migration in Africa.

Wilson (1972: 120-143) also discusses various examples of continuous migrant labour in other parts of the world, for example, the Mexicans who helped with harvesting in California in the USA; Bolivians who harvested sugar-cane in the Argentine; migrant labourers moving between Shanghai and rural areas in China (especially in the construction industry); various migrants in Western Europe. In West Africa the peanut growing areas of Gambia, cocoa farms in Ghana and cotton picking in Nigeria drew large numbers of migrants. Various examples also

exist in East Africa, but in particular the land tenure system in Uganda enshrined migrant labour; and, lastly, the copper mines in Zambia and Zaire. Certain of these forms of migrant labour have been described as draconian and, in cases where the focus was on meeting the demands for manual labour, were even compared to slave conditions (cf. Wilson 1972: 1; Van Onselen 1976: 243-244; First 1983: xxiii; Hanks & Liprie 1993: 181).

Migrancy is thus a widespread phenomenon but there are differences between the migrant patterns to the South African mines and other migrant systems: The oscillating migrancy (circular or return migration as described by Manchuelle above) to the mines was, firstly, not caused by seasonal agricultural fluctuations, as is the case with most of the examples cited above. Secondly, oscillating migration unrelated to agriculture has occurred in other parts of the world, but not for periods longer than a century, as was the case with the South African mining industry (Wilson 1972: 195-196). Even though the mining sector in South Africa did not invent migrant labour it did succeed in refining the system to such a degree that it was envied by other sectors in Africa and later copied by other business sectors in South Africa<sup>14</sup> (cf. Wilson 1972: 5; Van Onselen 1976: 128ff; Crush et al 1991: 53).

This oscillating migrancy to and from the mines should be understood from the point of view of the mine owners as well as that of the migrants and their families. The mine owners found the migrant pattern preferable to miners settling on the mines, because migrancy was a relatively cheap form of labour. It absolved mine owners from paying the same wages to black and white mineworkers, as it was argued that black mineworkers used this money only as income in addition to their family assets and agricultural production<sup>15</sup> (Allen 1992: 181; Beittel 1992b: 197ff). Furthermore, management had only to provide housing for single men,

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<sup>14</sup> Both the diamond and gold industries of South Africa should be credited with perfecting the compound system (Van Onselen 1976: 128-132). See also descriptions of non-mining hostels during the apartheid years in Jones (1990) and Ramphela (1993).

<sup>15</sup> See similar arguments in respect of different pay to "Africans" and "Europeans" in Zambia (Burawoy 1972: 13-17) and in Rhodesia/Zimbabwe (Potts & Mutambirwa 1990: 677-679).

and not for entire families, which led to the establishment of the single sex hostels. Apart from the comparative cheapness of hostels compared to family accommodation, the hostel (or compound) had its own advantages, such as ensuring that workers were housed in close proximity to the mining operations, a certain level of nutrition could be maintained, absenteeism could easily be checked, and strikes could be pre-empted<sup>16</sup> (James 1992: 3).

The arguments regarding the effect of migrant labour on families are more complicated. On the one hand anthropologists and historians provide rich descriptions of the family lives of different tribes (see for example Mayer & Mayer [1974]; Murray [1981] and Harries [1994]), which differ significantly from the concept of a conjugal couple living in a nuclear household that has dominated much of Western literature (cf. Russell 2003). On the other hand, the argument regarding the extended family structures of African people which are different from Western nuclear households, together with the poor remittances paid to black workers, was used to justify the migrant labour system. This conundrum is addressed by Murray (1981: 103):

Thus there is some substance to criticism of kinship analyses based on the imposition of western categories such as that of the nuclear family. But such criticism is quite gratuitous if it leads the critic either to insist by contrast but without appropriate evidence – now surely overwhelming – that the enforced separation of spouses generates acute anxiety, insecurity and conflict. The latter tendency implies an alternative, distinctively African view of marriage and the family which does not presuppose intimacy between husband and wife and which is not therefore undermined by the separation of spouses.

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<sup>16</sup> Although it could in turn be argued that it would be easier for mineworkers to engage in strike action because of their proximity to each other, as was demonstrated in 1946 and 1987.

It is therefore not possible to make assumptions about family life based on the fact that people do not live in nuclear households (or did not live in nuclear households prior to commercial mining in South Africa). Examples of African family life before the 1970s will serve to illustrate the complexity of family and kin structures:

Pre-industrial extended families were often organised in very specific ways. Bundy (1988: 14-15), for example, sheds light on the extended family structure when explaining the Cape Nguni as follows: “politically, they were arranged in lineages, clans and chiefdoms (it is possible to think of these as a series of concentric circles, with the extended family at the core). Observance of hierarchy and political obligations in tribal society are largely conterminous with kinship.” Both the structure of the family and the roles of individual members were clearly defined.

Another example of specific principles that guided families is provided by Mayer and Mayer (1974: 271-273), who describe the kin structures amongst the Xhosa-speaking people in the Eastern Cape, where grandparents took on the role of “mother” and “father” (“mother” and “father” refer here to prime caregivers and disciplinarians) whilst the biological mother and father took on the roles of respected older sister and brother. Within the traditional customs of the Xhosa-speaking tribe, the paternal grandparents take over the role of mother (*mama*) and father (*tata*) at the time when the child starts to speak. Biological parents who were also migrants therefore valued a rural upbringing of children by the rest of the kin, and the sentiment was expressed that “[t]own is no fit place for a child”. Within such a family system the biological parent as a migrant labourer could thus be accommodated with relative ease.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Complex fostering customs amongst the Swazi also make it possible for extended families to cope with migrancy with relative ease (see Nhlapo 1993: 38-39).

Similarly, Bonner and Nieftagodien (2001: 54-56) note that during the 1950s and 1960s Zulu and Xhosa-speaking people, in particular, preferred to leave their children in rural areas, away from townships (such as Kathorus on the East Rand) and its perceived criminal dangers. Schlemmer and Møller (1982: 1-15) argue that two categories of migrants developed in South Africa – those who did not want to move their families to the urban centres and those who did.

The fact that certain tribes practiced migrancy (even before the state and mining conglomerates intervened, for example the Batswana (see Hanks & Liprie 1993: 178), or that certain family structures “fitted” well within migrancy (such as the Xhosa family structure just described), suggests that migrancy was preferred, or at least not questioned, by some families.<sup>18</sup> Yet migrancy influenced certain family and kin structures in very specific ways, as Harries (1994) and Murray (1981) show in respect of the Mozambican and Lesotho mineworkers respectively:

Harries (1994: 90-100) explains how the accumulation of wealth was associated with marriage in Southern Mozambique during the second half of the nineteenth century. A system was in place where wives, herds and land were intimately connected to a man’s standing in the community, together with his relations to chiefs and other men in authority. The migrant labour system and concomitant cash wages had a cataclysmic effect on these embedded power relations, as young men could suddenly obtain wealth independently. At the same time, the chiefs and other men in authority realised the potential of this new source of wealth, and they encouraged young men and sons under their authority to go to the mines and bring back the cash that would contribute to their own wealth.

At the beginning of the twentieth century, “[b]y working in the Transvaal, men earned the money needed to acquire a wife, help the family pay the hut tax, and

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<sup>18</sup> The extent of migrancy was widespread and in the mid 1890s there were 30 black men for every one African woman (Beittel 1992b: 197).



tide over the loss of a son, father, or brother conscripted into the army or *xibalo*" (Harries 1994: 176).<sup>19</sup> These interchanges between the family and the mining industry coincided with the inception of large-scale commercial mining, and at this point families clearly preferred migrancy to settling on the mines. The lives of the Mozambican mineworkers were thus initially mainly oriented towards their families who remained at the rural homesteads.

Since the Mozambican men had long contracts on the mines absent men were an integral part of the way life was organised in these communities almost from the inception of goldmining in South Africa. An unmarried man became a migrant with the expectation of marrying on his return, and a married man "left his wife and family<sup>20</sup> in the charge of his father, his brother, or, if he were old enough, his heir. The protective role extended by the elders to the migrant's homestead came to be known as *basopa*, a word perhaps derived from the Afrikaans or Fanagalo term *pasop*, to watch out" (Harries 1994: 156). In the early twentieth century it often happened that a migrant would return to his homestead to find his wife living with another man. He could then demand the return of his *lobola*, which effectively meant a divorce. If a child had been born from the liaison between the wife and her lover, he could claim a son as his own and claim the *lobola* of a daughter.

As time passed migrancy became a cornerstone of the local economy, and migrant labour became part of a boy's passage to manhood. The continuous absences of men from the communities meant that mothers generally directed the gender socialisation of young boys. The phase of learning masculine identity during the teens usually took place in the rural areas, but with migrancy this phase moved to the mine environment (Harries 1994: 157-158). It thus becomes

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<sup>19</sup> *Xibalo* (or *chibalo*) is forced labour imposed by the Portuguese government of Mozambique on sectors of the society for specific purposes. The wages paid for *Xibalo* were not fair compensation for the work done and therefore the system has been compared to slavery. Similarly men were forced into the Portuguese army (Harries 1993: 142-143). Comparable also with *chibaro* in Southern Rhodesia (see Van Onselen 1976: 99).

<sup>20</sup> Presumably Harries is referring to children here.

clear that migrancy not only became part of everyday life, but it was also taken up within the customs and, in some cases, new customs were developed to accommodate migrancy and its accompanying stakes. The long contracts of the Mozambicans from the beginning of the mining industry resulted in migrancy becoming an entrenched fact of life.

Harries (1994: 159-160) describes how the hardships caused by migrancy in Southern Mozambique were severely felt by women and young boys (cadets), as they had to take on all the work traditionally carried out by men. Both men and women were pushed into marriages at an earlier age than before in order to accommodate migrancy more effectively. Women were trapped in the role of dutiful, hardworking wives because sexual unfaithfulness on their part would translate in the paying back of *lobola*, which could financially ruin their families of orientation. Young boys also bore the brunt of migrancy as they had to take on adult responsibilities at a young age.<sup>21</sup>

Murray (1981: 120f) notes that the practice of marriage amongst the Basotho is fairly intricate, as there is not a precise definition of marriage because of the complex process needed to finalise the marriage procedure. Owing to these multifaceted practices, it is at times difficult to distinguish between polygyny, serial monogamy, and monogamy together with an informal relationship of cohabitation. In such a context, Murray (1981: 104-118) describes how migrancy became an institutionalised way of life for families living in Lesotho. Migrancy undermined the agnatic structure (i.e. patrilineage) of families, because increasingly women, being migrants themselves, bore pre-marital and extra-marital children. These children (dubbed “women’s children”) can and are taken up in wider family networks, but they cannot compete with “men’s children” where the issue of succession is at stake. Such children are therefore not always formally incorporated, according to Basotho custom, into the family, although

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<sup>21</sup> Similar to Mozambique, Hanks and Liprie (1993: 184) also mention young men taking on adult responsibilities in Lesotho. See *Chapter 5* in this study on “boy-fathers” where such occurrences are also related.

they are cared for. Murray thus draws attention here to the fact that certain family and household practices endured despite migrancy (in this case the agnatic structure); yet other, new practices also resulted and became common because of migrancy (such as illegitimate births and paternal desertion).

Migrancy thus brought about major changes in relation to certain kinship practices, but on the mines as well certain changes took place. When children from urban sexual relationships were born, the children's relationships with their biological fathers were often unstable (or non-existent), because these men's relationships with their mothers were easily replaced with other sexual relationships.<sup>22</sup> In the mine environment there were "town women", who included concubines, casual sexual partners, prostitutes, girlfriends and even wives. Some men impregnated and became attached to "town women" (greatly feared by rural wives), although the nature of these attachments varied. At the one extreme "town women" were seen as temporary sexual partners only and, at the other extreme, "town women" replaced rural wives (cf. Moodie 1992: 127-130; Moodie 1994: 148-156). Certain men feared the effects "town women" might have on them; Breckenridge (1998: 676) quotes an informant's actual fear of women in towns during the 1930s:

We feared women's diseases – of the location. We feared to come back home to our girls with eGoli women's disease ... we were even scared of the woman herself.<sup>23</sup>

Partly to avoid the "dangerous town women", the practice of same-sex relationships developed in the mine hostels, as is hinted at in the following quote:

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<sup>22</sup> See also Kotzé (1993: 81) where mothers are perceived to be "a more stable factor in children's lives than fathers". See also case studies in Naidoo's (2001) study in the Winterveld area, where unstable relationships between parents may have devastating effects on children.

<sup>23</sup> If one takes into account how syphilis and gonorrhoea, carried by the Witwatersrand migrants, affected the southern Mozambican communities in the late nineteenth century (see Harries 1994: 155-156), these fears were not unfounded.

A person who goes to women in the location is not wanted. Mashiqela says when he hires you, "All that are mine should not go about the streets, let them stay here. The old ones must eat the young ones and the old ones if stupid must be eaten by the old ones". That thing means that young men used to meet with men (Breckenridge 1998: 676).

These same-sex relationships or the practice of "mine marriages" (or *bukhontxana*) is commented on extensively by both Moodie (1994: 119ff) and Harries (1994: 200-208). The 1930s, 1940s and 1950s are the time periods referred to by the informants in Moodie's accounts, while Harries focused on the first decade of the twentieth century. These relationships were between men (typically an older, established mineworker and a young man or novice on the mine), but the relationships followed the patterns of heterosexual relationships. In practice this meant that the younger man fulfilled certain aspects of the traditional role of a woman by doing household chores such as washing. The older man fulfilled certain aspects of the traditional role of husband, such as giving part of his wages to the younger man. The sexual acts mainly involved ejaculation by the older man between the thighs of the younger man. In addition, younger men were often required to hide their physical masculine attributes and "act feminine", even to the extent of dressing up like women, with fake breasts.

Although some of these men became active homosexuals, most of them returned to their rural wives without ever acting out any same-sex behaviour again. It is postulated that these practices gave relief to men's sexual urges without the "dangers" of extramarital heterosexual relationships, and therefore prevented some mineworkers from deserting their rural families. "Mine marriages" may have had limited impact in keeping migrants away from "town women" and fathering children with them because some men simultaneously had relationships with girlfriends and "boys" (Moodie 2001: 307). Although certain researchers state that the incidence of this practice declined in the 1970s (see Moodie 1994: 140;

Campbell 1997: 279) others found evidence of the practice continuing (Niehaus 2002: 84-86).

It was seen in this section that the reasons for young, able-bodied men entering into wage labour were often closely related to family matters, such as helping to sustain the extended family, or paying for some important family matter or responsibility. The expression that they were at the mine “on business”, implied that these men wanted to obtain the necessary money for a specific reason and that they then usually returned to their rural homestead (Moodie 1994: 138-139). Although rural families thus became part of the cash economy, because they needed cash for specific matters (to pay *lobola*, or to buy cattle for *lobola*, or to pay for Western medicine, etc.), they relied mostly on agriculture for their livelihood. Allen (1992: 187) states that the black South African mineworkers signed up for short contracts in order to minimise the disruptive impact of migrancy. (The Mozambican mineworkers, in particular, took longer contracts which resulted in migrancy affecting their family lives from early on.) The cash the miners brought home was welcome, but it did not immediately become the main source of livelihood. Moodie (1994: 217) states that even by the 1940s, very few mineworkers were in favour of abolishing the migrant system. Management and mineworkers both wished to continue with the migrant system, albeit for different reasons. Management wished to reduce labour costs, while mineworkers and their families generally wanted to continue with their lives within the kinship structures of their community of origin (although adjustments had to be made to accommodate migrancy).

When referring to family life in the 1950s, Crush et al (1991: 70) remark: “At that stage, mining employment was often a way of preserving the economy of the rural household, not as some historians argued since, the primary means of destruction.” It was believed that heads of families would send their young unmarried sons to work on the mines and in this way preserve the rural household. However, the devastating effects of mining on family life before 1948

was shown by Allen (1992: 185-224) when he refers to the “poverty”, “legal” and “land” traps. This argument of Crush et al makes sense only within specific contexts<sup>24</sup> as an entire system was set up in which blacks over a period of more than 50 years were increasingly restricted to smaller pieces of land (with the exception of labourers from outside the borders of South Africa). In addition, increasing legislation imposed taxes on them in order to regulate their every move. The mining magnates were instrumental in creating and preserving this system, in order to force men to become mineworkers and to perceive mining as a way of escaping poverty. Although mining did indeed help to preserve the rural household, this was because the members of the rural households had no other options available after paying taxes, outlawed as they were from almost all agricultural land, with little scope to practice entrepreneurial skills, with little freedom of movement for individual household members, and with few educational opportunities to enable them to find another decent job.

The arguments on whether migrancy destroyed the family life of blacks become less complex from the 1950s onwards, since from that time the state systematically destroyed the black families’ power to decide who lives where, when and under what conditions, thus effectively diminishing the decision-making powers of most black families. My line of argument in this context is that the relationship between rural and urban life became “hegemonically capitalist” (see description by O’Laughlin 1998: 5-6), to the detriment of families who had no choice but to remain in (increasingly impoverished) rural areas.

The complex nature of these arguments is summarised by Jeeves and Crush (1992: 20-21): “... too much emphasis on African agency and homestead dynamics ran the danger of underestimating the coercive character and destructive effects of migrant labour. Nevertheless, recent research rightly stresses the importance of the choices made by workers and their families.”

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<sup>24</sup> See, for example, Chirwa (1997) who focused on a few case studies where migrant men from Malawi used the money obtained from mine work to start up businesses in Malawi with varying degrees of success.

A new era commenced for the goldmining industry in 1968, when a two-tier pricing system for gold replaced the fixed price regime which had been in operation since 1935. With the two-tier system a fixed price was maintained for central banks and monetary institutions while for other buyers there was no price control. In 1972 the regulated price (which was then US\$35 per fine ounce) was discontinued. The main reason for terminating the fixed price of gold was that financial institutions in London were no longer able to maintain a large enough gold deposit to underwrite the fixed price. From 1897 until 1970 the wages of the black mineworkers remained static in real terms (Crush et al 1991: 3; James 1992: 18). With the changed market forces about to be released within the goldmining industry in 1972, the industry was about to change.

### **2.3 *The industry's boom years and its decline (1972-1993)***

From 1972 onwards the gold price skyrocketed, until it reached an all-time high of US\$800 per fine ounce in 1980. During this period, new technological developments in mining<sup>25</sup> meant that by 1970 the goldmines needed 25% fewer recruits per year. Black labour unrest started in 1973, and, from September 1973 until June 1976, 122 black workers were killed and 700 were injured in 48 separate incidents on the goldmines. Other incidents in other mining industries followed, as did arrests. In response 26 500 workers from Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Botswana and Rhodesia demanded to return to their countries before their contracts expired. All these factors finally had a cumulative effect on the stagnant wages of the previous decades, and wages paid to black workers on the goldmines increased eleven-fold over a period of five years (First 1983: 49-50; James 1992: 6; Davenport & Saunders 2000: 614).

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<sup>25</sup> Examples include mechanical scrapers which replaced manual lashing/shovelling and a new blasting technique known as sequential firing (First 1983: 51; Crush et al 1991: 74).

Families of mineworkers in neighbouring countries were increasingly becoming destitute as more and more South African labourers took the place of labourers from neighbouring countries. Where South African mineworkers had previously limited their stay on the mines, they now had less choice, and their labour patterns followed those of their northern counterparts in that they started signing up for year-long contracts. The families of South African mineworkers now had the benefit of the mineworkers' improved salaries (that is, of course, only if the mineworker sent his remittances home), although at the same time there was his constant absence from home. This process of growing dependency on the mining industry changed the relevance of mining for families. Families saw less of the miners (because of the longer contract periods), but these absences were associated with greater economic value. Divided families were financially sound (as far as this was possible). Dodson (2000: 139-141) formulates this ambiguity regarding the effects of migrancy as follows: "How ... does one calculate the benefit of economic gains obtained at the social cost of disrupted family lives? ... costs to individuals can bring benefits to families ...", or in Murray's (1981: 102) words: "A man's absence as a migrant labourer is a condition of his family's survival".

### *2.3.1 Decreasing numbers of labourers from neighbouring countries*

In the early 1970s, bilateral agreements between South Africa and its neighbours, Botswana, Lesotho and Swaziland, were signed, and, in the case of Mozambique, renewed. In terms of these agreements, South African mines continued to recruit temporary male workers and deferred pay was given in exchange (Crush & Tshitereke 2001: 53). These agreements would assure exclusive access to labour for the mining houses even during insecure times. The total number of foreign black migrants in South Africa in 1972 was 840 000, of which 33% were from Malawi, 26% from Mozambique and 25% from Lesotho. Smaller numbers came from Botswana (7%), Zambia (5%) and Swaziland (4%) (Wilson 1972: 109). The Chamber of Mines employed 381 000 blacks (45% of



the total number of foreign black migrants) in 1972, of which 119 000 came from Mozambique and other countries on the northern borders of South Africa. In total nearly four fifths of the mineworkers came from outside the Republic of South Africa. This was, however, about to change, as the Chamber of Mines changed its policy in 1975 to recruiting more black South Africans from the homelands (then known as Transkei, Bophuthatswana, Venda and Ciskei) (Davenport & Saunders 2000: 614).

A number of factors had influenced this decision of the Chamber of Mines, the first of which was the 1974 plane crash in Botswana in which 74 Malawian mineworkers died. In response to the tragedy, Hastings Banda, Life President of Malawi, recalled all Malawian mineworkers from South Africa and suspended recruiting in Malawi.<sup>26</sup> Secondly, there was growing political uncertainty in Mozambique, escalating armed conflict in Zimbabwe, and the withdrawal by Tanzania and Zambia of their workers from South Africa in the 1960s seemed like a possible forewarning of more withdrawals on the part of other Southern African countries. Thirdly, labour from Botswana was being redirected to the growing diamond and copper-nickel industries within Botswana itself, and Botswana could thus no longer be treated as an almost unlimited South African labour reserve. Fourthly, there was growing poverty amongst people in the homelands, which resulted in pressure to employ workers from there. Fifthly, the rising gold price made possible higher wages for black workers, which meant the goldmining industry was in a better position to compete with other South African industries in attracting workers. The result was that by 1979, 215 577 ( $\pm 54\%$ ) migrant blacks out of a total of 399 123 came from within the borders of South Africa. The division between foreign and local labour seemed to stabilise, as by 1993 48% of mine labourers were not South African citizens (First 1983: 50; 55; Crush et al 1991: 104-105; Jeeves & Crush 2000: 11; O'Laughlin 1998: 13; Davenport & Saunders 2000: 539-540; Davies & Head 2000: 204).

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<sup>26</sup> Far larger numbers of Mozambicans were recruited in 1975 to replace these Malawian workers, as well as a few urban Zimbabweans, although the latter group was more militant and better educated and did not stay for long (First 1983: 56; Moodie 1994: 247-248).

During the 1980s, the labour ministries of Lesotho, Swaziland and, to a lesser extent, Botswana expressed their concern about this growing trend of employing South African rather than foreign labour. In Swaziland in the early 1980s approximately 11 000 out of 80 000 wage employees worked on contract on the South African mines. For every one person with full-time employment in Lesotho in the 1970s, six to eight people were working as migrants in South Africa (Hanks & Liprie 1993: 182, 185-186). A 1985/86 Bureau of Statistics survey found that for 51 percent of households in Lesotho a mineworker's wage was the main source of cash income (Crush et al 2001: 14). The concerns of these countries in response to the mines' new preference for local labour were thus quite understandable. Even earlier, in 1974, it had been realised in Malawi that the economy would not be able to absorb the workers withdrawn from the South African mines, and the Malawian authorities put pressure on the mines to re-employ some of these labourers. In 1988 the Chamber of Mines made a decision to no longer employ Malawian mineworkers. The Chamber of Mines argued that the prevalence rate of HIV/AIDS was too high amongst the Malawian workers, and, since the Malawian government refused to screen recruits for HIV, the Chamber stopped all recruitment<sup>27</sup> (Chirwa 1997: 628-629).

If there had been any doubt about it before it now became abundantly clear that many of the economies of neighbouring countries had become dependant on the South African mining industry. Conversely, the hitherto dependency of the South African goldmines on foreign labour had started to decrease.

### *2.3.2 Mining as a career for black workers and unionisation*

The growing sophistication of the mining industry during the 1970s meant that more skilled labourers, and fewer unskilled labourers, were needed to compete

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<sup>27</sup> There was a moral outcry about this decision amongst HIV/AIDS activists, but to no avail. This episode may be regarded as one of the worst cases of unfair labour practice in the history of Southern African mining.

successfully internationally. The need for skilled labour required a stable (although not stabilised, i.e. living with families at or near the mine premises) workforce, and longer contracts with mineworkers therefore became commonplace. Contracts were also renewed with the same mineworkers, instead of new contracts being signed with novices (see First 1983: 59f). This practice was very different to earlier times, when mineworkers had regarded mining as a once-off opportunity to earn an amount of money for a specific reason. Mineworkers spent more time in the hostels and less time with their families because of these more stable and renewable contracts. In addition, the average age of workers generally became higher, as the workers did not retire to their rural homes once their sons were of working age. Often the sons of mineworkers were not able to find employment in the mining sector, and older workers were thus forced to stay on at the mines in order to continue to earn an income for the rural families (Crush 1992: 47-48, 67-68).

First (1983: 50-51) describes the way in which the need for skilled labour changed the ways in which mines were being managed and that certain black workers were then trained for artisan positions in electrical work and as boilers, fitters and welders. The nature of goldmining changed dramatically with the advancement and implementation of technology. The mines in the Free State were the most technologically sophisticated, as they had developed much later than the other mines. For example, the larger shafts which were sunk on the Free State mines allowed for bigger machinery to be used underground.

As noted above, the poor conditions in the homelands (previously called the reserves) prompted South African workers to enter the mining sector. By 1970, 10% only of the income of most rural households came from agriculture, and the dependency on migrants' wages thus increased. As they became "career miners"<sup>28</sup> (Crush et al 1991: 29), mineworkers became less concerned with the

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<sup>28</sup> Crush (1992: 46) explains that "inflexible migrancy" would be a more apt term as most mineworkers did not voluntarily choose mining as a career.

“farm calendar” (Crush et al 1991: 152). The implication of this is that mineworkers and their families became dependant on the cash economy, because they could not rely on farming for their survival, since too little land was available to black people, the soil was poor, and there was not enough capital available to farm productively. The result was the collapse of farming in many homeland areas. The government ignored the study by Tomlinson that it had commissioned in the mid 1950s – a study which had already pointed out the erosion and poverty in these areas. Instead, the government embarked on a policy of resettlement that populated the homelands even more densely (Clarke & Ngobese 1975: 9, 44; Simkins 1980: 256ff; James 1992: 6; Lurie 2000: 343-344). In certain areas, such as Pondoland and Malawi, mineworkers used their wages to promote rural production, but, from the 1970s onwards, this pattern became selective and irregular (Crush 1992: 51; Chirwa 1997: 631ff).

As was mentioned in the previous section (see 2.2.3) in the 1950s Sir Ernest Oppenheimer had proposed settling skilled black labour on the Free State mines but this proposal was never implemented. Even though the apartheid government allowed 3% of the black workforce on a goldmine to live with their families on the mine premises, no company had come anywhere near that figure at any time by the 1970s. Instead it was envisaged that “commuter migrancy” would increase. The term “commuter migrancy” refers to migrants who live in the hostels but go home on a regular basis (most commonly at weekly or monthly intervals). It was particularly workers from outside South Africa and those who lived at some distance from the mine premises who would fall into this category of “commuter migrancy” (see Crush et al 1991: 77-78, 151ff; 209).

During the 1980s changes in the goldmining industry continued, with the sliding gold price as a constant factor: The mines began an aggressive campaign to recruit workers who lived close to the mines, as opposed to only those workers who lived in the homelands (Crush 2000: 16). This step was the first indication

that migrant labour and the South African goldmining industry were not to be synonymous forever.

Another important factor in the 1980s was renewed black unionisation. The development of the unions is an important aspect, because the unions became the main vehicle for conducting negotiations on behalf of workers in respect of working conditions, as well as matters relating to family. The improved arrangements concerning family life from the 1990s onwards are in part attributable to the efforts of the union.

Since the forcibly suppressed 1946 mineworkers' strike that had been led by the African Mine Workers' Union (Moodie 1994: 213) the unions had been largely powerless. In 1979 the Riekert and Wiehahn Commissions<sup>29</sup> were appointed by the South African government to review "training, employment, housing and government of black workers in industry" and "labour and industrial relations" respectively. It was as a direct result of the Wiehahn Commission's recommendation that black trade unions came to be recognised as "negotiating bodies" for the first time (Davenport & Saunders 2000: 461-465, 642). In 1982, the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) was established and also recognised by the Chamber of Mines, and black unionisation became a force to be reckoned with on the mines.

Smaller demonstrations of resistance had occurred between the 1946 strike and 1982 (e.g. the unrest of the 1970s mentioned above), but these demonstrations had been mostly in response to specific conditions at a particular mine, and there was little solidarity between workers on the different mines. The wage demonstrations that erupted in 1982, however, were because different mining houses were paying different wages, as well as a result of the differentiation in pay between the different job categories within the black workforce. The

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<sup>29</sup> See Pretorius (1996: 257-262) for the state's reasons to initiate the official recognition of black worker trade unions by the state.

Chamber of Mines was forced to approve unionisation formally because the alternative appeared to be “ethnic collective violence”, which would disrupt production and challenge management (Moodie 1994: 244-248, 281).

One of the key aspects in the goldmining industry of the 1980s was that, for the first time, there was an oversupply of workers, and unfair dismissals became one of the first issues with which the newly established NUM had to deal (Moodie 1994: 251-252). After decades of having to force and woo black workers to the mines, mine management could now decide whom they wanted to work for them. “Troublemakers” could therefore be ousted from the mines. NUM responded to these dismissals, and whenever it managed to re-instate a black worker who had been unfairly dismissed, several workers would join the union. Membership of NUM grew, and the union quickly replaced the *induna*<sup>30</sup> system. The disadvantage was that whenever conflict arose, union members would be targeted by management because of the perceived power of the union over the workers (Moodie 1994: 255; 281).

The power dynamic between NUM and the Chamber of Mines culminated in the mining strike of 1987. Bobby Godsell, then industrial relations consultant of Anglo American, remarked that although the strike was about wage disputes, it was also about power (Benjamin et al in Moodie 1994: 303-304). Indeed, NUM had made a resolution at their annual congress in April 1987 that 1987 would be the year in which the working class would “seize control” of its destiny. During the strike action NUM took control of several hostels, although some workers were sent home or went home of their own accord. However, not all workers were supportive of the strike since they feared dismissal, and NUM had to resort to intimidation in cases where the workers lacked solidarity. The workers’ knowledge of long queues of unemployed men at TEBA offices did little to allay their fears. Their concerns turned out not to be unjustified, as Anglo American

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<sup>30</sup> Previously the mine managers had used the hierarchical power structures of the different ethnic groups to establish order in the compounds.

## *Chapter 2: A historical orientation to the goldmining industry in South Africa*

embarked on mass dismissals. Although union lawyers regarded this action as unfair labour practice, it still had the desired effect, and more and more workers wanted to accept the wage increases offered by management and to return to work (James 1992: 115-123).

The strikes ended, but the problem of what to do with the single sex hostels intensified (see the discussion below on the relationship between the Chamber of Mines and the unions in the 1990s). What has been illustrated up until now is that the Chamber relied heavily on cheap, foreign, migrant labour for the greater part of the twentieth century. By the 1970s economic changes had led to a larger complement of South African workers on the mines, but these men were still obliged to be migrants, which was in line with the apartheid policies of the South African regime (cf. Moodie's [1994: 278f] discussion of proletarianisation on the South African goldmines).

### *2.3.3 The effect of migrancy on family life*

By the 1970s the South African government was still portraying the migrant labour system as temporary (in accordance with apartheid policies), and it was argued that the decentralisation of industries, an effective transport system, and the development of the homelands would be the three mechanisms that would end migrancy in South Africa. Wilson (1972: 203-214) debunks these arguments effectively in favour of the "acceptance of permanent urbanisation" of black people. The South African government of the 1970s was, however, slower to recognise these realities, and migrancy continued. Nonetheless, as has been mentioned, the pattern of short contracts changed over the course of the twentieth century and mineworkers (including South African mineworkers) became proletarianised (dependant on wage labour) with long and recurring contracts. In many cases sons followed in their fathers' footsteps by becoming mineworkers, and there were often generations of mineworkers in extended

families. This meant that men spent less and less time with their families and absent men became an entrenched phenomenon within many families.

Yet families are enduring and flexible enough to accommodate different household structures. Murray (1981: 104) mentions that migrants were often considered “*de jure* members of households”, since they were prevented from taking their families with them to their places of work. Spiegel, Watson and Wilkinson (1996: 11-12) later expanded on these ideas with the concept of a “stretched” household to describe households with migrant family members. Four criteria had traditionally been associated with households, namely, “co-residence, productive co-operation, income sharing and commensality”. In industrialised countries production usually takes place outside the household, and therefore this criterion is no longer applicable. It has further been argued that in “at least the southern African context of labour migrancy” co-residence and commensality were not applicable either. In order to be able to identify a household one is therefore left with only one criterion, namely, “shared income and its expenditure”. The members of a “stretched” household may, according to this criterion, not live and eat together on a daily basis, but they do have a commitment to contribute to the household on an ongoing basis.<sup>31</sup>

These families living in stretched households are, however, doing so in order to cope with economic realities. Arguments on whether African families preferred the migrant labour system in the twentieth century to settling on the mines should not be oversimplified. Erasmus (1977: 16-21), for example, suggests that children coped well with the absence of the father, as the extended family provided enough male substitutes to fill the role of the father. It has also been stated that the family benefited from the migratory system, as it ensured better financial prospects. The father’s wage-earning role was thus deemed to be more important than his actual presence in the family, which implies an underlying

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<sup>31</sup> Similar to Spiegel’s term is the term “split-household family” that Glenn (in Bustamante 2005) uses to describe fatherhood responsibilities across national boundaries, i.e. men who work in other countries in order to support their families at home.



sentiment that a “good” father/son will work on the mines and send his wages home regularly.<sup>32</sup> A more cynical view of this migrant arrangement was offered by Govan Mbeki (quoted in Allen 1992: 216), who described the reserves as “mating camps for the production of migrant labourers” and “suitable dumping grounds for the physical wrecks whom industry discards in the same way as waste fibre is thrown away after its juice has been extracted”.

The first view (expressed by Erasmus) should be regarded with caution as Erasmus (1977; 1979), who was from the Human Science Research Council (HSRC) undertook research in the 1970s in which men and women were asked if they preferred the migrant labour system. In both cases both men and women indicated a preference for this system, but such research should be understood within its historical context. Wilson (1972: 169-202) points to the fact that such research, where migrants and their wives were asked whether they prefer the migrant system to a system where wives move in at the mines, involves loaded questions, since men answered the questions with the current system of single sex hostels at the back of their minds:

What man in his right mind, whose experience of industrial life is living in a compound with 5000 other men, would wish to expose his wife and daughters to the dangers that he has seen faced by other women living near such a place? (Wilson 1972: 193).

Wilson further argues that, even if men and women preferred the migrant labour system, they should have been given the choice of whether to live under such circumstances or not. It should also be taken into account that the division between a migrant household and a residentially united household is not always clear-cut: clear family structures and roles became progressively obscured as migrancy continued over the years. Sons, brothers and fathers were not part of the household for increasingly longer periods of time. Fewer male substitutes

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<sup>32</sup> Similar findings for hostel-dwelling migrants were reported by Møller (1986: 575).

were available to take the place of the biological father. After the abolition of influx control laws in 1986 people were able to move more easily between rural areas and towns or cities.<sup>33</sup> Many people started to move regularly between households in rural areas and households in the towns and cities. This phenomenon of moving between different households is associated with the “fluidity” observed in many black South African households (cf. Jones 1996; Spiegel et al 1996: 7ff; Spiegel & Mehlwana 1997: 10). Children were often influenced to a marked degree by this migration from one household to another – a migration which took place for various reasons, such as proximity to medical centres and educational facilities.<sup>34</sup>

Mashegoane (1990: 72) argues that the marriage of the migrant worker became more of an institution than a relationship, because the couple did not actually live together. However, according to Mashegoane, the migrant did have a culturally defined expectation of loyalty from his wife. The husband, on the other hand, may become “an idealised support provider” in the eyes of the wife. I would argue that the substitution of these idealised images for real relationships was not confined to couples only. If the actual family members are not present for most of the time images of these people evolve in place of their physical presence. These images may take several forms, such as photographs, anecdotes about their lives, and expectations of roles. Children who had not had the benefit of the presence of a father had to rely on these images as presented by other family members, instead of relying on real fathers. Generations of children grew up with “imaginary” instead of real fathers.

To summarise: the longer contracts of the majority of mineworkers from the 1970s onwards meant that the (in particular South African) migrant labourers

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<sup>33</sup> 1986 is remembered in South Africa for the abolition of influx control laws. Yet this does not imply that black people suddenly had freedom of movement, as “orderly urbanisation” was still in place (see Oliver-Evans 1991).

<sup>34</sup> See Jones (1990); Ramphela (1993) and Spiegel and Mehlwana (1997) for studies on the impact of the fluidity of households on children.

lived away from their families for progressively longer periods at a time. These lengthy absences made direct contact with children (if they had children) and other family members very difficult. There are even examples of men who exceeded the legal limit of staying on for one year at a time, and they would thus not even see their rural families every year (see Crush et al 1991: 151). As has been mentioned mine management did, from time to time, debate the advantages of having a stable workforce who lived permanently with their families near the mine. Such a stable workforce would cut the cost of training miners, but that did not compensate for the cost of providing family housing and social services. The phenomenon of “circular migration”, with strong rural ties, became career mining, with weakened or no rural ties. The mining industry benefited greatly from this stable flow of its workforce, but the impact of the migrant system on family life was severe and complex. Migrancy changed the ways in which families organised themselves in fundamental ways. As migrancy changed from being a temporary to a permanent family structure, families became fatherless, and children had to depend on vague notions of what constituted a father.

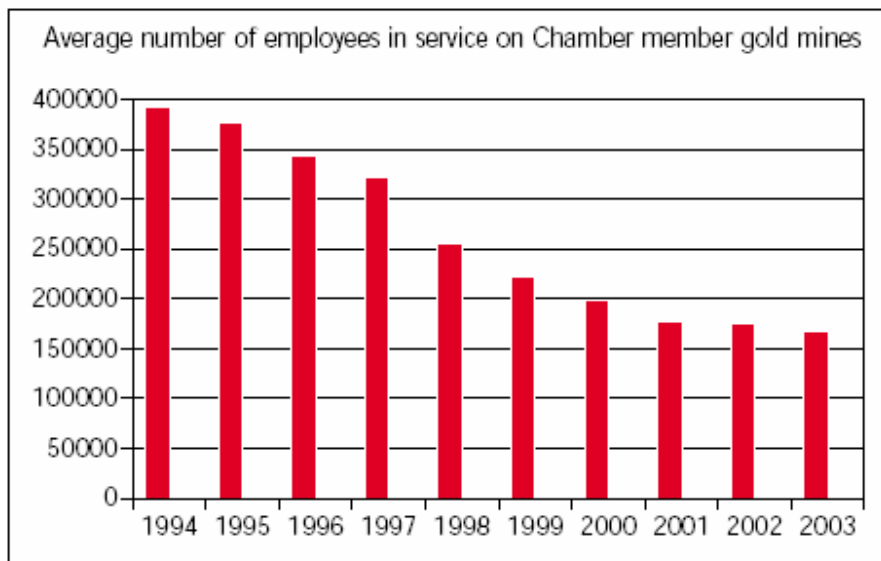
#### **2.4 *The goldmining industry today (1994-2005)***

The migrant labour system is one of the major legacies of the apartheid era and constitutes a principal development problem for a post-apartheid democratic government. To create a humane alternative to migrancy without destroying the wealth-creating productivity of the mining sector will challenge all of the major actors: workers, the companies that employ them, and the new state. Any genuine transformation in the way the mines use their black labour will also have far-reaching impact on miners’ families, their home communities, and the governments of the neighbouring supplier states (Crush, James and Jeeves 1992: 7).

The following represent major social factors affecting the family lives of workers in the goldmining industry since the coming to power of the new government – the rapid spread of HIV/AIDS on the mines; the ever-present possibility of retrenchments; the ongoing treaties regarding foreign labour; the phenomenon of subcontracting, and the employment of women in all sectors of mining. The trade unions, especially NUM, continue to play a significant role in the mining industry, but it is not possible to negotiate away certain economic realities. These factors will be discussed below, using as an example the mine where the research for this study was undertaken (i.e. Harmony Randfontein; see *Chapter 4*) as an example of certain of the phenomena. Many black families now do have more options in the way in which they wish to arrange their households, but practical restraints and retrenchments impact critically on these options.

#### *2.4.1 Retrenchments; subcontracting and unionisation*

As has been mentioned, during 1983 the gold price dropped internationally and production levels on many goldmines levelled off (see also Bezuidenhout 1999: 69; Carmody 2002: 255). Lurie (2000: 344) states that “in 1992 the gold mines employed 32% fewer workers than they did in 1986, and retrenchments have continued ever since”. These continued retrenchments are clearly illustrated in the table of the Chamber of Mines below showing the number of fulltime employees on the goldmines. The numbers decreased dramatically from 392 021 in 1994 to 167 418 in 2003 (compare this with the 500 000 workers in 1987, as reported by Crush et al 2001: 8):



(Source: Chamber of mines:

<http://www.bullion.org.za/Publications/Facts&Figures/04gold.pdf>)

This drop in employment had a huge effect on mineworkers' families and on mining communities as a whole, as the mineworkers are often the main wage earners. Poverty usually follows once men lose their jobs (Chirwa 1997: 636f; Kynoch 1999: 59-60). Although the drop in employment clearly has an effect on those mineworkers who lose their jobs, it also affects those men who are still employed. Mineworkers are, for example, unwilling to move their families to a mining region if they are not certain of future employment (Seidman 1995: 179).

NUM is fighting a difficult battle against retrenchments, as is shown by what happened when Harmony took over the Randfontein shafts from JCI – at the time when Harmony took over the Randfontein mines in 2000 the streamlining of management meant that several retrenchments took place, especially within the ranks of middle management (estimated to be between 50 and 100). The labourers were, however, more severely affected. The efficiency rate for the labourers was calculated in minute detail, to such an extent that the number of square metres per worker was specified. With the initial takeover in 2000 approximately 1000 labourers (referred to as the “3-8 levels”, which are the ranks

of the unskilled and semi-skilled labourers) were retrenched. In June 2001, due to rationalisation, a second round of retrenchments took place, with approximately 700 unskilled labourers losing their jobs. A third round of retrenchments in April 2002 meant that a further 500 people lost their jobs (Potgieter 2002). Despite this bleak picture, NUM continued their activist role and released the following press statement:

We also wish to raise our concern in this situation, because while Harmony intends to deprive families and communities of mineworkers of a livelihood, the company is going ahead with acquisitions of mines in foreign countries. All of this despite the fact that millions of profits they are making are a result of the blood and sweat of the mineworkers they now wish to throw out into the streets. This is direct disinvestment in our people and our country (Lekorotsoana 2002).

It can be seen from this quotation that NUM is not only stating their position in terms of labour relations, but also in relation to the position of the families of the mineworkers. With large-scale retrenchments continuing in the sector the plight of the neglected families of mineworkers cannot be ignored, the more so if the complicated sociopolitical history is taken into account. Harmony, in particular, is exposed to these issues, because it had acquired a number of lower-grade mines, which in effect meant that certain of the mines were close to being worked out. Retrenchment is therefore often inevitable, especially when a stronger South African rand puts pressure on the goldmining industry which is largely export based. The planned takeover of the Gold Fields group (with its richer mines) by Harmony during 2004 was intended to help Harmony during difficult times. However, the takeover failed and cost thousands of rand in legal fees, causing both Harmony and Gold Fields share prices to plummet, with no benefits to the workers (see Klein & Formby [2004: 1] for news reports during the bidding process).

This episode illustrates that when the gold industry encounters difficult times it is often the labourers who pay the biggest price, namely their entire income. These men then have very little prospect of re-employment, and if they are re-employed, it is often with subcontractors under harsher conditions than before. Under such conditions, therefore, migrancy continues, as men then have a place to which they may return if they are retrenched.

In addition to retrenchments, the practice of subcontracting mineworkers increased steadily from the late 1980s and during the 1990s. In previous years, shaft-sinking only had been subcontracted, because it was regarded as a specialised function. From the 1990s “non-production” services (e.g. catering and cleaning) on the mines were also subcontracted. Other mining activities followed suit, and generally workers had fewer rights, less pay, and worse conditions than before they were employed by subcontractors. Retrenched mineworkers are often found among the ranks of subcontractors’ employees. Many of the subcontracted mineworkers have to move between mines, which effectively means that they are not able to settle with their families, but have to remain migrants (Bezuidenhout 1999: 73; Ulicki 1999: 61-65; Crush et al 2001: 7-21). The growing numbers of subcontracted mineworkers thus have fewer rights (also in relation to housing), even though the rest of the mineworkers enjoy improved working conditions and the freedom to choose their household arrangements.<sup>35</sup>

#### *2.4.2 The spread of HIV/AIDS; the housing of mineworkers and “foreign” labour*

Lurie (quoted by Schoofs 2001: 2) states the problem facing the goldmines with their masses of migrant workers in the era of HIV/AIDS as follows:

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<sup>35</sup> The trade unions entered into agreements with the Chamber of Mines to address the issues of subcontracting on the mines which is part of a worldwide phenomenon (Mantashe 1999: 67-68).

If you wanted to spread a sexually transmitted disease, you'd take thousands of young men away from their families, isolate them in single-sex hostels and give them easy access to alcohol and commercial sex. Then, to spread the disease around the country, you'd send them home every once in a while to their wives and girlfriends. That is basically the system we have.

The South African mining sector with its thousands of migrant workers does have a high HIV/AIDS prevalence rate amongst its workers. Being absent from families and households for lengthy periods of time often promotes high-risk sexual behaviour, that is, by having multiple sexual partners. Pregnancy and HIV infection patterns demonstrate that both husbands and wives are likely to be sexually active during separation periods as a result, of migrancy. In previous decades other sexually transmitted diseases were also linked to migrant status, and the high incidence of HIV infections amongst mineworkers is therefore hardly surprising (Campbell 1997: 273; Lurie 2000: 345; Niehaus 2002: 82; Delius & Glaser 2004: 109f).

The link between migrancy and the spread of HIV/AIDS became a contentious issue between the Chamber of Mines and NUM. During the 1980s and 1990s, the Chamber downplayed the role of migrancy in spreading the disease. NUM, however, maintained that the large number of black mineworkers who lived away from their families contributed to the spread of the disease. The fact that the HIV/AIDS prevalence rate in the mining sector is one of the highest amongst the different economic sectors gives weight to NUM's argument. A study undertaken in the late 1990s in KwaZulu-Natal found that mobile workers were three times more likely to have HIV infections than more stable workers. Yet, migration does interact with a variety of other factors, such as the cultural dynamics associated with regulating sexual behaviour. Migration can therefore not be described in isolation as the cause of the spread of HIV/AIDS, even though it is considered to be a key factor (Horwitz 2001: 105; 112-113).



It could be assumed that the abolition of the apartheid policies that had prevented the movement of black people, the development of the transportation infrastructure, and the established power of the trade unions (see Lurie 2000: 344) would lead to the end of labour migration, but in fact these factors simply brought about different life circumstances for workers on the goldmines. New leave arrangements now allow workers greater freedom to visit their homesteads according to their own schedules (Sechaba consultants 1997: 9). Mining houses also have separate rooms available within the single sex hostels for visiting wives, but the number of these rooms is limited and may only be booked for periods of two weeks at a time, and no provision is made for visiting children. Workers may move out of the hostels, in which case they receive a “living-out-wage” (or in some cases home ownership schemes, and rent and mortgage subsidies). Workers are thus free to live with their families in any available and affordable accommodation they are able to find, but different mining houses offer different choices.<sup>36</sup> In many cases housing shortages still persist and mineworkers are not always able find suitable accommodation outside the mine premises (Smit 2001: 536; Niehaus 2002: 82). James (1992: 83) states that “[b]ecause of the different responses, a centralised policy, agreed to by all members of the Chamber, was not possible”. This changed in 2003 when the Chamber of Mines and NUM signed agreements regarding the planning of accommodation in the goldmining sector. The agreements include the following: “50% of employees should be in a position to exercise accommodation options, including family accommodation, by the end of 2009”, and “[t]he parties commit themselves to normalise mining communities and allow accommodation options by the end of 2013”. Within this general agreement, every mine still negotiates individually with their workers, and certain mines will be in a position to reach these agreements earlier than others (Kebeni 2004).

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<sup>36</sup> See Hunter (1992: 93f) for JCI’s alternative housing policies on the goldmines prior to 1994 and Lipton (1980: 113ff) for a discussion on other mining sectors’ housing policies.

However, workers from outside the borders of South Africa may still not bring their families to live with them permanently. In 1996 a “miner’s amnesty” was announced, according to which “foreign” mineworkers who could prove that they had worked continuously from 1986 onwards in the South African mining sector could apply for permanent South African residence. The application rate has been low, and many of those who applied are not planning to bring their families to South Africa (Sechaba consultants 1997: 19-21; Crush & Tshitereke 2001: 59-60). Perhaps Wilson’s (1972: 193) realism of the 1970s should be borne in mind here, when she asked why mineworkers would want to bring their families to a place which is not suited to their families’ needs. Certain men wish to continue with the migrant system, but with a certain amount of flexibility to arrange their personal affairs and accommodation.<sup>37</sup>

On the other hand, Crush and Tshitereke (2001: 55-56) state that, in the 1990s, non-South African labour on the mines increased to over 50% of the total workforce on the mines. They also reiterate previous beliefs on the part of mine management that non-South African workers are keener to work on the mines, than South Africans (although such beliefs cannot be supported by sound evidence). The supplier countries of non-South African labour (Swaziland, Botswana and in particular Lesotho and Mozambique) benefit from the treaties (already signed in the 1970s) as they lessen their unemployment problems, and remittances, deferred pay and income tax are received from the mineworkers. It is therefore no surprise that the proposal to grant permanent South African residence permits to mineworkers from these countries was vehemently opposed by the supplier countries. In these former supplier countries (such as Swaziland [Leliveld 1997] and Malawi [Chirwa 1998: 76-79]) households suffered severely as South African labour started to replace the labour from these countries.

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<sup>37</sup> In Zambia there was an effort in the 1950s to push families towards a nuclear household model (the opposite of the South African process), but towards the end of the twentieth century it transpired that families used survival strategies which resulted in a variety of households to serve their needs best (Burawoy 1972: 13; Vaughan 1998: 173; Ferguson 1999: 167ff).

Whether or not changed housing practices will indeed slow the spread of HIV/AIDS on the mines remains to be seen; however, the end of forced migrancy for all workers (foreign workers included) will enable mineworkers to make their own choices on arranging their families' household needs – a basic human right that they had been denied for decades.

#### *2.4.3 Female mineworkers and masculinity*

In the 1990s women started to work as manual labourers on South African mines (even though there were a few cases of female labourers on certain South African mines [cf. McCulloch 2003]). Certain mining houses were at first apprehensive about the employment of women in any position since most female labourers would be in their fertile years, and the harmful effects of mining conditions on the unborn babies of pregnant women are particularly worrisome. Those mining houses that did employ women (e.g. Harmony Randfontein) followed the safe route, and removed women from underground work if it was established that they were pregnant. The small numbers of female workers (during 2003 less than 1% of the labourers were female at Randfontein) meant that alternative positions could be found for pregnant women above ground. These women went on the four-month maternity leave prescribed by law, but on their return they could be expected to resume their underground duties. According to the initial framework for women working underground, not only pregnancy policies, but also facilities and sexual harassment policies, were being developed. Separate change houses for women are needed, and underground toilets must contain sanitary bins and have lockable doors. Sexual harassment cases were to be dealt with according to the Labour Relations Act. None of the women lived permanently in the hostels, but when they went for training away from the shaft where they worked, safe accommodation, separate from the men, had to be provided for them in the hostels.

In 2003 Harmony was actively recruiting and training a much higher number of women labourers. Women with matriculation certificates who wanted to follow careers in mining received preference.

Little research has been done on women in mining up till now but women do challenge the masculine notions of men working on the mines. Strong masculine ideals are part of the mineworkers' identities – as the one Sotho song declares: “We are the bulls of the mines” (Moodie 1994: 18). Traditional notions of gender are challenged and renegotiated by the presence of the female workers (since the majority of men had not previously worked with a woman in a team they had not been challenged about their views on a practical level). More importantly, the breadwinner role (see detailed discussion in *Chapter 3*) associated with men, and in particular with fathers, is directly challenged by employing women amidst the high unemployment levels amongst male labourers. The ideology of gender equity of the current South African government is aimed at redressing past gender inequalities on the mines, although male victims of the previous exploitive system do not benefit from this ideology.

It is thus clear that, even though the mineworker (including the uneducated, semi-skilled, black, and sometimes foreign mineworker) has more worker rights now than was previously the case, economic realities may nullify these worker rights by way of retrenchment. Consequently few labourers wish to live with their families in the vicinity of a mine, and may prefer to have some rural base (homestead) to which to return if need be. Currently one thus finds a variety of household and family structures on mines, and the role of father under such diverse conditions will be further explored in this study.

## **2.5 Conclusion**

This chapter contains an overview of the goldmining industry in South Africa in three distinct periods, namely 1886 to 1971; 1972 to 1993 and 1994 to 2005. During the first period labour shortages were a constant problem and workers were sought from different areas. Reliance on a labour supply from neighbouring countries became the norm, and families adjusted by coping with migrancy. Compared to other industries in South Africa, mine wages remained low, and it was only when the gold price was determined by market forces, from 1972 onwards, that changes were made. Growing labour activism in South Africa and the development of strong trade unions also had an impact on increased wages. More South African blacks started to work on the goldmines, and this had a negative effect on the economies of neighbouring countries whose labourers had dominated the industry previously. The mechanisation of mining resulted in a declining need for unskilled workers during this time, which meant there was now an oversupply of labourers. Consequently, families either had economically active members who were absent or no breadwinners at all. The latter is part of broader capitalist forces, summarised in O'Laughlin's (1998: 1) words focusing on rural households: "[W]hat should be done when capital no longer needs the labour that it pulled from rural households over so many generations (?)"

In a post-apartheid era the goldmining industry is struggling with the legacy of mining hostels and with establishing a policy of fair treatment towards foreign and domestic labourers alike. The spread of HIV/AIDS, retrenchments, and subcontracting further complicate the running of gold mines. The goldmining industry is thus still plagued with human resource management problems to which there are no easy solutions.

## ***Chapter 3***

### **A theoretical orientation to fatherhood**

#### **3.1 *Introduction***

Until the 1960s relatively little research had been conducted internationally on fatherhood in general, especially when compared with research into the mother-child link (Green 1976: 1-2; Nsamenang 1987: 284-285; O'Reilly 2004). Moreover, information that had been gathered during the research on fatherhood that had been conducted had been collected mostly from wives and mothers (Cohen 1993: 1-2). Certain research trends were noted in earlier fatherhood studies – trends such as the focus on “father-absent” families in the 1960s and on resident fathers as caregivers of young children after 1980 (Hamilton 1977: 19-51; Parke 1985: 9; Lamb 1986: 14-16; Bruce et al 1995: 2-3, 61; Marsiglio 1995a: 7; Coltrane & Collins 2001: 435; Morrell, Posel & Davey 2003: 77-78). However, the concern with the father as a research topic increased dramatically from the 1980s onwards and this is exemplified by the amount of attention the topic attracted from the public as well as from scholars (Lamb 1986: 3; Segal 1990: 29; Marsiglio 1995a: 1; Smit 2000b: 1; Burgess & Russell 2003).

In South Africa studies on fatherhood lagged behind when compared to the international literature. However, studies on general family life (cf. Mbatha 1960; Mayer & Mayer 1974; Erasmus 1977; Erasmus 1979; Steyn & Boersema 1988; Viljoen 1994); the general living conditions of urbanised Africans (cf. Oliver-Evans 1991; Ramphela, 1993; Spiegel & Mehlwana 1997) and on children per se (cf. Burman & Reynolds 1986; Jones 1990; Kotzé 1993; Reynolds 1993; Reynolds 1995) do yield some insight into fatherhood. A number of studies focusing explicitly on fatherhood were carried out towards the end of the 1990s and at the beginning of the twenty-first century, for example, studies on the worker rights of fathers (Appolis 1998); the views of youth on fatherhood (Morrell

2005); a compilation of various studies on fatherhood in South Africa (Richter & Morrell 2006) and the male perception of fatherhood in double income families (Smit 2000a). With regards to this interest in the topic of fatherhood the establishment of the Fatherhood Project by the Child, Youth and Family Development Programme at the Human Science Research Council (HSRC) in 2003 (HSRC: <http://www.hsrc.ac.za/fatherhood/index.html>) is particularly significant because it draws attention to various research studies in the field, such as the aforementioned publication by Richter and Morrell (2006).

Apart from the academic work on fatherhood in South Africa there has also been a focus on fathers in the public domain. The Fatherhood Project is again of importance as it constitutes a comprehensive approach to fatherhood which includes not only research but also community awareness programmes. The latter is exemplified by the travelling photographic exhibition with the aim of casting fatherhood in a positive light:

The project was launched through a travelling exhibition of photographs, together with events organised by partner organisations in the project. The photographic exhibition, and a selection of posters drawn from it, continues to be shown around the country at conferences and other occasions at which the *constructive involvement of men in the care and protection of children is promoted* (Richter & Morrell 2006: vi, emphasis added).

This portrayal is in contrast to the negative images of men in relation to children (cf. Bartlett & Vann 2004: 100-101) which are often depicted in the South African media<sup>38</sup>, for example, fathers abusing their children (see, for example, South African research by Russell [1995] in this regard).<sup>39</sup> The purposefully positive

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<sup>38</sup> See, for example, the Baby Tshepang case where community members were quick to presume that innocent men were guilty of raping a child (Schmidt 2002: <http://www.aegis.com/news/suntimes/2002/ST020307.html>).

<sup>39</sup> In certain cases the presence of a father in a household is even described as detrimental if he, for example, abuses his children (Marsiglio 1995a: 10; Morrell 2006: 15).

portrayals of fatherhood in the travelling photographic exhibition hint at an activist element at work in the portrayal of fatherhood.<sup>40</sup> Amidst all the negative images of fathers a positive portrayal of fatherhood is a welcome development. The Fatherhood Project may also initiate more public discussion on the role of men in the lives of children as it also links with various other activist groups such as the South African Men's Forum.

There is a danger, however, that fatherhood may be typecast too easily (simply as negative or positive) and this could obscure the many facets of fatherhood (cf. Knijn 1995: 2-4). In order to avoid a simplification of the concept of fatherhood, the concept will be explored in more detail, starting with a discussion on the different conceptualisations of the term. In this context the way in which fatherhood is socially constructed in relation to a life course perspective will be considered. Secondly, the scripting perspective, and, in particular, its application to fatherhood, will be explained. With the scripting perspective as an orientation point, the background from the previous chapter, together with other literature, will shape the four subsidiary research questions of this study which were outlined in the introduction.

### **3.2 *Conceptualising fatherhood***

Although motherhood receives far more attention from social researchers than fatherhood, Walker (1995: 424) argues that even this term has not been clearly defined – “There appears to be a powerful, but unexamined, assumption at work that motherhood is so familiar an institution and experience that it does not need rigorous definition”. Furthermore, it is often assumed that biological motherhood is a natural phenomenon, and biological mothers are believed to be “real” mothers. Downe (2004: 165-178) reflects on this latter assumption regarding biological motherhood by illuminating the reactions of people to her status as a

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<sup>40</sup> In the 1970s a similar project also unfolded in other countries such as Sweden (Lamb 1986: 18).



stepmother. She had to encounter various perceptions that she was not a genuine mother as she had not undergone the rites of biological motherhood. She pleads for the acceptance of wider categories of motherhood. If one takes Downe's plea seriously then biology alone is not sufficient to determine motherhood.

When trying to define the concept fatherhood the same problems as is the case with motherhood arise regarding biological fatherhood versus other forms of fatherhood. Morrell (2006: 14), for example, distinguishes between biological, social and economic fatherhood. The term "biological father" refers to the man who procreated the child. Even though biological fatherhood appears to be a straightforward concept the implications thereof may become complicated when in-vitro fertilisation or multiple partners are involved (cf. Morell et al 2003: 74-76). Biological fatherhood in itself may also be deemed important and therefore have a cultural significance in various societies, for example in West Africa (Nsamenang 1987: 285). "Economic fatherhood" (often named the breadwinner role) refers to the financial contributions by men towards the material needs of children. "Social fatherhood" refers to taking care of a child in some way, or even living with a child who is not a biological child (the latter is referred to by Marsiglio [1995a: 9] as surrogate fatherhood). Townsend (1997: 407) describes the "social father" among the Batswana as the man who acknowledges the child and is seen by others as the father. In other contexts social fatherhood may also include various ways of interacting with children, such as teaching, playing, nurturing and providing guidance (cf. Gould & Gunther 1993: 46-55). It is clear that these different roles pertaining to fatherhood may be performed by the same man<sup>41</sup> (Townsend 1997: 406), but, in many cases, different men are involved in these different aspects of fatherhood.

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<sup>41</sup> The aim with these distinctions is not to ignore the importance of the interplay between biological and social factors as argued by Rossi (1985).

The above distinctions help to identify different aspects of fatherhood and this is useful in pursuing the main question of this research, namely: *How do black mineworkers conceptualise and experience fatherhood?* These distinctions may enhance insight into fatherhood by examining under what circumstances mineworkers fulfil the different roles of fatherhood, that is, the acknowledgment of biological fatherhood, and acceptance of the “economic father” and “social father” roles. This study is thus concerned with the agency of the father, but accepts that there are certain parameters which limit the agency of individuals. The discussion in the previous chapter on the historical orientation of the goldmining industry in South Africa gave an indication of the limitations imposed on fathers working within this industry. We may thus conclude that there are both active and passive aspects to fatherhood which may change over time.

Similarly, Wetherell (1996: 307) considers individuals to be both active and passive when they construct their life histories. She follows Connell’s reasoning that every social identity (in this case fatherhood) may be seen as a “project” in which people attempt to weave together the various aspects of their lives. Where individuals may be thus active in this sense they may also be passive, since there are collective ways in which certain concepts (including fatherhood) are understood.

Apart from the active and passive elements of life histories a focus on the life course approach<sup>42</sup> brings to the fore the way in which conceptualisations may change over time. In terms of the life course approach, the unique circumstances of an individual’s life are taken into account and understood within the context of major events that form the milieu of that individual’s life. Change and

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<sup>42</sup> The life course approach should not be confused with the notion of “family life cycle”. There are various models of the family life cycle, but in all of these the family is seen as consisting of certain stages through which a family will develop. The family life cycle is not appropriate for a study on fatherhood as it assumes too many variables (e.g. everybody gets married and they have children only after getting married). The family life cycle also tends to be static in its analysis as it provides pictures of a specific stage of the family without taking the history of the family into account. As the life cycle approach is concerned with averages, families that do not fit this general profile may be thought of as deviant. The emphasis is on generalisation and not on individual differences. Perhaps because families do not fit easily into generalisation the different models of the family life cycle vary between 3 and 24 stages (Elder 1978: 18; Morgan 1985: 177).

development over time, individual differences and generalisations are therefore considered. The life course perspective is specifically concerned with transitions which the individual or the family undergo (e.g. the birth of a baby, the death of a family member). The life course of the individual is seen as multidimensional because multiple identities are involved, for example, mineworker, father, husband. The timing of the transition together with historical events (such as migration), and the cumulative impact of earlier transitions on current transitions, are also of importance<sup>43</sup> (Elder 1978: 26; Morgan 1985: 176-178; Parke 1996: 14-15).

It was discussed how fatherhood comprises different roles, namely: biological, economic and social. In order to understand what transpires when men take up the various roles of fatherhood, the dynamic relationship between the individual and society should be taken into consideration. To enable such an understanding of fatherhood the life histories of individuals will be examined in this study and not only current life circumstances. In order to analyse systematically the relationship between an individual and society regarding fatherhood, the scripting perspective will now be discussed, as this perspective includes conceptualisations of fatherhood on collective and individual levels.

### **3.3 *A theoretical approach to fatherhood: scripting perspective***

The scripting perspective illuminates the distinction between societal expectations or norms regarding a specific matter, and an individual's experiences and expressions of that same matter. The scripting perspective uses

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<sup>43</sup> I want to argue that a life course perspective generally fits well with studying relations between family members. Amongst black South Africans the extended family was often portrayed as the norm, whereas the nuclear family form was described as a stage (Nzimande 1996: 44). It is for the latter reason that Ziehl (2002) argues that household and family types should be studied across the life cycle in order to understand their family structures. Snapshot pictures of family life may be misleading if long-term patterns are ignored. A mineworker will thus be encouraged to relate the main events of his individual and family life in order to obtain a broader framework for his depictions of fatherhood.

the term, social scripts, which is explained by Simon and Gagnon (1986: 98) as a “metaphor for conceptualising the production of behaviour within social life”.

Marsiglio (1995b: 79-80) uses the scripting perspective of Simon and Gagnon (1986: 98-104) to explain three “interrelated levels of fatherhood activity”.<sup>44</sup> According to this perspective behaviour follows once scripting has taken place by way of cultural scenarios, interpersonal scripts and intrapsychic scripts. The first level, namely cultural scenarios (Marsiglio also adds subcultural), is collective in nature. These scenarios include normative guidelines – how fathers should think, feel and act – as well as general knowledge, ideal images and stereotypes about fatherhood. Cultural scenarios are generic and are not fully able to predict behaviour under all circumstances.

The second level, which is the interpersonal scripting process, is the level where the actor “becomes involved in shaping the materials of relevant cultural scenarios into scripts for context-specific behaviour” (Simon & Gagnon 1986: 99). Marsiglio relates the interpersonal scripting process to actual experiences of and orientations to fatherhood. Other people, such as partners and circumstances over which a father may not be able to exercise control (e.g. working hours) are included at this level.

Simon and Gagnon explain intrapsychic scripting as necessary in settings where interpersonal scripting falls short. Such settings are characterised by differentiation and complexity of cultural scenarios with a variation of outcomes. The actor engages in internal dialogue which includes his/her multi-layered wishes. In terms of fatherhood, Marsiglio relates intrapsychic scripting to private images of the way in which a father wants to present himself. These images may

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<sup>44</sup> In 1985 Pedersen (1985: 437-441) stated that a theoretical model for fatherhood needs “pluralistic conceptions” of the paternal role. The scripting perspective as used by Marsiglio contains all the conceptions listed by Pederson. Earlier work of Marsiglio (1991: 274) also reveals an approach that distinguishes individual and cultural levels to aspects of fatherhood. Marsiglio et al (2000: 1176) list the multilevel scripting perspective as one of the main theoretical approaches to studies on fatherhood.

relate to the father's concerns about his performance in the role of a father and how other people assess this performance.

From the above descriptions it may be deduced that scripting involves more than simply acting out learned roles. Scripting also implies taking into account the reality of the context and then reflecting on the possibilities for action. The constraints and possibilities of specific contexts still allow an agent the freedom to make choices, although the options are not necessarily of their own making (the active and passive elements of social identities, as discussed by Wetherell [see 3.2 above], are thus also found in this context).

I want to elaborate on Marsiglio's scripting perspective by arguing that the enduring realities of interpersonal scripting and forceful intrapsychic scripting may lead to changes in cultural scripting. Thus if actual experiences almost always clash with normative guidelines, the normative guidelines may change. If this premise is accepted, the scripting perspective will not only help to explain the ways in which actors perceive and contemplate their lives, but also cast light on why dominant views (or cultural scripts) change over time. This "active element" (or agency) thus adds a more dynamic aspect to cultural scripts.

Marsiglio used specific examples to illustrate the different levels of scripting. These examples will be referred to briefly in the following discussion, but the focus will be on literature relevant to the study of fathers in the goldmining industry in relation to the scripting perspective.

### *3.3.1 The cultural scenario*

Marsiglio uses LaRossa's (1988) criticisms on the perceived changes relating to fatherhood in order to illustrate aspects related to the cultural scenario of fatherhood. LaRossa argues that the widely held perception of active/involved/new fatherhood (see discussion on "new fatherhood" below) is

overstating the actual changes that have taken place in men's behaviour towards their children in the USA. LaRossa, for example, makes the case that although women spend less time on childrearing (since far more women are formally employed compared to previous generations of women), it is erroneous to deduce that men therefore spend more time with children. In actual fact, compared with previous generations of children, children today spend more time in day care facilities and not with their fathers. The idealised image of fathers spending more time with their children is thus not in accordance with the reality of actual fathers spending time with their children. The demands made on fathers by work commitments act as a barrier to men's greater participation in the lives of their children. This argument supports the notion that fatherhood includes "stereotypes – people's perceptions of how typical fathers think, feel and act – as well as *ideal* images – how people think fathers should think, feel and act" (Marsiglio's 1995a: 3). LaRossa thus draws attention to a persistent cultural scenario which, he argues, is not based on evidence but rather on misconstrued and ambiguous deductions. He does admit that minimal behavioural changes have taken place, but more importantly, that men are thinking differently about fatherhood. Men feel that they should spend more time with their children even though they do not necessarily manage to do so. LaRossa's comments on cultural scenarios show that this level of the scripting perspective is distinctly recognisable and does not correspond perfectly with behaviour.

I would suggest that the way fatherhood is understood today (i.e. cultural scenario) may be linked to "traditional images" of fatherhood. Southern African studies focusing on the way in which men view masculinity reveal that men often "use (or invent) tradition" to justify certain behaviour (Van der Vliet 1991: 221; White 1999: 109; Becker 2001: 11). Spiegel and Boonzaaier (1988: 48-49) argue that, when traditional institutions are scrutinised, one often finds that external factors influenced the institution, although there may be some continuity with the past. Images of fatherhood are therefore both historically embedded and context specific as was alluded to in the historical orientation in *Chapter 2*.

The following three images of fatherhood are widespread and recurring in the literature – they constitute stereotypes and cultural ideals, and therefore represent cultural scenarios: patriarchy, the father as breadwinner, and “new fatherhood”. These images are not necessarily mutually exclusive (cf. Pleck & Pleck 1997: 33) although there may be some succession in their prevalence.

### *3.3.1.1 Patriarchal relations*

Patriarchy has different meanings in different contexts (cf. Knibiehler 1995; Walby 1997). Here patriarchy is approached from the following three angles: Firstly, the objections of women to patriarchy is indicated; secondly, and related to the first aspect, is a focus on the division of labour within families, specifically in relation to fatherhood and motherhood; lastly, studies on the relationship between men and their children are discussed.

Within western societies the conjugal couple is described “as a major site of patriarchal power and women’s subordination” (Elliot 1996: 10). A central theme within the feminist movement was to point out that, within such conjugal relationships, men wielded power over women. Women protested that they were perceived as mothers, daughters, wives or sisters only (Oakley in Cohen 1993: 2). In other words women are perceived in relation to others and not for who they are themselves. Women are always the “Other” in the de Beauvoir (1949) sense, and never the “Subject” or the main actor. Men, on the other hand, have been studied mostly for who they are (i.e. as “Subjects”), and not in terms of the relationships they have with other family members (cf. Seidler 1994: 148-150). The feminist movement challenged these views in which women were perceived only as “Other” and, over time, these protests resulted in altered perspectives of women. These changed perspectives led to changed circumstances for some women living in western societies, for example, increasing numbers of women entering the job-market as opposed to being full-time housewives from the 1950s

onwards (Lewis 1986: 1-2; Bronstein 1988: 4-6; Brayfield 1995: 321-322). Dual-career families<sup>45</sup> and consequent research on this topic also proliferated from the 1970s (cf. Rapoport & Rapoport 1976; Gilbert 1985) although it was recognised that dual-career families do not automatically lead to gender equality in the home.

Another stream of research focused on masculinity, and in particular, on the changing roles of men (see for example Connell [1995] on developments in Australia; Gerson [1993] in the USA & Segal [1990] in Britain). This research included men's relations with their children as well as other intimate relationships. Segal shows how, within a westernised framework, the empowerment of women challenges patriarchy and men's sense of worth:

... this reassertion of fatherhood can create new problems for women. Significantly, this growing stress on fatherhood has occurred at a time when men's actual power and control over women and children is declining. In the fifties the father was essential, but only, it seemed, for financial support, status and legitimacy: his wife and children relied upon him even when he totally ignored them. An alternative way of viewing the emphasis on the importance of fathering today would be to see it as a reassertion of the essential nature, significance and rights of fathers at a time when slight but significant shifts in relations between men and women have meant that some women are better placed to question any automatic assumption of paternal rights. Men's hold on their status as fathers is less firm and secure than ever before (Segal 1990: 26-27, emphasis in the original).

It may be deduced from the above quotation that patriarchy is no longer firmly in place. In African settings patriarchy had undergone dramatic changes as well

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<sup>45</sup> Dual-career families are different from dual-earner families. In the latter women perform paid work because of economic necessity and not because they choose to – they often have few career prospects (Hertz 1986: 5).



(related to the changes in masculinity which Morrell [1998: 620ff] and Peacock [2005: 147-148] describe) as was shown by the observations of Harries (1994: 90-100) on the patriarchal structures in pre-colonial Mozambique. Harries explained how the Mozambican patriarchal structure underwent remarkable changes when migrant labour was first introduced. Although the patriarchal structure was initially undermined by the fact that migrant labour brought with it an independent source of income for young men, the system adapted mechanisms (such as sending young men to bring money for *lobola* and thereby saving existing cattle for the family) to strengthen patriarchy.<sup>46</sup> Despite this endurance of patriarchy, women enjoyed greater relative independence in their daily chores as more men migrated. In other contexts it was also shown that women have more decision-making power if adult men are not living with them (Maloka 1997; Sideris 2005: 104). However, the migrating men's main source of power became their wages, and women and children endured hardships if deserted by their husbands and fathers. Thus, although patriarchy changed under migratory conditions to the goldmines, it did not vanish, as economic power was still mainly in the hands of men.

In the wider South African society (meaning outside of the mining context) patriarchy is still a recurring theme (cf. Lesejane 2006: 173-174), although young black women do not always adhere to the traditional notions of a dominating patriarchal system when they argue for a more egalitarian relationship to benefit themselves and their children (Van der Vliet 1991: 221; Campbell 1994a: 118-129). When Bozzoli (1991: 166) writes on the *Women of Phokeng* in the twentieth century, she states: "black women – often abandoned by their men and seeking independence from pre-industrial restrictions – were capable in certain cases of reshaping the family form in new ways." Patriarchy thus is not a static concept and it manifests itself in different forms (cf. Bozzoli 1983; Marciano 1986).

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<sup>46</sup> In Matsinhe's (2004) research into masculinity in Mozambique amongst men in the twenty-first century it is shown that the impact of the mining sector on patriarchy (and masculinity) has diminished in modern day Mozambique.

Despite active attempts on the part of women to reshape gender relations, researchers still find a continued role division according to gender in terms of which women are primarily responsible for child care (Ramphela 1993: 83; White 1999: 95), and motherhood is seen as “essential” for women but optional for men (Walker 1999: 445). Newman (1999: 268) states that women are socialised into believing that “having children is a primary source of self-identity”. With regard to men Bruce et al (1995: 55) state that cultural beliefs may even prevent men from being directly involved in caring for children. In this connection they cite the example where Zimbabwean fathers “were surprised to learn in an educational seminar that they should play with their children from birth onwards to ensure healthy development; they expected to wait until their children could talk before interacting with them”. Bruce et al (1995: 49) conclude that “[w]hile women’s lives have been characterised primarily in terms of motherhood, men’s lives have been characterised largely without reference to fatherhood”. The term “intense mothering” (Hay in Ranson 2004: 88) captures the notion that children need the constant, undivided attention of their mothers. The link between mothers and children is thus regularly taken for granted while the link between fathers and children is easily downplayed.

Patriarchal power does not relate to women only, but also to the relationship between fathers (or adult men) and children. In a study conducted in Zambia relationships between men and their children were described as distant and it was stated that this was regarded as “normal in African families” (Simpson 2005: 572). Campbell’s (1994a) research within a South African township indicates how fathers feel that they have no authority over their children, and that their daughters (17-21 years old) are already involved in parenting because of teenage pregnancies over which fathers have no control. Delius and Glaser (2002) explain this diminishing patriarchy in greater detail when focusing on the sexual education by parents, grandparents and other adults of (urbanised) black youth from the 1930s onwards. They describe a process whereby youths formed

subcultures that were not under any adult control. Youths initially became detached from their fathers, but eventually also from other adult members of the extended family. In the 1960s and 1970s schools still performed the task of guiding the youth (those who did not belong to gangs) and also provided a haven of a kind from gangs, but this situation also changed because of the inferior Bantu Education and political unrest of the time. Eventually no sexual supervision or guidance was given to the youth – those who tried to do so were ridiculed. Parental guidance thus became a foreign concept. At the same time, young men belonging to gangs impregnated young women without there being any sanctions against this practice. The responsibility of raising these children was left to the maternal kin with the result that young men were not confronted with the demands of raising children. The youth's own lack of meaningful relationships with their fathers thus became self-perpetuating. Although the Delius and Glaser study focused on sexual guidance (or lack thereof) the study does also suggest that other forms of adult authority deteriorated in the same way.

To conclude, it has been shown that women actively try to reshape gender relations in order to break down patriarchal rule. Certain researchers, however, find continued traditional notions of parenting in terms of which mothers are primarily responsible for nurturing children, and in certain sectors of the South African society, it was even found that children do not have meaningful relationships with their fathers. Some children believe that their fathers' main paternal responsibility is to provide financially for children. This breadwinner role will now be discussed in greater detail in the next section.

### *3.3.1.2 The breadwinner role of fatherhood*

When focusing on the social construction of fatherhood, the breadwinner (or economic) role of fatherhood is found to be salient in several societies (cf. Cohen 1993: 1; Bruce et al 1995: 57; Ishi-Kuntz 1995: 102; Marsiglio 1995a: 3; Marsiglio et al 2000: 1175; Simpson 2005: 572) and certain researchers simply associate

fatherhood with the economic role of breadwinner only (cf. Mazibuko 2000: 93). The specific association between fatherhood and breadwinner manifests itself differently in different societies (cf. Benson 1968: 44-48). Gerson (1993: 17f) and Connell (1995: 28f) show that this association of breadwinner with fatherhood emerged in response to the way in which industrial capitalism developed in western countries such as Britain and the USA. Initially men and women were employed as labourers, but increasingly the male wage worker was favoured.<sup>47</sup> Connell argued further that this widely assumed role of men as providers manifests itself in industrialised settings where “men as providers” are often equated with “men as wageworkers”. The ideology of the male breadwinner became increasingly dominant.

In South Africa industrial capitalism developed amid colonialism and racial segregation policies and this had important implications for the way in which black male wage labour developed. It was shown in *Chapter 2* how black men were coerced into wage work (specifically as mineworkers) by the state and capitalist structures. Regardless of the complexity of industrial developments, the same belief amongst black men regarding the father as breadwinner was found in a South African study carried out in the 1970s (Erasmus 1977: 16-21) and another in the 1980s (Møller 1986: 575). A later study in the 1990s by Spiegel and Mehlwana (1997: 27) shows that fathers in *stable* relationships see themselves as worthless if they are not able to send money to their families. In these cases other family members (often wives and children) also experience feelings of anger towards fathers who are not able to provide for their economic needs. Campbell (1994b: 40) reports similar findings in a township context where children are angry with fathers who are not able to provide for them financially. In a later study Campbell (1997: 278) found this same concern regarding the breadwinner role amongst mineworkers who commented on the demands of working in the mine as follows: “We commit ourselves as men because if we

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<sup>47</sup> There is some controversy about how this shift from female, male and child labour to male wageworkers came about (cf. Gerson 1993).

don't do it our children will suffer." The respondents in this study link the role of a man who assumes the difficult job of mine work with that of being a responsible father. In the case of non-resident fathers (which includes migrants) Marsiglio et al (2000: 1182) remarks that "it is not the total income earned but the amount that it is transferred to children that is central."

The breadwinner role is thus deemed important but, at the same time, it is difficult (if not impossible) for men who are unemployed to fulfil this role (cf. Morrell 2006: 21-22). Even men on contract work (see discussion on the time period 1994-2005 in *Chapter 2* on the increase of contract work) find it difficult to meet their families' material needs:

Life is so unfair. I found myself bound to work for a contractor although it pays so little because I could not face my children and tell them I had no job, that is why I could not provide them with clothing and food. It made me feel irresponsible (Crush et al 2001: 21).

The problems are seen in the family. You go home and you find that you're more in debt than when you were not working. In the long run you end up deciding that it's better to stay home than come home to find your children hating you and your wife yelling at you about money and not coming home often enough ... Sub-contractors must remember that we are married and have families to support. We don't go looking for jobs to be away from our homes, but to support our families (Crush et al 2001: 27).

The despair evident in the words above about not being able to fulfil the role of breadwinner adequately is echoed in Connell's (1995: 20f) work where he shows that waged employment may easily be lost, especially with growing mechanisation (technological development) and, more recently, globalisation with

the concomitant privatisation, restructuring and downsizing. Moore (in O’Laughlin 1998: 2) also argues that “global patterns of accumulation” led to “unemployment for unskilled workers” and a “corresponding decline of the male breadwinner role”. This is especially true for men in developing countries, but also for men working in unskilled and semi-skilled industries worldwide (cf. Ray & Mcloyd 1986: 339ff). Townsend (1997: 405) argues that “the ‘irresponsibility’ of men who do not contribute to the support of their children” is often found in social science literature, even though the life circumstances of men are not included in most of these studies. It thus becomes clear that, if fatherhood is linked with the breadwinner role only, fathers may lose this singular attachment with their children if they lose their source of income. In an industrialised society the breadwinner role is a salient aspect of fatherhood for men and their families, but it is also fragile part of fatherhood if it is largely dependent on insecure, waged earnings.

Women are increasingly also becoming breadwinners (Green 1976: 6) and, apart from certain men not being able to fulfil the breadwinner role, certain women are increasingly able to fill this role. A father who is not able to secure wage earnings may thus have a female partner who is able to do so. In the goldmining industry in South Africa today the employment of female labourers underground also challenges the male breadwinner role as women take on jobs in an environment that has been associated with men’s earning power.

In the early 1990s policymakers in the USA considered broader definitions of responsible fatherhood precisely because young and poor fathers were not able to be “responsible fathers” if this term implied being a breadwinner only (Marsiglio 1995b: 90). Despite the dominance of the ideology of the breadwinner role it is possible to trace a recognition of other aspects of fatherhood in the USA where roles such as “moral overseer”; “sex role model” and “nurturer” also emerged in studies (Lamb 1986: 4-7; Marsiglio 1995a: 3). Similarly in South African literature one finds other perceptions according to which fathers are also described as

important role models (Viljoen 1993: 155; Lesejane 2006: 176), heads of households (Walker 1995: 421), being in charge of family rituals (Ramphela 1993: 53) and being responsible for discipline (Campbell 1994a: 41). A strong indication that men themselves construct fatherhood in broader terms than simply that of the breadwinner role is evident in the success of a South African trade union in the retail sector in bargaining for paternal rights such as paternity leave (Appolis 1998).

The so-called “new fatherhood” embraces far more aspects of fatherhood than that of being a breadwinner or a patriarch only.

### *3.3.1.3 “New fatherhood”*

Related to conceptualisations of fatherhood that are broader than that of the breadwinner role only are certain studies on fatherhood during the past few years which focus on the “new emerging fatherhood”.<sup>48</sup> The emphasis in this context is on the roles of fathers in the household. In the twentieth century the term “new fatherhood” was used to describe a father who was involved in the different phases of the child’s life and who took responsibility for the physical and emotional care of children (cf. Lamb 1986: 7; Bronstein 1988: 3; Segal 1990: 26ff; Coltrane 1995: 256; Hochschild 1995: 219; Knijn 1995: 5). Smit (2005) argues that the emphasis in industrialised societies on the man’s earning role made the absence of the father in the private sphere more apparent (in other words he may have been absent in earlier contexts as well, but his absence was less visible). The large number of women entering the job market is also believed to have initiated a greater degree of involvement on the part of the father as it was the only way in which many families were able to cope (Pleck, Lamb & Levine 1986: 13; Hochschild 1995: 222). Despite certain scepticism regarding the involved

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<sup>48</sup> Morrell (2001: 4) refers to the concept of the “New Man”, which includes aspects that correlate with the “new emerging fatherhood” but the former term also includes wider gender concerns, such as supporting women to develop careers (cf. also Edley & Wetherell 1995: 141).

father (cf. LaRossa 1988) there is undeniable evidence that, overall, men are more involved than previous generations of fathers in sharing the responsibilities of the household and childrearing (cf. Steinmetz, Clavan & Stein 1990: 109ff; Bruce et al 1995: 55f; Popenoe 1996: 119-121; Popenoe, Cunningham & Boulton 1998: 257; Coltrane & Collins 2001: 116ff). Changed life circumstances (the interpersonal scripting circumstances experienced by many) may thus lead to new cultural scripts.

The bulk of this research on “new fatherhood” focused on white, middle class, nuclear households in the UK, the USA, Sweden, Australia, Canada, Japan and Germany (cf. Segal 1990; Gerson 1993; Hood 1993; Smit 2005). To my knowledge the only South African studies exploring aspects of “new fatherhood” in some depth are those of Smit (2000a) and Morell (2001). Smit’s (2000a: 656-657) research indicates that the roles of white South African men are changing towards greater involvement in household and fathering tasks (she drew a non-probable sample of 400 in the Gauteng area for her study). This indicates that a pattern similar to that found in western society, namely, greater involvement on the part of fathers, is emerging amongst white fathers in a certain area of South Africa. With regards to “new fatherhood” amongst black men in South Africa there are some indications that the same pattern is developing amongst young, black, male professionals (Morrell 2001: 32). To my knowledge the notion of the “new emerging fatherhood” amongst black working class men has not been researched in any depth in South Africa, although Appolis’s (1998) discussion on bargaining for paternity rights in the ranks of the working class alludes to aspects related to “new emerging fatherhood”.

Using various research studies the following three cultural scripts have been discussed: patriarchy, the breadwinning role and “new emerging fatherhood”. These cultural scripts may overlap (cf. Pleck & Pleck 1997: 35) but they can also exist independently. Hence the first specific research question of this study



focuses on the understanding of fatherhood amongst goldmine workers: *How do the respondents characterise fatherhood?*

### *3.3.2 Interpersonal scripting*

In the 1950s and early 1960s a dominant picture of a middle class western family, consisting of a husband and wife with their offspring (nuclear family) living in a separate household (neo-local residence), emerged. The husband was expected to be the breadwinner whilst the mother was the homemaker who also provided emotional support to her family. The relationship between the parents was assumed to be based on camaraderie, and a high premium was placed on fidelity (cf. Steyn, Van Wyk & Le Roux 1987: 250f; Popenoe 1996: 81ff; Newman 1999: 209-212). Cultural scenarios, such as the breadwinner role of the father as discussed in the previous section, are often based upon this nuclear family model and, even though this family with its underlying value system is a widespread phenomenon, there are also many other family forms and household structures. Delius and Glaser's (2004: 110) statement on the African marriage, for example, contains a very different view from the depiction above regarding fidelity: "African marriage, whether monogamous or polygamous, was conceived to designate homes and responsibility for children rather than to contain all sexual activity." Interpersonal scripting addresses the fact that life experiences vary and often do not correspond with cultural scenarios.

In certain cases widespread, persisting experiences may change cultural scenarios – in *Chapter 2* it was explained how the families in Lesotho and Mozambique adjusted or invented norms to regulate sexual unfaithfulness and the resultant pregnancies. Adjustments were thus made to cultural scenarios in order to accommodate migrancy. Ramphele's (1993) research on hostel dwellers provides another instance of how practicalities may affect the cultural scripts of fatherhood. Ramphele's study is very specific to a (non-mining) hostel context within a specific time period, but it does demonstrate the way in which household

arrangements may influence notions of fatherhood. She indicates how space constraints forced changed behaviour amongst men towards their infant children:

Most children are treated with gentleness and tenderness by both parents during infancy. The sharing of the same bed by all three, *which goes against all rules of tradition*, may perhaps be a facilitating process for the bonding which occurs. The father cannot turn a deaf ear to a crying baby right next to him, whereas it is easy to do so if newborn and mother are secluded in a different room or hut with other women for support (Ramphela's 1993: 83, emphasis added).

However, Ramphela (1993: 83-84) observes how traditional childrearing practices still influence the way older children are treated when they grow too big to share the parental bed. Women remain responsible for the wellbeing of children in the hostels. If children are sent to other family members in rural areas the role of the father is seen mainly in customary rituals such as circumcision. Apart from the infant stage where practicalities force men to adapt the cultural scripts of fatherhood, men fall back on familiar cultural scripts for fathers once the "special circumstances" of proximity have been removed.

Another practical experience of fathering is that fathering does not always take place within the context of a marriage or a stable relationship. The fact of whether or not fathers live with their children was found to be pertinent in father-child-relationships in the USA (Marsiglio 1995b: 86). The relationship between men and the mothers of children is often crucial in determining to what extent fathers are involved in the lives of their children in cases where the ending of an union between a mother and father often results in the father having much less contact with the children than before. Research in Jamaica suggests that this is especially true in cases where the children live with another man (Bruce et al 1995: 57). In the USA it was found that, after a break-up with the mother, a father

often had only indirect commitments towards his children, based on the relationship with the mother. A non-resident father may have to face a hostile relationship with the mother of his children and possibly even with her new partner. It seems therefore that fathers do not necessarily believe that they have direct commitments towards their biological children. It was also found that men do not necessarily have emotional ties with children whom they seldom see (Marsiglio 1995b: 87, 93; Seltzer & Brandreth 1995: 168). It seems thus that biological fathers may easily be obstructed from social fathering if the biological fathers do not live with their children, and if they do not have a sound relationship with the biological mother of a child. In such cases a mother's new partner may then become the social father. Non-residential fathers therefore pose a particular case of fathering (Michaels 1989: 411). Thus both *household structures* and the *relationships with mothers of children* are important in determining the kind of relationship men have with children.

In the case of migrancy Bruce et al (1995: 53) state: "In any type of economy, poor economic conditions militate against father-child contact when fathers are compelled to migrate in search of work or spend long hours at a job or jobs." Research in the USA and Europe also shows that migrancy (sometimes referred to as "guestworkers") may easily lead to the break-up of families, and this in turn may lead to matriarchal family systems (Eisikovits & Wolins 1983: 239-240). Migrancy, as described in *Chapter 2*, presents a special case where men do not live with their families. Initially men worked on the mines as migrants because they wanted to earn money for a specific reason related to a family matter, for example *lobola*. However, the historical discussion in the previous chapter showed that increasingly, as the twentieth century advanced, mineworkers were forced to live away from their families due to labour demands. Although the father's absence may have been emotionally unsettling for children, the reason for his absence was not because of strained family relationships. Migrancy thus constitutes a special case of father absence, but it was also shown that the financial contributions of non-resident fathers were particularly crucial. In fact, the

concept of a stretched household which was discussed in relation to migrancy (see *Chapter 2*) indicates that household members may not live or eat together on a daily basis, but that those members living away from the household do contribute economically to that household (Spiegel et al 1996: 11-12). The economic aspect of fathering thus became the main role the migrant father was able to play. It was, however, also shown that certain mineworkers are able to live with their families on a daily basis (especially after 1994), and the relationships resident and non-resident fathers have with their respective children will therefore be compared in this study.

Gerson's (1993) work on the interplay between fatherhood and commitments to employment is used by Marsiglio to explain interpersonal scripting. Gerson shows how altered work expectations and relationships with partners in the USA affected fatherhood. For the respondents in this study relationships with partners and work expectations are also crucial (compare the sociopolitical realities for fathers working in the goldmine industry as outlined in *Chapter 2*), although, in view of the historical migrancy of work commitments, household arrangements also become relevant. These conclusions form the basis on which the following two research questions are formulated: *How do migrant and resident respondents' experiences of fatherhood differ?* and *What influence do biological mothers or female partners have on father-child relationships as described by the respondents?*

### *3.3.3 Intrapsychic scripting*

Marsiglio's (1991) own work is cited as an example of intrapsychic scripting where the different responses of men to the same life events are questioned. Men construct images of the way in which they present themselves as fathers (Marsiglio 1995: 80). It may be difficult to give an account of this level of activity in the research but it is an aspect of which one should be aware when conducting and analysing research data.

In terms of migrancy, Mashegoane (1990: 72) argues that, because the couple did not live together, the marriage of the migrant worker became more an institution than a relationship. However, according to Mashegoane, the migrant husband does have a culturally defined expectation (i.e. cultural scenario) of loyalty on the part of his wife. The husband, on the other hand, may become “an idealised support provider” in the eyes of the wife. I would argue that this substitution of idealised images for real relationships was not confined to couples only, and children also developed certain images regarding their father. If actual family members are not present for most of the time, images of these people take the place of their physical presence (see similar findings by Ramphele & Richter 2006: 75). These images are often nurtured with the aid of cultural expectations (i.e. cultural scenarios). It is particularly difficult for men to portray themselves as fathers if they do not live with their children, and their fathering is often mainly limited to economic fathering. Cultural ideals can thus easily dominate the construction of fatherhood within migrant relationships, and this may be furthered by the individual’s own construction of the self.

Intrapsychic scripting can also be seen in the manner in which men portray themselves. In Campbell’s (1997: 279) study mineworkers discussed fears about their wives’ unfaithfulness; their concerns with children who grew up without their guidance, and guilt about money being wasted on drink and commercial sex. She sums up as follows: “These absent families were never far away in their accounts of their lives and their health.” Even if the men’s behaviour does not seem to be that of concerned fathers, they may depict themselves as fathers who care.

The way in which fatherhood is understood by mineworkers will also be influenced by their previous life experiences. The life histories of the mineworkers in this study will thus include the miners’ experiences of their relationships with their own fathers. The depictions of these relationships with fathers will be examined in order to compare them with the miners’ descriptions of their own

relationships with their children. It should, however, be borne in mind that another study found that fathers do not necessarily use specific fathers, even their own, as role models for their own fathering experiences (Daly in Marsiglio 1995a: 15).

Jung and Honig (in Sharabany, Sher & Gal-Krauz 2006: 242) identify three ways in which experiences with parents can influence the way in which men father their own children. Firstly, a positive experience often leads to modelling behaviour on the part of men with that of their fathers. Secondly, if the relationship is perceived as unsatisfactory, men may try to compensate for the ills or neglect they felt they experienced. Thirdly, men may father differently because society in general changed their stance on fatherhood – an age cohort effect. Some men may therefore purposefully avoid their own fathers as role models and make use of media representations, other fathers they know or even their own partners on which to model their fathering behaviour. Some men purposefully use their own fathers as models of how they *do not* want to be as fathers. Their own fathers are thus negative role models in their lives (Pleck et al 1986: 13; Gould & Gunther 1993: 17ff; Daly 1995: 29). For the purposes of this study the following question will be asked with reference to intrapsychic scripting: *What are the respondents' own recollections of being fathered?* and indirectly *How do the respondents characterise fatherhood?*

### **3.4 Concluding remarks**

This chapter started with a discussion of the different conceptualisations of fatherhood. The distinction between the different fatherhood roles, that is, biological, economic and social, is a useful distinction. In exploring how men construct fatherhood in this study it will be of value to ask if and under what circumstances men take up the challenges of the different fatherhood roles.

It was argued that a life course perspective is crucial in understanding fatherhood amongst mineworkers. A life course perspective will include different household arrangements and earlier life experiences to give depth to the mineworkers' views on fatherhood.

Subsequently the scripting perspective, with its three interrelated levels of fatherhood conceptions, was examined. This perspective allows for an analysis of individual and collective conceptualisations of fatherhood. The first scripting level, cultural scenarios, comprises collective notions of fatherhood that may include stereotypes and ideal images of a father. Cultural scenarios are associated with patriarchy, the breadwinner role and "new emerging fatherhood". Although there are indications that men are involved in caring relationships with children, men are still perceived as being primarily responsible for providing financially for their children's material needs and leaving the nurturing aspects to women.

The second scripting level, interpersonal scripting, relates how actual experience does not necessarily correspond with cultural scripts and how individuals have to adjust their views in order to accommodate real life. In a specific context, such as a particular household structure, a man may have to deviate from cultural expectations because it is necessary for him to do so. Household structures and relationships with mothers of children are particularly important in determining the relationships men have with children.

Intrapsychic scripting, the third scripting level, shows that people do not only adjust to accommodate actual life circumstances, but they also express themselves according to the way they want others to perceive them. An internal dialogue takes place as, in this case, a father reflects on his role and he is conscious of the way in which others perceive him. There is clearly an overlap between these three conceptions of fatherhood, but each level is distinctly recognisable and facilitates a better understanding of fatherhood.

The broad research question for this study is: *How do black mineworkers in the goldmining industry conceptualise and experience fatherhood in present-day South Africa?* In order to address this main question the question has been operationalised by asking the following four subsidiary questions as guided by the scripting perspective's levels:

- How do the respondents characterise fatherhood?
- What are the respondents' own recollections of being fathered?
- How do migrant and resident respondents' experiences of fatherhood differ?
- What influence do biological mothers or female partners have on father-child relationships as described by the respondents?



## **Chapter 4**

### **Methodology**

#### **4.1 Introduction**

*Chapter 4* starts with a discussion of the qualitative approach which is the methodological orientation of this study. The link between a qualitative approach and the scripting theory that guides this study is briefly outlined. The research design of the study is then discussed. This discussion includes a general orientation to the study; a description of the research method (mainly in-depth interviews) and the sampling; a brief overview of the way in which the interviews were conducted; a description of the data analysis and interpretation; and some remarks on the validity of the data. Certain critical reflections on the research process form part of all qualitative research (Mason 2002: 5); therefore ethical considerations, my role as interviewer, together with that of the various translators, are also considered. The chapter concludes with an overview of the research setting and the respondents.

#### **4.2 Methodological orientation**

The scripting perspective, which focuses on cultural scenarios, interpersonal and intrapsychic scripting, is applied here to a particular setting, namely, fatherhood within the goldmining industry. The views and conceptualisations of the respondents, which have been extrapolated from the four research questions discussed in the previous chapter, are investigated from the scripting perspective. The meaning men attach to fatherhood is under scrutiny, and rich descriptive information is needed from the respondents. Thus the data required for such a study has to be embedded and context-specific, which implies a qualitative research design. This study is thus undertaken as qualitative research from an interpretative stance (cf. Leedy 1993: 144; Mason 2002: 64; Neuman 2003: 76).

Various sources of information were used to understand the life world of the mineworker in greater depth. Burowoy (1991) is a proponent of immersing oneself in the research environment and in the life world of the subjects. This approach is most suitable for doing research as a participant observer, but the principles may also be of value in other research methods. Even though Burowoy's extended case study method was not followed in this study, it did inspire certain guidelines: I used not only the transcripts of the interviews, but also all other information I was able to gather from the environment by observing the interaction between respondents and colleagues, and by going down a mineshaft in order to experience life underground. Not all information gathered would, of course, cast light on the men's conceptualisations of fatherhood, but additional sources of information such as these provide a mental framework for understanding how these men occupy themselves and the type of world in which they live. A broader understanding of the men was thus sought in order to provide insight into how they present themselves, under what type of conditions they work, how they interact with one another, and so forth.

### **4.3 *The research design***

A general orientation to the research environment introduces the following discussion on the research design. This is followed by a discussion on the sampling method; the interviews which were used as the main research method; the data analysis of the interview transcripts; and a discussion of the validity of the research process.

#### **4.3.1 *Orientation to the research environment***

In order to gain access to black mineworkers I approached a goldmine of Harmony in Randfontein, southwest of Johannesburg. A number of interviews with mine officials followed, the aim of which was to provide the necessary orientation for understanding the working world and, in the case of the hostel

dwellers, the living arrangements of the respondents. Accordingly interviews were conducted with two human resource officials,<sup>49</sup> a shop steward from NUM; a health worker from the mine hospital; two hostel governors; a hostel clerk; and a number of people involved in the training of mineworkers. The latter took place underground, where I also had two informal group discussions with workers training to become miners.<sup>50</sup>

Observation was also used to supplement the interviews, as I spent a number of days trying to understand the mining environment, but also in waiting for delayed/postponed appointments with respondents. Usually I assumed the role of complete observer, although I sometimes engaged with those who could speak English in order to understand as much about their lives as possible.<sup>51</sup>

#### 4.3.2 Sampling

The sample for this study had to be large enough to include a cross-section of men, but also of a size that would enable me to gather rich descriptive data on individuals. I therefore decided to interview 30 mineworkers in a first round of interviews. Since the aim here was not to find a representative sample, I used the non-probability sampling method of purposive or judgemental sampling. This sampling method is used when the purpose of the study is to gain an in-depth understanding of a certain issue. It is used under various circumstances, such as when identifying particular types of cases for in-depth analysis (Babbie & Mouton 2001: 166-167; Neuman 2003: 213-214). Since I wanted to obtain in-depth information from a variety of men of different ages

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<sup>49</sup> During the first interview I had with a Human Resources Officer he repeatedly asked me whether I wanted coffee, an offer I declined, but then he mentioned that he had to drink some coffee in order to keep awake. When I asked him why he was so tired, he told me that he had become a father for the first time the previous night, when his wife had given birth to a baby girl. Although I felt somewhat awkward about the fact that he had kept his appointment with me despite these events I later came to consider this as a rather appropriate note on which to begin my research into fatherhood in the mines.

<sup>50</sup> Although the term "miner" is often used quite loosely, technically it refers to a certified miner who acts as an overseer underground. Working as a certified miner involves high levels of responsibility, such as ensuring that it is safe for a team to enter a workspace. A miner can be (and often is) held legally responsible for accidents that occur underground.

<sup>51</sup> With those with whom I could not speak English it was more difficult, for example, the man to whom I had to return the clothing I wore for going underground had to demonstrate to me, with the help of a wooden contraption, how to take off the mine boots. We managed to communicate with two *Fanagalo* words I understood, together with some gestures.

and from different home language backgrounds, from men who lived with their families or who were migrants, purposive sampling was an appropriate sampling method. It is thus clear that, as a representative sample was intentionally not drawn, it will not be possible to generalise the research results to all mineworkers.

In order to address the third research question the ideal situation would have been if half of the respondents had lived with their families on a daily basis, and the other half saw their families over weekends only or less frequently. This breakdown would have included comparable respondents in the two identified categories of mineworkers (i.e. those living with their families on a daily basis and those not living with their families on a daily basis). These “comparable respondents” would then have included men who speak the same home language, have the same educational background, are of similar age, and have been on the mines for roughly the same period of time. It would then be relatively easy to address the second research question, by means of which I wish to compare the experiences of fatherhood on the part of migrant and resident men. The Human Resources Department simply did not have such detailed information available on any particular mineworker. It also became apparent that the notion of comparable respondents is not realistic in the mine environment, because, for instance, the majority of Shangaan speakers from Mozambique do not live with their families, and there is thus no accessible group of comparable Shangaan-speaking men living with their families. It was, however, possible to identify men who spoke different languages and were from different age categories. These were the only characteristics of which the Human Resources Officer was in any way certain when approaching a mineworker for possible inclusion in the research group, and these criteria were therefore applied in selecting respondents.

Roughly six months after the original interviews a second round of interviews was conducted with ten of the initial 30 respondents. These additional interviews were conducted between June and September of 2003. For various reasons fewer men were interviewed for a second time than had originally been anticipated – two of the initial respondents had gone on extended

training courses and were therefore unavailable for interviews; one man had left the mine after being declared unfit for work due to medical reasons; I chose not to interview certain men again (such as the man who did not want to be audio-taped); one man worked in a team that was currently working overtime and I could therefore not see him during office hours; some men were difficult to trace; and, lastly, certain men were apparently unwilling to be re-interviewed (three men, for example, simply did not show up on two separate occasions, even after having had their appointments confirmed). The latter was somewhat disquieting, because it could indicate a degree of resentment in respect of the interviews. There could, however, be many reasons for the men's avoidance tactics – they may have felt uncomfortable answering personal questions; they may have felt they had things to hide or things of which they were ashamed; they may simply not have liked being interviewed; or they may genuinely have had more pressing issues to attend to. I was therefore only able to re-interview those respondents who were available and prepared to be re-interviewed.

#### *4.3.3 In-depth interviews*

The preliminary discussions and observations were important in order to provide context of the life world of the mineworkers, but the main research method for this study was in-depth interviews or field interviews (as termed by Neuman 2003: 390). Interviews are flexible, as they enable one to focus on certain themes, as well as allowing respondents the opportunity to discuss related issues they deem important. The research questions posed during these interviews could thus be dealt with in some depth, but still allowed for the inclusion of the respondent's personal circumstances and other related issues. Qualitative interviewing often resembles a dialogue which is characterised by an informal or natural conversational style. However, there is a specific purpose to the interview in that the researcher has in mind a number of themes he wishes to discuss, but at the same time a flexible, spontaneous and fluid rhythm is maintained during the interview. The underlying assumption of research interviews is often that knowledge is contextual, and within an interview setting facts are not merely repeated, but

meaning is created and knowledge is reconstructed (McNeill 1985: 79-80; Denzin 1989: 102-103; Mason 2002: 62-63; Neuman 2003: 390-392). The research interview was thus selected for this particular study because it enabled me to focus on the conceptualisations of fatherhood on the part of the respondents – an interview would allow the respondents to talk freely about fatherhood, though with some prompting on certain issues.

The initial 30 interviews were conducted towards the end of 2002 over a period of roughly four months. An interview schedule (see Addendum 3) was used to guide the first 30 interviews. The structure of the interviews I conducted complies with certain of the characteristics of the nonscheduled standardised interview or focused interview (Denzin 1989: 105) as I made use of an interview schedule. At the same time the interviews I conducted also complied with certain characteristics of the nonstandardised or unstructured interview (Denzin 1989: 106), since the interview schedule was not rigidly adhered to and the questions were asked “naturally” as the conversation developed. The effect of this was that there was no specific sequence to the questions, and I returned to certain themes later on in the interview. Certain specific themes were thus explored, but the respondents were also given the time and opportunity to speak about things they deemed to be important.

The interviews were all audio-taped, except in the case of the single respondent who did not want his responses audio-taped, and in this instance I took detailed notes. Notes were also made during all the other interviews.

During the second round of ten follow-up interviews, the conversations were generally much longer than had been the case with the first interviews. In a number of cases some “catching up” had to be done, for example, one man’s second wife had recently had twins; another man and his girlfriend had moved to their own house; one man had left his girlfriend; and another man’s wife had moved in with him. I reread the transcripts of the first interviews shortly before the second interview, which enabled me to pick up on specific aspects that required clarification (see Neuman 2003: 391). Although the process of

securing the second interviews was at times<sup>52</sup> frustrating, the second interviews were more fruitful because most of the men were far more relaxed compared to the first time I had seen them. This could be because nobody else from the mine was present during the second interviews, the interviews were conducted in offices<sup>53</sup> that offered greater privacy; and also I was by now more familiar to them.

#### 4.3.4 Data analysis and interpretation

After conducting the first 30 interviews I transcribed the interviews fully within a week after the interview had been conducted. In transcribing the interviews I made no attempt to “tidy up” the interviews – grammatical errors (including my own), peculiar expressions, pauses, interruptions etc were not edited out of the transcripts (cf. Blauner [1987] on editing interviewees). Since the interviews had been audio-taped it was possible to listen to the tapes repeatedly in order to ensure that the transcripts would be reliable (cf. Silverman 2005: 222-223). The comments or field notes I made during the interviews were also incorporated into the transcripts at this stage.<sup>54</sup>

The process of “open coding” then followed, during which initial labels were assigned to data in order to locate the main themes (Neuman 2003: 442). The initial interview schedule used had dictated the main themes of the interviews, but these themes were adjusted and refined after actual data had been obtained. After these initial themes had been identified the follow-up interviews with ten respondents were planned. Tentative themes could thus

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<sup>52</sup> I often went to the mine, along with the relevant translator, only to find that the people we were supposed to speak to were not there (one man was sick, one man had to queue for a meal ticket, and then there were the unwilling ones mentioned before). At other times I had to wait for more than an hour to speak to someone. These interviews were different to the first interviews because I now wanted to speak to specific people, and not to any person who fitted a specific profile, as had been the case initially.

<sup>53</sup> One Human Resources Officer was on leave for a time and I used his office to conduct certain interviews without any interruptions whatsoever.

<sup>54</sup> It is important to note that although many of the interviews were conducted in English, others were held in Shangaan, Xhosa, Southern Sotho, Northern Sotho, Zulu, Swazi and Tsonga. The transcripts of this study are thus based on translations done “on the spot”, or they reflect mineworkers conversing in English, which may be their second, third or fourth language. The verbatim reports could therefore be seen as a tribute to multilingualism, and incorrect grammar should not be regarded as an indication of low levels of formal education. Translating “on the spot” also means that certain issues may not be translated with the same nuanced meaning it has in the original language.

be formulated using the first 30 interviews, and these themes were more fully explored during the follow-up interviews. Thus, despite the smaller number of follow-up interviews, these interviews extended over longer periods of time and covered more ground and in greater depth compared to the first 30 interviews. I also audio-taped these second interviews and then transcribed them.

After the follow-up interviews the initial codes were reviewed again in order to identify the key concepts. The process of re-examining the themes, identifying the subthemes and combining certain themes took place after the second round of interviews. Selective coding then followed, during which the entire collection of transcripts was read with the aim of finding all possible data related to the final themes and subthemes (Neuman 2003: 444).

#### 4.3.5 Authenticity

When analysing data it is important to address the issue of validity – does the reported data provide an accurate account of the phenomena under investigation? Silverman (2005: 211) warns that qualitative research may easily fall victim to the problem of “anecdotalism”. The danger with the anecdotal approach is that only those research results that illustrate clearly the issue at hand are included, while other cases are ignored. Silverman (2005: 212-220) discusses certain techniques, which I employed, to guard against such distortion of data:

The first of these preventive techniques is the *constant comparative method* in terms of which constant internal comparisons of the data are made, implying that the data is regularly compared with the emerging premises, as has been shown in the description of the data analysis given above. Secondly, by returning to the relevant aspects in each interview, *comprehensive data treatment* is employed instead of focusing on specific data only. Thirdly, the *tabulation* of the most significant aspects of the interviews means that an overview of all the cases is provided (see Tables 1, 2 and 3). The aim of such



tables is not to provide numerical arguments, but to provide a framework within which all the respondents may be identified.

#### **4.4 Reflections on the field process**

Qualitative research should involve critical self-scrutiny by the researcher, or active reflexivity. This means that researchers should constantly take stock of their actions and their role in the research process, and subject these to the same critical scrutiny as they do the rest of their 'data'. This is based on the belief that a researcher cannot be neutral, or objective, or detached, from the knowledge and evidence they are generating. Instead, they should seek to understand their role in that process. Indeed, the very act of asking oneself difficult questions in the research process is part of the activity of reflexivity (Mason 2002: 7).

In this section the ethical considerations of this study are discussed. Since it was not possible to ignore my own presence and the presence of the translators during the interview, I also reflect on these two aspects.

##### *4.4.1 Ethical considerations*

The major concerns in this section are the issues of informed consent on the part of the respondents, and protecting the respondents' identities. These ethical concerns are discussed in relation to the sampling method, obtaining informed consent to the first and to further interviews, and ensuring confidentiality in matters of a sensitive nature.

During the sampling stage undue pressure may have been put on a mineworker if I had been present when the mineworker was asked to take part in the research, therefore a Human Resources Officer asked potential respondents if they would be willing to take part in the research. Two mineworkers refused to be interviewed, and one mineworker agreed to be

interviewed but refused to be audio-taped. I regard the fact that some men refused to take part in the study in a positive light, as this allays the fear that the men who gave their consent did so simply because they felt under obligation to do so. It also implies that the respondents understood that they had the right to refuse to take part in the research. Some of the men were also not very keen on a second interview, and I regarded this as a refusal to consent to further interviewing. Regarding the latter, Mason (2002: 80-82) discusses how informed consent implies that respondents should be given the opportunity to withdraw from the research project at various stages. I therefore considered it important not to pursue follow-up interviews too vigorously if a respondent seemed unwilling to take part in a second interview.

The issue of trust between the respondents and the researcher was also of importance. Initially it was proposed that certain of the respondents' wives, girlfriends and even children be interviewed in order to obtain a multidimensional picture of fatherhood. My attempts at setting up such interviews (one with adult children and one with a wife) were, however, met with definite avoidance tactics on the part of the two respondents concerned. The reasons for avoiding further interviews may have varied, but it could have been that, although some of the men were comfortable to be interviewed at the mine, it would be a different matter for them if the interviews were to take place in their domestic sphere. In one case a respondent told me that his wife was now close by on a visit from her Swaziland home. Although this presented a good opportunity to speak to his wife, pursuing the matter could have been seen by the respondent as betraying the earlier trust he had shown when he told me of his girlfriend, of whom his wife was unaware. This study is therefore presented as the views of the mineworkers only on fatherhood, that is, without the benefit of interviews with children or female partners.<sup>55</sup>

I used consent forms (see Addendum 2) that were completed by all respondents after the form had been explained to them by the interpreters. In the consent forms it was made clear to the mineworkers that they were

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<sup>55</sup> This point will be taken up again in the final chapter, when discussing the limitations of this study.

entitled to withdraw from the study at any time, and that their real names would not be linked to their views. Whenever one of the two interpreters who worked for the mining company was present I asked them to sign the forms as well. The interpreters agreed to this every time. On completion of the study these consent forms will be destroyed so as to protect the identities of the respondents.

In order to ensure the confidentiality of the respondents in the analysis of the responses obtained, I refer to the respondents by pseudonyms<sup>56</sup> and to other officials by their job titles. This practice did not mean disrespect to any individual – instead I wanted to ensure that individuals felt free to discuss any issue (even mine-related issues) without worrying that someone might read it later and attribute confidential or disloyal utterances to them personally. This matter is particularly relevant when considering that the mine management gave permission to conduct the research on condition that they would be able to read everything I wrote.<sup>57</sup>

#### 4.4.2 *The researcher as outsider*

There are certain inherent limitations in interviews between a middleclass, Afrikaner,<sup>58</sup> white woman (such as myself) and black, male mineworkers who speak different languages. However, this is not a unique research situation, for, as Denzin (1989: 117) points out: “Typically, the interviewer and the respondent come from totally different social worlds.” In certain research situations specific disparities between interviewers and respondents may constitute a substantial hindrance, but dissimilarities in race, language, class and gender may also have the effect that the respondents will discuss their

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<sup>56</sup> The pseudonyms consist of first names only. Pseudonyms were chosen that are comparable to the respondent's original first name in terms of cultural significance, for example “John” may be called “Mark” or “Faith” may be called “Belief”.

<sup>57</sup> I did send the people concerned drafts of chapters for comment, but, apart from acknowledging receipt of the documents, nobody ever reported back. After initial scrutiny by management and the trade union they may have come to the conclusion that the nature of this research project was not directly related to any mining operations.

<sup>58</sup> My Afrikaner identity was, however, not salient in the interviews as far as the respondents were concerned. Since their own command of English was limited and, for the sake of the translators I spoke English only in the interviews, the respondents were probably unaware that my home language is Afrikaans. Since many of the domineering white supervisors I met were Afrikaans speaking it was probably best that this aspect of my identity was hidden from the respondents.

views and actions more freely, since the researcher is perceived as an outsider who is unaware of specific cultural norms (compare Mager [1999: 13] and Spiegel and Mehlwana [1997:17], where “outsiders” could ask questions that “insiders” could not).

Despite the difficulties of being an outsider sufficient rapport was established to discuss sensitive issues, such as having a girlfriend (and whether a wife was aware of this or not), dreams for children, and love for or disappointment in their own fathers. Although I remained an outsider during all of these interviews, in some cases the fact that I was an outsider contributed to my being able to obtain aspects of information that someone who was regarded as more of an insider may have found difficult to elicit. It is important to note that the outsider status is fluid. In qualitative designs researchers who are outsiders embark on journeys where they try to create understanding between respondents and themselves. I tried to use this journey that only an outsider can undertake to my advantage by carefully noting the information that was openly discussed with me; those topics that the respondents did (or could) not elaborate on; and comparing information that was intimated in first interviews with information disclosed in second interviews (which were more open discussions). By employing these practices I could distinguish between the respondents’ views on what they regarded as acceptable experiences to share with a stranger (or outsider) and more sensitive or intimate experiences that they will only share once a more trusting relationship is established.<sup>59</sup>

#### 4.4.3 *The translators and the research milieu*

I am able to conduct interviews in Afrikaans and English only, and few of the mineworkers were able to converse with me comfortably in either of these two languages. Translators were therefore needed to assist with the interviews, and it was with their help that the interviews were conducted in Shangaan, Xhosa, Southern Sotho, Northern Sotho, Zulu, Swazi and Tsonga. Certain interviews were conducted in English, namely with those respondents who

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<sup>59</sup> It is, however, important to note that the roles of outsider and insider are fluid – see Rabe (2003) for an analysis of the dimensions related to insiders and outsiders in research.

were proficient in the language, and, in these cases, it was possible to conduct the interviews without any translators being present. Two translators from the Human Resources Department at the mineshaft assisted me with the initial 30 interviews. The first translator helped me with the first twelve interviews. Seven of the remaining interviews were conducted in English, without translators present, and a second translator helped me with the remaining eleven interviews.

I found it very difficult during the first few interviews to create a relaxed atmosphere in which the respondents were able to express themselves freely. This was due to a number of reasons related to the translators themselves, but also to the rigid mine structure:

The venue where the first few interviews were conducted was not well suited to private interviews. Interviews were initially conducted in the first translator's office, and I experienced this environment as cold and impersonal. It was also my impression that the offices were intimidating to those mineworkers who seldom entered them. There were constant interruptions during many of these interviews – the interpreter's cellphone or the office telephone would ring; people would come into the office for a quick word; and, on one occasion, there was looming strike action, with dozens of mineworkers descending on the offices. I had considered using different premises, but women were not allowed into the hostels, and the mine offices were the only venue where interviews could be conducted with at least a modicum of privacy.

The time available for the interviews was also a problem. The first translator, together with the shop steward from NUM, decided that, because the mineworkers finish their shift at around one o'clock (although different work teams do come up from underground at different times), the afternoon would be the most practical time for me to conduct interviews. If the men washed and changed their clothing first the interviews could start at approximately two o'clock. I found, however, that certain of the mineworkers became tired after three o'clock, and for this reason I had to cut one or two interviews short.

Furthermore, the hierarchal structure on the mine implies that the translators working at the mine as Human Resources Officers are accustomed to giving orders. Accordingly, some of my questions were translated in a very abrupt fashion,<sup>60</sup> which at times prevented an open line of communication. One of the conditions on which NUM had consented to the interviews was that a shop steward would be present during the first interviews, but this gave the impression at times of a public gallery instead of a private interview.<sup>61</sup>

As the interviews continued, conditions improved considerably. The shop steward stopped attending the interviews after three days. The interviews were moved to offices closer to the mineshaft, directly next to the storeroom from where the underground equipment (headlamps etc.) was issued to the workers before going underground. Compared to the previous office this area was therefore more familiar to the respondents. Another translator from the mine took over, and he was far more relaxed with the respondents. The interviews became longer and less hurried, and this resulted in interviews with greater depth.

Although the translators at times inhibited some of the respondents from elaborating on certain issues (this was especially the case with the first few respondents), interpreters *from the mine* were needed during this stage of the research. They helped me to understand the jargon and the environment of the mine by providing a more detailed explanation, either when I asked for it or when the interpreter himself thought that I needed it.<sup>62</sup> The interpreter was thus not only translating the language, but also acted as informant, exhibiting all the characteristics Neuman (2003: 394) considers essential for a good informant:

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<sup>60</sup> I have some idea of certain of the respondents' languages, enough, in any case, to realise when an instance of translation had been rather freer than I had anticipated.

<sup>61</sup> I asked the shop steward to sign the consent forms as well in an effort to ensure the confidentiality of the interviews.

<sup>62</sup> I realised how much I had needed these translators from the mine when I was later assisted by translators from outside the mining environment, and they asked me to explain certain jargon the migrant respondents had used in relation to their leave arrangements when going home.

He or she lives and breathes the culture and engages in routines in the setting without thinking about them ... The individual is currently involved in the field ... The person can spend time with the researcher ... Nonanalytic individuals make better informants. A nonanalytic informant is familiar with and uses native folk theory or pragmatic common sense.

In addition to these characteristics both translators also had a good general command of the various languages, and they interpreted speedily.<sup>63</sup>

With the second round of ten interviews six months later, I made use of three different translators from outside the mine. Two of these translators had completed their honours degrees in Social Sciences (both were studying towards master's degrees in Sociology), and the third one was in the process of completing an honours degree in Social Sciences. Their academic training enabled these translators to understand the interview situation, and I also had the benefit of different translators for the Shangaan, the Nguni and the Sotho languages, which resulted in more detailed discussions with certain of the respondents than had been the case with the first interviews.

It was interesting to observe the different reactions of the respondents to the different translators, and the way in which certain translators helped to obtain more information from respondents. For example one translator is an extremely sociable person, and he greeted everybody and chatted to everyone he met. I wanted to leave one day after it had become evident that our respondent was not going to turn up, but the translator talked with someone I had already interviewed. They were conversing in English on my behalf and, because of the translator's presence and personality, more information was gained from this respondent than would have been the case in a more formal interview setting.

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<sup>63</sup> On one occasion I spoke in Afrikaans instead of the usual English, but the interpreter translated without any questions. I only realised I had spoken Afrikaans when I listened to the audio-tape afterwards.

To summarise – although translating during interviews may at times hinder the free flow of a conversation, the translators were also able to help gather more information on specific topics.

#### **4.5 Overview of the research setting**

The mine management and NUM granted me access to the most profitable and biggest shaft of Harmony Randfontein, which is known as Cooke 3. This shaft is run separately from the other shafts in the sense that it has its own administration and Human Resources Department. The mine is situated on the outskirts of Randfontein with a few established townships nearby. Many RDP houses had been built in the nearby areas. The information below was obtained from the discussions I held with various mine officials, and also from my own observations.

##### *4.5.1 The number of mineworkers and the work schedule*

In 2003 a total of 1535 underground workers, 257 officials and 12 supervisors were employed at Cooke 3 (these were the official figures on 14/05/2003 – Motlhokwane, personal communication). Eighteen women had also started working at this shaft in 2000.<sup>64</sup> In addition, from time to time, 260 contract workers carried out specialised jobs, such as creating support structures underground.

The work was scheduled into two shifts of eight hours each. The permanent workers work one shift a day for six days in the week, and they have an additional Saturday off once a month (this is in addition to their normal leave arrangements).

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<sup>64</sup> By 2003 one of them had passed away, three of them were being trained in the Free State to become miners, and three had become pregnant. It was arranged for the pregnant women to work above ground during their pregnancy, and they went back underground after maternity leave. In 2003 an additional 65 women were being trained as mineworkers, 30 of whom were to be employed at Cooke 1 and 35 at another mineshaft, Cooke 3.



#### 4.5.2 *The mine premises*

Apart from the shaft with its adjacent buildings; administration buildings, hostels, change rooms, a dressing room for sick workers, a canteen, and a small shop which sells mostly clothing are to be found on the premises of Cooke 3. These buildings are linked by means of long covered corridors with overhead notice boards that contain safety messages about underground mining work. Many of the spaces (such as the hostel and access entrances to the shaft) may only be entered with a personnel card. The buildings all seem sturdy, but they are essentially functional, and not aesthetically attractive.

A private security company guards the shaft, and one may only enter the premises with a staff card or on appointment with a staff member. Company officials have secure parking spaces which they access with their staff cards.<sup>65</sup>

There is a nearby taxi collection point to transport workers to their houses (if they do not live in the hostel) and to town. A minority of mineworkers ride bicycles to and from work.

#### 4.5.3 *The hostels*

The hostels are fenced off from the rest of the mine premises and there is only one entrance from the mine grounds to the hostel. The hostel rooms originally each accommodated 12 men, but, as the hostel is no longer very full, no more than eight men now live in a room.<sup>66</sup> If he has no particular preference, a new mineworker will be assigned to a specific room, but mineworkers are free to change to another room should they so choose. Contract workers are also accommodated in the hostel from time to time.

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<sup>65</sup> Despite these strict security measures there are reports of theft from time to time. It was even alleged that men who did not work for the mine would on occasion stay in the hostel and try to obtain food from the kitchen.

<sup>66</sup> This information is in contrast to one of the respondent's (Winfred's) account of sharing his room with eleven other people, but after I enquired about this in a second interview, Winfred indicated that this was simply the way they had organised it themselves. Winfred maintained that present conditions are much better than in previous years, when they had been issued with bunk beds.

Inside the rooms every person has a bedstead, a mattress and a locker, but bedding has to be provided by the mineworker. There is also a table and chairs in every room. The rooms have tiled floors, curtains and heaters. There are no laundry services and all washing is done by the mineworkers themselves, by hand. They also clean the rooms themselves, but mine management does not provide any cleaning equipment.

Breakfast is served from 3:30 to 9:00 am, lunch from 11:00 to 6:00 and a light supper consisting only of porridge and gravy or soup. These meal times have been set up to provide for the different starting and ending times of the two shifts. Since 2000 the kitchen has been run privately. At the beginning of 2003, due to complaints from the men regarding the food the original company running the kitchen was replaced. There were various opinions on the quality of the food, but it generally seems to be adequate. In addition, a canteen is available close to the changing rooms, but this closes at 2:00 in the afternoon. The canteen is very small and resembles a tuck shop, with only a counter and some space behind the counter housing a fridge and a few shelves. Any person on the mine premises is entitled to buy from the canteen (i.e. not only those from the hostel). It sells mainly starch-rich meals, cool drink, chips and sweets.

Two public bars are available to the men in the hostel. The outside bar is “open”, which means people from outside the mine may also visit it. The inside bar is for residents of the hostel only. No food is served in the bars (unlike previously), and it is run by a private company.

A hostel clerk is involved mainly with the payments and bonuses of the mineworkers, while the hostel governors are responsible for the daily running of the institution. Hostel governors, who also live in the hostel, are elected by the hostel residents through the union (they are paid better than in their original jobs), and their main duties are to discuss problems with management, be responsible for the maintenance of the building, and assist with the payment of benefits to widows.

One of the hostel governors is also responsible for the organisation and coaching of sports in the hostel. The mine has an official soccer team (a soccer field is available on the premises), and traditional dances, boxing and indoor games that include darts, snooker, fingerboard and *Marabaraba* are available. There is a television set in a communal room. On Sundays different church services are conducted by lay preachers from amongst the ranks of the mineworkers. Clergy from outside will, on invitation, also conduct services. Different denominations are involved in the church services, although all are within the Christian faith (though there is at least one Muslim faith community near the mine premises).

In the hostels there are 15 rooms available for wives who are visiting (these have to be booked in advance through the hostel governors), and wives may stay there, with their husbands, for periods of up to two weeks. At times the rooms are fully booked, and there may even be a waiting list. No other women are allowed into the hostels, although it is alleged that women do try to gain entrance from time to time. The only exception to this “no women” rule was two women trainees who stayed in the hostel for the duration of their training.

#### 4.5.4 *The respondents*

From Table 1 (see *List of Tables*) it may be seen that 14 of the 30 mineworkers in my sample live in the mine hostel, and are therefore not with their families. However, some of the men who do not live in the hostel do not live with their families either, as they may rent a room or a shack somewhere and live on their own. Others live with (some of) their children and/or a wife/girlfriend, while others stay with their wives for lengthy periods of time, though not continuously. Many of the respondents thus live in households with fluid structures.

Table 1 also shows that most of the respondents are married, and that one Mozambican man is in a polygynous marriage. Several of the men have fathered children with women who are not their current partners. The issue of

biological, economic and social fatherhood that was discussed in the previous chapter is thus relevant to this sample, and will be further explored.

From Table 2 (see *List of Tables*) it may be seen that quite a number of men never knew their fathers, or that their fathers had passed away when they were still young. In certain cases another man had taken over the role of father (social or economic fathering), but in some cases the respondents had been raised by women only. A few men still have a father living, or their father had been alive until they themselves (i.e. the respondents) had become adult men.

#### **4.6 Conclusion**

In this chapter the methodological orientation and research design were discussed in detail. Certain practical hurdles were encountered in this research, and the research experience was reflected upon. Brief information on the research site and the respondents was also provided. In the next three chapters the data that was collected will be analysed in accordance with the research questions. The starting point will be the relationships the respondents reported having had with their own fathers.

## **Chapter 5**

### **Analysis and interpretation: Relationships with own fathers/father figures**

#### **5.1 Introduction**

In *Chapter 3* it was noted that, although researchers often do not have a clear-cut definition of fatherhood, there is a tendency to distinguish between biological, economic and social fatherhood. In this particular study the respondents were not approached with a readymade definition of fatherhood as the aim was to discover their definitions and views on fatherhood. The scripting perspective will underscore this chapter as cultural ideals (cultural scenarios), practical realities (interpersonal scripting) and the way in which the men presented themselves as fathers (intrapsychic scripting) will be analysed on the basis of the interviews with the respondents.

In this chapter the focus is on the respondents' memories of fatherhood as sons; or, in the words of the second research question: *What are the respondents' own recollections of being fathered?* It will be investigated whether childhood memories impact consciously on these men who are now fathers themselves. One of the important questions asked in this regard is whether the respondents think that they are the same type of fathers as their own fathers were. It will be seen that men with positive images of their own fathers want to be like their own fathers, while men who view their own fathers negatively portray themselves as different from their own fathers.

The nature of the relationships the respondents as adult men have with their fathers will also be explored. Not all respondents have experienced a relationship with a father as an adult as their fathers may have passed away before the respondents reached adulthood. At the time of the interviews eight of the

respondents still had a father living, while eleven of the respondents had fathers who had passed away in the ten-year period prior to the interview. Four from the latter group had been five years old or younger when their biological fathers passed away. In the cases where the father had survived until his son reached adulthood, the complexities of the relationships between certain men and their fathers had changed through the years while in other cases the dynamics had stayed very much the same. The life course theory is thus of relevance here as the research interviews focused on major life transitions (such as a first job, having children, possible death of parents) in order to gain insight into the way relationships change over time.

Certain themes emerged from the questions posed regarding fatherhood – these themes are clustered here into conceptualisations of fatherhood. From this process representations of fatherhood emerge that assist in formulating the meaning fatherhood holds for these men. The first research question – *How do the respondents characterise fatherhood?* – is thus also indirectly addressed in this chapter.

A frequently mentioned aspect that influenced the men's perceptions of their own fathers/father figures is that of financial support (breadwinner role) or, in certain cases, the lack thereof. Responses indicate that although financial support from fathers is important, it is not always the main factor in determining the type of father-son relationship. There are, however, certain issues, such as schooling and *lobola*, that are closely associated with financial support: In order to attend school, school fees have to be paid and several respondents pointed specifically to the fact that their fathers were good to them because they provided the necessary money for them to attend school, for example: *"My father was treating me well, he took me to school a little bit"* (Mac). The paying of *lobola* is another huge expense for many men, and help from fathers was appreciated and often mentioned when asked about good things their fathers did for them. Other frequently mentioned aspects during the discussion on fathers/father figures

included alcohol abuse, physical punishment, religion and guidance (or general advice) received from fathers.

The *migrant men* and *resident men* are discussed as one group in this chapter. When the respondents' families of procreation<sup>67</sup> are discussed, migrant men and resident men will be discussed separately as their daily circumstances are distinct from each other. Distinctions between resident and migrant men were, however, not found when focusing on their families of orientation as is the case in this chapter. Some men grew up in households where the father/father figure was always present while others either almost never saw their fathers or their fathers had passed away when they were still young, and there had been varying degrees of involvement with other father figures in their lives (see *Table 2: The mineworkers and their fathers* for a summary of the respondents and their fathers).

Based on the themes which emerged from an analysis of the data it was possible to distinguish three patterns of fatherhood, and these patterns of fatherhood will form the structure of this chapter. These three themes can be identified in the following phrases of certain respondents: "the father is like a lion"; "I don't remember anything good about my father"; and, "he was a good man". With the first pattern identified in terms of which the father is perceived to "be like a lion", the father is regarded as someone who adheres to the cultural scenario of being a breadwinner. In addition to this general cultural scenario he is a stern disciplinarian whose relationship with his children does not include much intimacy or expressions of emotion. In the second pattern, referred to as "I was suffering", the father (or any substitute father/caretaker) did not provide adequately for the material needs of his children and, in some cases, he even abused his children physically. He is regarded as a "bad father" based on what he does or fails to do. It will be argued here that, in terms of the scripting theory, the practical realities or interpersonal scripting contributed to men not being able to fulfil the expectations

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<sup>67</sup> Family of procreation: The family in which the referred individual is the parent.

of the cultural scenario of breadwinner. The third pattern of a “good father” (“he was a good man”) is a father who is held in high regard by the entire community including his children. This type of father does as much for his children as could be expected (as seen by the respondents) and he may be a community leader. In order to illustrate these patterns the information from the transcribed interviews will be clustered according to the themes identified and discussed in detail below.

## **5.2 “The father is like a lion”**

A significant theme in the respondents’ discourses on fatherhood is the obligation of financial support on the part of the father. There are respondents who were not able to recall any particularly positive or negative experiences when talking about their own fathers, and yet they judged their fathers to have raised them as well as could be expected because their fathers supported them financially. The cultural scenario of breadwinner is thus salient in this context. “The father is like a lion” theme is, however, not associated with the breadwinner (economic) aspect of fatherhood only as this pattern also relates to the father being a disciplinarian and/or guiding children in this context. The following respondents discussed their own fathers in terms of the “father is like a lion” theme:

### *5.2.1 Respondents*

#### *Martin:*

Martin was 54 years old at the time of our interview and his father had passed away when Martin was an adult. Martin grew up in Mozambique, during which time his father was a contract worker in South Africa. His father came home only once a year. When I asked Martin about his childhood in Mozambique, he said:



*Chapter 5: Relationships with own fathers/father figures*

*It was difficult when I grew up, because firstly, there were no schools available; secondly, there was a lot of starvation and thirdly, I then had to leave school in order to come and work.*

Martin remembers his father's drinking binges with some amusement: "When he was drunk he used to come and make a small choir in the home and we all sing." He does not judge his father for the bouts of drinking and, when I asked him what he remembers about his father, he responded:

*What I remember about my father is that he was the only breadwinner working, he was looking after us, he was buying food for us, he was buying clothes for us.*

Martin also mentioned that his father gave him three head of cattle for *lobola*. The importance of a man being able to provide financially for his children is central to Martin's view of fatherhood. This is also illustrated in the following advice Martin gave his own sons:

*I tell them [his sons] to be like me, because I explain to them that if this thing does not work, they must not go and marry, because if they marry, a woman and the children will suffer because they will not have money, there must be an income.*

Martin is a migrant worker and he describes the interaction with his family when he returns home as follows:

*I call upon my wife and relatives. We sit around the table. I show them here is the money that I've got. We then have a feast ... Yes, they are very much happy. Even now, they [his children] know they will get a biscuit, all those things other children get ... Ja, I always tell stories for them. I say they must be at ease and talk to them. I*

**seem like a lion to them** so I make them at ease (emphasis added).

In this extract Martin emphasises his role as the provider of financial support to the family. Martin has nine children with his wife, one with a girlfriend in South Africa, and three grandchildren. None of Martin's children are married or employed. He provides financially for his family and is able to give small treats to the children. Martin emphasised his own father's ability to provide for the family in his description of his father, for instance, his father provided the cattle for *lobola*. As regards this aspect of financial support Martin sees himself following in the footsteps of his father as he himself pointed out: *"There is no difference between me and my father, what my father used to do is what I am doing."*

When prompted during the interview he also related his conversations with his children. He used the symbol of a father as a lion to represent his children's perceptions of him. He believes that his children see him as strong and someone to be feared. Martin has been a migrant worker for 35 years and his rural children<sup>68</sup> have had very little direct interaction with him. He tries to overcome this image of a lion by relating to them in a friendly manner.

Despite the limited contact Martin has with his children in Mozambique, he considers himself to be a good father just as he considered his own father to be a good father. Both of them were able to provide for their families financially and this is central to Martin's expectations of what constitutes a good father.

Stuart:

Stuart never expected a great deal from his father as he never received much from him while growing up. Stuart was raised in Port Elizabeth in the Eastern Cape by his grandmother. Stuart has one brother and one sister. His mother worked in a kitchen on a mine in Gauteng until the time of the interviews, and his

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<sup>68</sup> Martin has one child living close to him – see *Chapter 6* for details.

father had worked in mine offices in Gauteng before he died in 1987 (Stuart was then 20 years old). He mentions that his father was an alcoholic and that this contributed to the family's poverty. However, the efforts of his grandmother in raising him on her pension money seem to compensate for this lack of financial support from his father. Apart from his grandmother's financial support, he particularly mentions his grandmother's love for him when reflecting on his childhood. Stuart was 35 years old at the time of the interview and he still regards his grandmother with affection, whilst his relationship with his mother seems to be rather neutral. During the time of the interview his mother lived close to him and he saw her everyday, but he does not have particular childhood memories of her except that she came home during the December holidays. He does not judge his father harshly and simply portrays him as a man who struggled financially because of an alcohol problem. According to Stuart's recollections his grandmother took up the challenge of the breadwinner role as well as that of social parenting.

Stuart has three children with three different mothers. He lives with the mother of the eldest child which he describes as his girlfriend. Their child is deaf and is in a school catering for special needs in the Eastern Cape. He does send money to the other two children on occasion but his girlfriend opposes this fiercely (see discussion on Stuart in *Chapter 7*) and, since the mothers of the other two children are employed, Stuart believes the children are provided for materially. When I asked him if he thinks he is a different father from his own father he again mentions the financial aspect, but says: *"Not so different, I mean just like him, I am just like him."* Although Stuart's father did not support the family financially this did not affect Stuart too negatively (unlike Jerome and Richard – see below) since his grandmother provided for them with her pension money. Stuart's relationship with his grandmother led to Stuart making fewer demands on his father, but he does suggest that their quality of life would have been better if his father had been able to meet his financial responsibilities towards his children. It does, however, become apparent in this particular case that the father's

breadwinner role is less important if another family member is able to provide financially for a child's basic needs.

George:

George held his father, who was able to provide for the family's needs, in high esteem, he says: *"He was a good father as I can remember because he supported us"*. When George later gave examples of what his father had done for him he mentioned basic necessities, such as food and plates, which his father provided. He did intimate that his father had done more for him but he did not elaborate. George's father had a piece of land that he had cultivated in the area of Bushbuckridge, Limpopo Province. His father also owned cattle and George had had to leave school after completing Grade 5 (Standard 3) to look after the cattle. George was 37 years old at the time of our first interview. His father had passed away in 2001 due to illness. George remembers receiving beatings<sup>69</sup> from his father but he views these beatings as a justifiable method for *"correcting"* a child *"from doing wrong things"* – something he also does as a father. The ability of George's father to support his family helped to engender positive feelings towards his father, although there were also other dimensions to the relationship. When I asked him to describe his childhood, he said: *"No, life was good, I was not suffering because my father was there."*

George's experience of fatherhood in terms of his own father was so positive that he believes he imitates his father and considers himself to be a good father. When I asked George to tell me about the interaction between himself and his children he told me that he plays with his children, he tells them stories and they watch television together. They also discuss these television programmes in the sense that he sometimes uses a certain television character in conversations with his children. In a second interview he related how he works with his children in the garden. When I asked him if it is important for children to work in the house

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<sup>69</sup> In the interviews there was no distinction made between the terms "spankings" and "beatings" but since the interviews were translated on the spot, certain nuances in meanings were lost.

he said: *“Yes, it prepares them for the future. I teach them what my father taught me.”*

To George his father met the ideals of the cultural scenario by being a breadwinner, and by disciplining and guiding his children. George views corporal punishment as acceptable and he also administers it as a father. George thus also portrays himself as a breadwinner, a disciplinarian and a guide for his children. He continues with the same practices he observed in his father as he believes that these practices typify the way in which a good father should behave.

*Mandla:*

In Mandla's relationship with his father financial support also played an important role – *“there is nothing good that I can say [about my father] but he did support us”*. Despite Mandla's very negative view of his father his tone is almost forgiving when he mentions his father honouring his financial obligations towards his children, although he was not very involved with them in any other way. There is further ambiguity when Mandla describes his father as a distant figure: *“he was a very quiet somebody, he was not strict but he did not like to speak to children, but we were not afraid of him”*. Mandla grew up in Mozambique and he knows his father worked somewhere in Gauteng, but he does not know what type of work his father did. This lack of knowledge about such a basic aspect of his father's life supports the perception that he did not have a close relationship with his father. Mandla was 54 years old at the time of the interview and his father had passed away several years before. When I asked Mandla to compare himself as a father with his own father he responded:

*I think I am far better than my father the way I behave ... I am saying that because my father used to beat us when we did wrong but I am not doing that to my own children.*

He also thinks his children like him and he said that although he does not tell his children any stories he likes to play and joke with them. In his view there is a fun aspect to his relationship with his children that he did not experience with his own father. Mandla thus did have the financial support of a father as a child but, unlike his own father, he chooses to have more interaction with his own children and to be less of a disciplinarian.

Timothy:

Similar views were expressed by Timothy and there is also the sense that he respected his father without being close to him. Timothy is a mineworker in his late twenties whose elderly father still lives in Mozambique. When I asked him about the relationship with his father he said: *“We have a very good life together, I wouldn’t like to disturb him.”*

When thinking back to his childhood the best thing he can remember about his father was the occasion when his father bought him a bicycle. Again we see the father as the person who is able to give you things. Yet there is also the notion that Timothy would like to be different from his own father because when I asked him to compare himself with his father, he said:

*During those days when I grew up, compared to now, things are not the same. Maybe I could treat my kids far better than him, maybe, it depends.<sup>70</sup>*

Timothy would thus like to have a better relationship with his children than the relationship his father had with him although he has doubts about his ability to achieve such a relationship.

### 5.2.2 Discussion

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<sup>70</sup> Timothy’s own children are still very young and that is why he speaks of the possibility of treating his children better.

Although, in the cases cited above, alcohol abuse and physical punishment on the part of the fathers were mentioned, not one of the men verbalised negative feelings towards their fathers. Martin, Stuart and George all regard themselves as similar to their own fathers. Mandla, however, does not carry out the harsh discipline which his father carried out, and he adds playful activities when referring to his children. I want to argue that the reason for this fairly neutral to positive portrayal of their fathers is that these respondents believe their fathers met the cultural expectations of fatherhood. George, Mandla and Martin's fathers managed to support their children financially. Stuart's father did not provide for his children financially, but, because Stuart's grandmother raised him, he was not deprived materially as were as some of the other respondents (see below). There is an underlying notion that their fathers did what was expected given their circumstances. In all four cases the fathers had already passed away and therefore the relationship with the father could not be analysed further.<sup>71</sup>

I want to illustrate this point about the cultural expectations of fatherhood further by discussing Steven's portrayal of fatherhood. Steven grew up in Paul Pietersburg in KwaZulu Natal. Steven's father worked for the railways and he came home once a month. Steven is critical of his relationship with his father and he remembers his father as follows:

*Eh, he was a very strict somebody and according to our culture, you know, **the father is like a lion**, you understand, he thinks there is no chance to smile and to joke and do that. When he arrives at home, he just sitting down like this [he demonstrates] with the questions: "What, what? Why is it not like this and this?" So when you see he comes you run away because he is going to ask us a lot*

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<sup>71</sup> Religious beliefs relating to ancestors did not fall within the scope of the interviews. The fact that other men whose fathers were deceased did criticise their fathers led me to believe that such beliefs did not impact greatly on their views. Awareness of such beliefs should, however, be borne in mind when referring to deceased relatives in certain contexts.

*of things “Why did you not do this, why did you not do this?” So it is some of the things that was ... but usually it was not so bad (emphasis added).*

In this quotation Steven establishes himself as someone who will inform me about African fathers when he says: *“according to our culture you know”*. He then proceeds to define fatherhood within the African culture as follows: *“the father is like a lion”*. He then elaborates on this definition by explaining this father to be a man who does not *“smile”* or *“joke”*, but instead he questions his children in detail on why things were not done in a specific way. This questioning resulted in the children *“running away”* when they saw their father approaching. The fact that they ran away when their father approached indicates that they did not view his influence in their lives positively. Yet Steven describes his father as if he were manifesting fatherhood according to cultural expectations. Steven also describes good memories from childhood as follows:

*The best thing that I remember from my father is to assisting us with clothes and foods, is some of the things, we never suffered like other children. That was a very good thing so it was to take the responsibility of their children. So the children never suffered so much although the money that he gave, he was never earning such a good salary, but he was trying his level best so that his children could have food at home like other children. So that is the very good thing that I can remember.*

Steven therefore considers his father’s behaviour in terms of financial support positively and better than that of other fathers whose children suffered because of a lack of money. However, his response to one of the questions during the interview shows that he is not satisfied with the conduct of his father towards them as children:



*Mm ja, some of the bad thing is most of the time is he drinking and trying to hit us and all of those things ... the bad thing of our father, he didn't give us that love, the relationship was not so good when we were growing to guiding us: "don't do this, do this, that is a bad thing, do this". That is some of the bad things that was not oraait. Ja, because a child really needs guidance from the father sometimes, not only the mother, but the father also. He must guide the child, especially a boy, there are some things he can't discuss with the mother. The father must play a role when growing up as a boy, so times go on with this decision and this decision and you must do one, two, three, four, five. Ja, that is some of the things I didn't see with my father, my father was ignoring, some of, a lot of things where he was supposed to play a role with us.*

Initially Steven said that fathers are like “lions” in “his culture”, but he now qualifies this statement by saying that fathers should show love and guidance towards their children. This love and guidance was clearly lacking in the conduct of his father and does not fit the cultural scenario he portrayed. Steven thus believes that fathers should do more than the cultural expectations (as he described them) and show more affection towards their children. The relationship between Steven and his father is amicable now that Steven is a grown man. Steven was 46 years old and his father 82 years old at the time of our first interview. His father had had a stroke a few years prior to the interview but he could still walk one or two kilometres at a time, and he did evince interest in the lives of his children and grandchildren. Steven, however, made statements such as: “... I was telling myself I don't want to behave like my father...” When I asked him later on if he consciously tries to be different from his father he answers:

*Yes, I tell myself I want to be different from the way my father behaved to give my child the love, and responsibility and all other things.*

In Steven and Mandla's responses there is the notion that, although their fathers did what was expected of them as fathers in terms of supporting their children financially, they had wanted more from their fathers. A more intimate father-son relationship is called for and Steven and Mandla are trying to establish such a relationship with their own children.

The central theme in this pattern of fatherhood is that the father is able to provide financially for his children. The first two men were satisfied with their fathers' conduct towards them as children and therefore they want to continue along the same path. The last three men, however, gave clear indications of wanting to be different from their own fathers by having relationships that include intimacy and/or having fun (play) with children. The cultural scenario of a breadwinner who disciplines his children by means of corporal punishment is pictured here. Some of the respondents are, however, not satisfied with a father who embodies this cultural scenario and they would like to see it changed to that of a father who guides his children more lovingly by talking with them, spending more time with them, playing with them and telling them that he loves them. Thus although the cultural scenario of the breadwinner role is important it is not perceived by all as a sufficient representation of what a father should be.

### **5.3 *"I was suffering"***

Those respondents whose fathers failed to support them adequately as children (without anyone else stepping in to fill the provider role sufficiently), consciously or unconsciously, attempt to live their lives differently from their fathers. Their fathers did not fit in with the cultural scenario of being a breadwinner and they often portray their fathers as having failed them. Their fathers are portrayed by their sons as bad fathers because they could not be adequate providers. As employed mineworkers themselves they are in a position to break the "bad father

pattern". Yet, it will be shown that, even though the breadwinner role is important in this context, other factors also influence the relationship.

### *5.3.1 Respondents*

#### *Jerome:*

Jerome is from Mozambique and reveals negative memories of his childhood. Jerome's mother was his father's third wife in a polygynous marriage and she passed away when he was a baby. His mother had had another daughter and son but this son died as a child. Jerome grew up with his grandmother and he had little contact with his father. He said his father had told him that he worked on contract on the mine as a machine operator. Jerome's father passed away in 1973 and had, therefore, worked on the mines before the major changes in mining took place. Jerome himself started working on the mines in 1972 and he was therefore able to benefit from the improved conditions (especially better wages – see *Chapter 2*) on the goldmines. Jerome has a very negative image of his father who failed to support him financially:

*My father did nothing good for me because he had a lot of kids, that is why I said **I was suffering** ... I don't remember anything good about my father (emphasis added).*

In a second interview he continued to represent his father as having failed him as a child as he had had to grow up in poverty:

*Yes, he [my father] didn't play a big role because he had three wives and my mother passed away. Although he was there, he did not play a big role because he used to drink a lot.*

And in response to a question:

*No we didn't do that [look after cattle or goats], since my father was a drunkard we didn't have anything, we did not have cows, goats or anything.*

When I asked Jerome how he compares as a father to his own father, he says: “*I would not compare myself with my father.*” Jerome portrayed himself in the interviews as a very different father to the memories he has of his own father who passed away when Jerome was 19 years old: Jerome has a large family (two wives, twelve children – including newborn twins – and six grandchildren) and he supports the family with the help of his two sons who are also employed as mineworkers. In addition, his one son-in-law also works on a mine in South Africa and two of his daughters are employed. Jerome has some agricultural experience, having worked as a farm labourer before coming to the mines, and he explained in detail how he had just constructed some kind of reservoir to hold enough rainwater to meet the household needs for the entire year. They cultivate a few vegetables and Jerome seems to time his leave according to agricultural demands (the “farm calendar” [cf. Crush et al 1991: 152] does still appear to play a role in Jerome’s life). Apart from his wives and daughters-in-law who work in the fields fulltime, Jerome also pays casual labourers to come and help the family from time to time.

Jerome portrayed himself as an involved father who meets the cultural scenario of being a good provider for his large family.

*Richard:*

Richard grew up in Mozambique and his father worked in a restaurant in Mozambique. This job at the restaurant was interrupted for three years when his father worked on a mine in South Africa. Richard answered the following in response to a question about his memories from childhood:

***I was really suffering.*** My father had two wives, we were 16 all of us. Yes, it was bad, I even had to sell some of the things so that I could get money to go to school. It was difficult. That is what made me realise that I must recognise my children. I have four children and I don't want others to suffer because of what I experienced when I was a child.

Yet despite these poor circumstances, Richard does not fit neatly into this category as he reveals the following about his father: “He was loving me. I even took his name, he gave me his name.<sup>72</sup> We were only suffering because of money.” Richard portrays a loving relationship with his father despite their financial difficulties and therefore has good memories of his father. However, he is adamant that he does not intend to repeat his father’s way of life that could lead to dismal poverty.

Isaac:

Isaac’s experiences are very similar to those of Richard. Isaac’s parents had lived with him, his wife and three children for the eight years preceding my interview with him. His parents are not in good health – his father’s leg was amputated because of an illness and his mother suffers from high blood pressure. Isaac’s father used to be a mineworker and his mother worked as a kitchen helper somewhere in Gauteng when he was a child. Isaac and his six siblings grew up in the Free State with his uncle. His parents only managed to visit them at the end of every month. There were a total of fifteen people living in his uncle’s dwelling. Isaac believes his uncle favoured his own children and he describes his childhood as “*terrible, terrible*”. He had never lived with his own parents until they became too weak to look after themselves and moved in with him eight years ago. Yet, Isaac has positive feelings towards his own father and he values the teachings his father gave him, he said:

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<sup>72</sup> Although the giving of a name does not seem unusual in itself, Richard attaches a special meaning to it.

*... he encouraged me to do my own life, today I am a priest in the church because of him ... he was punishing me like every father do but it was not so bad because he was guiding me in the right way. This is why today I sit with him and look after him because of the way he guided me.*

Here again the main determinant of the father-son relationship is not financial support. Isaac did not receive adequate financial support from his father but he did receive guidance and encouragement.

Unlike Richard and Isaac, Jerome did not have such a good relationship with his father. Where Richard's father loved him, Jerome's father had little contact with him and there was no loving relationship to counterbalance the poverty experienced. Jerome also blames his father's heavy drinking as the direct reason for the family's poverty. Both men thus decided to live their lives differently and this is expressed in their concern for the financial welfare of their families of procreation. However, the emotional relationship played a significant role in their views of their own fathers.

*Bernard:*

Another example of a man who wanted to be different from his own father is Bernard (hails from Mozambique), who told me the following story early in the interview without much prompting:

*When I was twelve years old, there was something which was discussed in the family because my father had another girlfriend here in Gauteng. So he had two children with her, now we came after 18 months so **we were now suffering**. I was still at school at that time: I had to work during the days and in the afternoons I had to go to school. Then we had some difficulties now. So my mother used to make sorghum beer and sell it so that we can survive. I had*

*two brothers who could go to school because my mother was selling that beer. Then I was retrenched from that job I was doing because I was still very young. Then I had to go to another place where I could collect the reeds so that I could sell. With that money that I got, I had to support my family, my mother and my brothers. Then in 1991 my father sent me a telex that I had to come here to work. From that year 1991, I worked here. I saw that there was no difference; my father was with that girlfriend of his. We had no room at home, it was just a small room, it was leaking. Then I had to start to build a house for my mother. So I was able to build a five-room house and then we were all happy and we stayed in that house. Then my father was retrenched now, so he came back now. So I gave that house to my father because I've got my own house now (emphasis added).*

Although Bernard's circumstances are different from those of Jerome's, Bernard also endured hardships as a child due to his father's failure to provide for his rural family. This quote is a condensed version of the devastating consequences when a father deserts his rural family. However, in this instance the "dutiful son" came to the fore and the boy tried to fill the shoes of a father who was not supporting them financially. Initially the boy did not have much success in trying to provide for the family: *"I was retrenched from that job I was doing because I was still very young"* but later on he was more successful when he managed to find a job on the mine. It is interesting to note that his father helped him to obtain this job on the mine but that Bernard is then the one who sends money home for a house to be built. The relationship with his father still continued and the "dutiful son" also gave this house to his father when his father returned home. The interview continues:

Question: *How do you feel about this that the responsibility was shifted on your shoulders to look after the family?*

Response: *I was feeling very upset because it was his responsibility to look after us, but I was loving my mother and my brothers as well. That is why I was trying by all means to make survival.*

Question: *What is the relationship between yourself and your father at the moment?*

Response: *No our relationship is very sound. I remember when I got married in 1997 he gave me a cow. So our relationship is still good.*

Question: *What would you say then, your father gave you this cow, was that the best thing he ever did for you or were there other good things as well that your father did?*

Response: *Before he was trapped in that thing of having a girlfriend, he used to buy us clothes, bicycles, all nice things. He used to take us for supper in some restaurants. He used to take us to the beach.*

The needs of other family members and the pleasant earlier memories that Bernard has of his father seem to be of sufficient import to result in Bernard's forgiving the years of desertion by his father. Again financial issues are crucial in this father-son relationship as Bernard specifically mentions the things his father bought for them before he took a girlfriend in Gauteng. Bernard also cited the fact that his father had given him a cow when he got married as an indication that their *"relationship is very sound"* at the time of the interview.

Yet the financial issue is not the only factor which determines the nature of this relationship. The fact that Bernard presents himself so readily as a dutiful son is also relevant in this context (intrapsychic scripting), as it points to a lifestyle pattern of honouring responsibilities towards others. In the three examples above – Richard, Jerome and Bernard – there is a pattern of trying to look after family members because their own fathers failed to support the family adequately. In fact, these men had already taken over the paternal responsibilities, which they believe to be supporting family members financially, when they were mere boys themselves. Now that they are employed adults they are better able to fulfil these



paternal responsibilities. These men were forced by circumstances to take on adult responsibilities as children and they have continued along this path as adults. The responsible “boy-fathers” became responsible fathers.

Dean:

This same pattern is also seen in the case of Dean, although his father’s death, when Dean was about four years old, was the main reason for their poverty. Dean grew up with his siblings, mother and grandmother in the Limpopo Province. His mother worked as a labourer for an agricultural department and struggled to feed the family. Dean had to leave school at an early age and his childhood was characterised by abject poverty:

*Eh ... I think it was a bad life [his childhood] and I don't like to talk about it because all the time at home **we were suffering**. I tried to get some money to support myself and my brother. So, if I talk about my mom I am going to get heartache in my heart you know? ... I am second born, my brother is the firstborn. My brother grew up with a lot of suffering, so he got a lot of sick, you know? And then I do something to try and help him (emphasis added).*

Dean has never experienced any support from an adult male. He was raised by women and, as an adult, he is still surrounded by women in his personal life except for a son with his first wife whom he divorced. He lived in the hostel for a few years but he left this environment because there were so many men in one room and he says: “I like quiet all the time, I don't like talking too much.” He does seem to put enormous pressure on himself to provide for his family: he financially supports his mother who has cancer, he plans in consultation with his family how to help his current wife to improve her qualifications (his first wife – with whom he still has an amicable relationship – was treated in the same way and she completed a certificate in telecommunication) and he supports all his children financially in addition to having regular contact with them.

Dean defines a good father as someone who tries to: *“treat his children very well and then try to support them very well and then you show them love and you say to them: I love you”*. It is interesting that Dean adds the dimension of expressive paternal love to financial support. He regards a caring environment for children as material support but in conjunction with an emotionally caring relationship. Although the importance of material wellbeing is undeniable, the emotional wellbeing is also recognised and fulfilled.

In some cases the issue of beatings and violence were related. A number of men believe their fathers were too strict and they used to be beaten as children when their fathers deemed it necessary. Some believe that these beatings were justified (see George and Martin above) but others (see Mandla above) highlight the fact that they do not make use of physical punishment when dealing with their children’s misdemeanours – instead of corporal punishment many prefer talking to their children or reprimanding them. Sam represents a compelling example of not wanting to continue the pattern of physical violence.

Sam:

Sam grew up in the Limpopo Province where the family lived in one household. Sam’s father worked as a security guard for a government department but he died from tuberculosis when Sam was in Grade 10 (Standard 8). Sam was not able to continue with school after his father’s death as his mother could not pay the school fees. He remembers his father as a drunkard who used to beat his mother as well as the children. Sam also had other traumatic experiences as a child although he claims he cannot remember all these events clearly. Three of his siblings died as children – he is unsure of the cause of death of the first one, but the second one either drowned or was caught by a crocodile, and he witnessed two boys beating the third one to death. His sister called his parents in the latter case but they were too late to save the boy. Sam’s father talked to the parents of the boy’s attackers. The boys claimed they were only playing but Sam

refuted this passionately. However, no arrests were made and the matter was never discussed with Sam or with any of his siblings. These events probably contributed to Sam's total aversion to violence as an adult and he is actively trying to raise his children differently from the way in which his father brought him up. He believes in talking about problems and he has convinced his wife that spanking children is unacceptable:

*Ja but I sit down with her [his wife] and I said don't beat her, if you beat them you don't teach your child, you don't teach like that, when she is doing something wrong, don't beat. Sit down and discuss with them, tell them you did wrong here and there. You beat, you don't teach, ja, and she will never understand nothing.*

Although poverty was also part of Sam's life, issues of violence predominated. He has a close relationship with his children today and he is concerned with guiding them in a respectful manner. For Sam providing adequately for his children is only one aspect of being a father. He is involved in his children's lives on many levels such as physical care, sharing of values and mundane daily activities. Sam has thus consciously chosen to be a different father to the one he experienced as a child.

### *5.3.2 Discussion*

I experienced all five of these men – Richard, Jerome, Bernard, Dean and Sam – as gentle soft-spoken men, yet they had all showed enormous determination to change things for the better in their lives. None of them want others to (continue to) experience the difficulties they had gone through as children.<sup>73</sup> These findings

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<sup>73</sup> At this point one may ask why these representations of the five men interviewed are so different from their experiences as children. There is often an assumption that children continue with the same practices they experienced as children once they are adults. Child abuse in particular is believed to repeat itself where adults abuse their own children because they were abused as children. This belief is formalised in the "Social Learning Theory" (Kurst-Swanger & Petcosky 2003: 43). In 1984 Pagelow wrote a critical review on "Exploring the popular idea of a "cycle of violence"" (Pagelow 1984: 223-257). In this chapter she showed how generalisations are made from small research samples or selected research samples and she

are similar to those of Simpson (2005: 576) in Zambia and are explained as a pattern by Jung and Honig (in Sharabany et al 2006: 242) in terms of which men try to compensate for the troubles or neglect they experienced as children in relation to fathers. In this context their own fathers are thus used as negative role models. All five of these men also presented themselves as good, or at least, responsible fathers. The intrapsychic scripting level – the way in which they present themselves – is thus in accordance with their views on the cultural scenarios of good fatherhood.

I want to argue further that these six men are working so hard to look after their family members that they are fulfilling the cultural expectations of being breadwinners. What is crucial in this context is that their employment at the mine makes it possible for them to be breadwinners (interpersonal scripting level). Jerome's contempt for his father's failure to provide for them, Bernard's fairly lengthy depiction of himself as the dutiful son, Dean's efforts to look after all family members satisfactorily, Richard's determination not to let "*others suffer like he suffered*", Isaac who takes care of his elderly parents, and Sam's insistence on not spanking his children show us that they all want to fulfil the cultural expectation of being breadwinners and good fathers. Jerome, Bernard, Dean and Richard were all forthcoming in the interviews with their depictions of themselves

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concludes that "there is no scientifically sound empirical evidence that there is a causal relationship between being an abused child and becoming an adult child abuser" (Pagelow 1984: 254). Elliot (1996: 167-182) and Kurst-Swanger and Petcosky (2003: 26-52) also review the research on domestic violence and they cluster this view of child abuse victims becoming child abuse offenders as adults under the subset of theories that are psychopathological in nature. A psychopathological view implies that certain behaviour is "abnormal" and due to individual shortcomings. Yet different researchers are not able to reach an agreed upon "profile" of a child abuser and certain of the results are even contradictory. It is important to note that no study has found that *all* children who were abused become abusers themselves. Human relationships are too complex to be reduced to a single causal factor.

Another set of explanations are labelled sociological explanations (this subset of theories is described on a socio-cultural level by Kurst-Swanger and Petcosky 2003: 46-49) in understanding domestic violence. Elliot (1996: 167-182) discusses (amongst others) the work of Strauss, Gelles and associates who argue that there is "a disjunction between cultural values which emphasise material success and structural conditions which limit opportunities for success". They argue that men are expected to be breadwinners but that in poor socio-economic groups men are often not able to do this. This lack of achievement results in frustration which leads to aggression and violence. In this regard Campbell (1994) has done a study in KwaZulu Natal where women and children do blame men who are not able to provide for them. In Crush et al (2001) we encounter men who blame themselves for not being able to provide sufficiently for their families. Jerome's criticisms of his father who could not meet the family's material needs during difficult economic times also bear testimony to this "disjunction".

as good providers which points to their pride in this matter. In Sam's case he wants to be a caring, and not an abusive, father. Instead of merely asking why they behave differently, the question could also be posed as to why their own fathers did not provide sufficiently for them. Certain of the answers to this question are straightforward – in Dean's case his father had died; Bernard's father had a second family in the urban area to support; Jerome's father had three wives and numerous children; and Richard's father had two wives and 16 children. In the cases of Jerome, Richard and Isaac there was simply not enough money to support everybody. Socio-economic aspects thus prevented their fathers from being able to provide.

The socio-economic conditions for the respondents do, however, favour their providing for family members. Richard decided to have four children only and never to take a second wife. He said that the worst thing his father had ever done was to take a second wife – he was the son of his father's first wife. Jerome, however, also has two wives and twelve children, but he is able to support them all because of the family's successful cultivation of a piece of land, and the fact that the older children are either self-supporting (his son-in-law is also a mineworker and takes care of Jerome's one daughter) or contribute to the family's economic activities (his two daughters-in-law work in the fields with his wives and the daughters-in-law's husbands – his sons – are also mineworkers). These four men have thus managed to contribute to their families' finances early on in life and, unlike their own fathers, started a life pattern of being able to fulfil the expectation of being a provider. The issue of agency should therefore not be overlooked in these examples. However, although the individual men choose their actions, it was possible for them to make choices from which their families would benefit. Interpersonal scripting – or the practical realities of life circumstances – makes it possible for these men to be providers while practical realities made it almost impossible for their fathers.

It is clear that financial support from their fathers is an important issue for sons – even as adults remembering their fathers. Men who grew up in extreme poverty (and said that they suffered as children) are particularly motivated to create better conditions for their children. However, it is not possible to analyse financial aspects in isolation when considering father-son relationships. Richard's love for his poor, but loving, father provides a clear example of this.

#### **5.4 “He was a very good person”**

It was found that certain respondents had particularly fond memories of their own fathers/father figures. These fathers were admired by their sons and generally the sons want to follow in the footsteps of these fathers.

##### *5.4.1 Respondents*

###### Mathew:

Mathew's father worked for a transport organisation in Mozambique when Mathew was growing up. Mathew supposed his father had worked in Johannesburg before he was born (in 1953) as he had mentioned “*Jo'burg*” often when Mathew was growing up. When his father died in 1982 he was still working for the transport company. At this time Mathew had already been working for ten years for a mining company in Gauteng, but four years after his father's death he returned to Mozambique for a period of six years (he said that workers had been prevented from coming to South Africa when Samora Machel had died) After this time he returned to the mines and has worked there ever since. He remembers his father affectionately:

*He was loving me. And he had a lot of cattle. Ja, even today I am still thinking about my father, ja.*

He also mentioned specifically that his father gave him cattle for *lobola* and he said *“that is why I love him”*. Mathew describes a “good father” as *“the one that will give you everything that you want; he is the right father”*. Mathew thinks he is a good father but he says: *“It is only my kids who know what I am.”* When I asked how he compares as a father to his own father he responded: *“I remember he was right, maybe he was better than me, maybe I am better than him, I cannot say.”*<sup>74</sup>

A strong theme of giving material things to children in order to be considered a good father emerges from Mathew’s responses. Since his own father was able to give him all the things deemed necessary for a father (from his point of view), he considers his father to have been a good father.

Nelson:

Nelson was born in 1951 (although he maintains that his passport erroneously states that he was born in 1954) in Mozambique. Nelson’s father worked on a mine in Gauteng until his death in 1986. By that time Nelson was already working on the mines – he had started working there in 1971, continued until 1975, and then returned to the mines in 1982. Nelson described his father as follows:

***He was a very good person, even the people who worked with him could not stop talking about him*** (emphasis added).

When I asked him what good things he could remember about his father, he responded: *“The only thing that I can say, I don’t know how to put it but he is the one that helped me to grow up, he is the one that let me go to school”*. When I asked him to compare himself with his father he said: *“I think I would just follow him, I wish to stay with my father.”* Nelson has no doubt in his mind that he is a good father himself.

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<sup>74</sup> I spoke to Mathew some time after his shift had ended. He was extremely tired and I ended the interview prematurely so that he could get some rest. This meant that I was not able to explore certain issues further.

Now that they are adults themselves certain of the respondents are in a position to reflect upon their relationships with their fathers. For some such a relationship is merely a continuance of the foundations laid much earlier in their lives, but for others the present relationship entails major shifts in the way they understand their fathers or engage with their fathers as children. Some men also mentioned how their fathers' treatment of them as children influenced the way they raise their children today – similar to Sam above.

Tony:

Tony, who grew up with his own father's presence in the house on a daily basis, continues a relationship with his father along the same path as their earlier relationship when Tony was a child. As long as Tony can remember his father has been a painter for the town council. He grew up with both his parents and his brother in one household in Gauteng. He describes his father as:

*... a patient somebody and then he doesn't talk too much. If there is a problem, he sits down with all of us and show us the way.*

He said he is trying to be the same type of father that his own father was as he believes his own father provided a good role model when raising him and his brother. Now that Tony is an adult he still turns to this father for advice when faced with difficulties. He consistently portrays his father as a patient person who resolves problems by discussing them.

When Tony was growing up his family were members of the Old Apostolic Church and he is still an active member today. His wife is involved in teaching Sunday school and he is a choir conductor. When asked he stated that raising his own children within the church is important to him. Apart from the religious aspects, the church seems to play an important social function in Tony's life as it is the only other activity in which he participates that provides a social network



besides his work and family relationships. The fact that Tony continues with the same religious practices of his family also shows a general continuance of his family of orientation's lifestyle.

Tony and his girlfriend had moved out of his parents' house in the time between the two interviews I had with him. The new household arrangements brought changes to the family relationships as Tony prefers his parents to come and visit him. His parents, often accompanied by younger family members living with them, usually visit Tony and his girlfriend every second weekend. They watch videos together (apparently the video machine is a new purchase in the family) and share a meal. The main dish often consists of chicken prepared by his girlfriend and his mother. Tony makes sure that everybody's favourite beverages are available. Tony also makes small contributions, normally maize flour, to his parents' household when the need arises. It is thus clear that the amicable relationships Tony experienced as a child continue now that he is an adult.

*Winfred:*

Winfred is a migrant from Mozambique, but his relationship with his father also seems to be continuing along the same lines as that of Tony. He describes his father as follows:

*He loved his kids. He had two wives, my mother was the elderly one – thereafter he got married to the other one. But we were staying in one home – the kids from the other wife were also staying with us. There was no difference in supporting, he would send money, buy food for us. He even took us a little bit to school ... eh ... and then he became old and he took pension now.*

It should, however, be pointed out that Winfred is the eldest son of the first wife and that his father gave him cattle (at the time of the interview he had more than

twenty cattle). This preferential treatment of the eldest son seems to have been carried over from earlier years:

*... he used to tell me that I will be in charge of everything because I was a boy. He gave me the authority over everything, to look after the younger brothers ...*

Winfred still has a good relationship with his father today, and he visits him when he goes home even though his father lives in another province with his younger wife (Winfred's mother had passed away the year before our first interview). A similar relationship exists between Winfred and his own children although he said that he treats his sons and daughters equally.

Lucky:

In contrast to Dean, Lucky's life shows that not all children experience poverty and misery if their fathers die. Lucky's father passed away when he was eleven years old. He then moved from Vryheid with his only brother to his maternal uncle's house in Estcourt. At the same time his mother started working in Durban. He has very fond memories of his uncle and he said that he even tried to take his uncle's surname when he was a teenager because he thought of him as a father. When asked about his life with his uncle, it seems as if he remembers him with affection:

*Oh it was very nice, we were very spoiled. [He laughs.] We were not allowed to wash dishes and pots because he said this is for women, it is not for boys ... I was not allowed to drink tea, even now I don't like to drink tea, because he said there is sugar in this tea and your teeth will become brown. [He laughs again.]*

Lucky's uncle and his brother have passed away in the meantime but he still regards his cousins as his brothers and sisters. Lucky was thus supported by a

man who took up the challenge of social parenting by providing adequately for the children of whom he was not the biological father (compare with Isaac's uncle above). From Lucky's recollections it becomes clear that he had a happy childhood, which proves that the loss of a biological father does not have to translate into growing up without parents or taking on adult responsibilities at a young age.

#### *5.4.2 Discussion*

One could argue that these men received financial support and therefore that this one aspect alone determines the relationship between sons and their fathers. In every case, however, the men also mention various other aspects that played a role in the relationships they had with their fathers/father figures. The financial support was thus supplemented by regular contact, guidance and love from the fathers. This pattern may not necessarily entail the nurturing of children and therefore does not correspond fully with the "new emerging fatherhood" pattern. Yet emotional closeness and expressions of love were experienced by the respondents in terms of their fathers/father figures. Emotional closeness between fathers and children should therefore not necessarily be typecast as "new".

Mathew, Nelson, Tony, Winfred and Lucky have deep respect for their fathers (or uncle in the case of Lucky) and they believe they were good men. They want to follow in the footsteps of such good men.

### **5.5 Conclusion**

When analysing the relationships adult men have with their fathers, a variety of factors seem to influence these relationships. In certain cases previous good relationships continue or distant relationships persist, but in other cases, previous poor relationships may improve and become amicable. In particular changed

circumstances in relation to household structures (parents move in with adult children, parents live far away, adult children have their own household for the first time) impact on the relationships adults have with their parents.

When asking *What are the respondents' own recollections of being fathered?* and *How do the respondents characterise fatherhood?* the answers are nuanced and they have to be qualified. From this discussion on the ways in which men perceive their own fathers and how they present themselves as fathers the following three fatherhood patterns were identified and discussed:

- “The father is like a lion”;
- “I was suffering”;
- “He was a good person”.

In the case of “the father is like a lion” the men believed their own fathers generally adhered to the expectations of being fathers although they did not have a close relationship with their fathers. The cultural scenario of the father as breadwinner is thus not good enough for them and they want fatherhood to include a more affectionate relationship. Certain of the men, who associated their fathers with this group, want to be/believe they are different as fathers.

Men with negative childhood memories often stated that “I was suffering” (or something similar) as a child. The fathers are often seen as responsible for the “terrible” childhood although two of the men have still maintained fairly good relationships with their fathers due to the emotional closeness with them. Practical circumstances – on the interpersonal scripting level – often facilitated (in the case of the employed respondents) or prevented (as in the case of the overburdened fathers of the respondents) fathers from being able to be breadwinners. However, one man described a fairly intimate father-son relationship despite the fact that his father had not been able to provide adequately for his children’s financial needs. It is thus possible to fulfil the role of

social fatherhood even though the economic fatherhood role is impossible to fulfil.

In the cases where the respondents believed “he was a good person” they often want to emulate their fathers/father figures. They had a good relationship with their fathers/father figures and also admired them. These respondents often experienced emotional closeness with their fathers/father figures when they were children.

When the respondents’ memories of childhood were prompted, many of them chose to talk about financial issues as these related to their fathers/paternal figures. This supports the cultural scenario of the man as the provider as discussed in the theory chapter. Yet, it is clear that relationships are more nuanced and cannot be viewed simply from a financial perspective. It was shown how men who grew up in immense poverty due to their fathers neglecting this supportive role, seem to be particularly eager to support their own families to the best of their abilities. Although the importance of financial support is understandable, it is not the ultimate factor in determining the quality of relationships fathers have with their children. Issues such as emotional support, other competent caregivers (such as a grandparent or uncle), physical violence and alcohol abuse interact, fuse with and, in some cases, overshadow financial support. Although financial support is thus central in paternal relationships, it is not possible to reduce paternal relationships to financial support only.

Early relationships with adult males seem to have lasting impressions as they continue to impact on men in their current father-child relationships. In their understanding of themselves as fathers, they often react to their bad experiences as children or else continue with the good experiences they had as children. A phenomenon that emerged in this context is that of the “boy-father”: a male child who takes on adult responsibilities to provide an income for themselves, their siblings and their mothers. These boy-fathers come to the fore when there are no

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adult males to provide for them, and their mothers or other adult relatives are not able to raise enough money for the family's needs. In the cases discussed these men grew up to become responsible fathers who continued with this pattern of looking after others.

The way in which the respondents characterise fatherhood will be further discussed in the next chapter. *Chapter 6* deals specifically with the migrant respondents in this study, and their views on relationships with their female partners and children.

## **Chapter 6**

### **Analysis and interpretation:**

### **Migrancy and fatherhood in the goldmining industry**

#### **6.1 Introduction**

*Chapters 6 and 7* contain analyses on the living arrangements and relationships with the families of procreation of the migrant and resident respondents respectively. The rationale for this division in the presentation is the diverse circumstances and experiences of migrant and resident men in terms of their families. The migrant men do not live with their families on a daily basis while resident men do live with family members on a daily basis. The state of either resident or migrant father should be regarded as fluid (although it is treated as static in this analysis for the sake of clarity) as certain resident respondents live with some of their children only and/or only sometimes with their female partners.

The relationships between migrants and their families are analysed in this discussion in terms of gender and intergenerational relations. The latter refers specifically to relations between fathers and their children. The following research questions are addressed: *How do the respondents characterise fatherhood?; What influence do biological mothers or female partners have on father-child relationships as described by the respondents? and How do migrant and resident respondents' experiences of fatherhood differ?* Although these questions are addressed in this chapter they will be analysed more comprehensively in the next chapter after the discussion on resident respondents.

The migrant respondents of this study are introduced by providing certain background information on them.

## 6.2 Who are the migrant men in this study?

Seventeen of the 30 respondents in this study are oscillating migrants. In this study a man is considered to be an oscillating migrant if he lives at or near the mineshaft and is therefore only able to visit his family when he takes leave from work. The families of these migrants live in rural households and there is thus regular commuting between the place of work and the rural household. Eleven of these 17 migrant men have rural households in Mozambique, two in Lesotho, one in Swaziland, one in KwaZulu-Natal, one in the Eastern Cape and one in the Limpopo Province.

The migrant respondents were married according to civil or customary law but all of them paid *lobola*. Some of them paid *lobola* with cattle, but money payments are quite common and, in a few cases, money and cattle are combined. Generally the migrant respondents have several children (4.5 children on average) born from their marriages, with the number of children ranging between twelve (with two wives) and one (see *Table 1* for detail).

### 6.2.1 Frequency of family contact

As employees the mineworkers have a certain number of fixed days leave together with a number of “casual leave days” per annum. Requests for “casual leave days” are administrative human resources matters and are usually granted if an employee has sufficient leave left in the year. The result of this setup is that different men visit their families at different intervals (Potgieter 2002). Simon, for example, visits his family in Swaziland every second weekend, while George visits his family in Bushbuckridge once a month, and Winfred visits his family in Maputo every second month. Simon does not make special arrangements to send money back home, as he takes the money home when he visits. There are, however, also respondents who, although they go home less frequently, go for longer periods at a time. However, none of the respondents visit their homes once a year only as was the norm for mineworkers on fixed contracts.



In addition, wives are now able to visit their husbands in the hostel of this mineshaft, as rooms are set aside for men to share when their wives visit. However, a wife may not stay for longer than two weeks. Some men may also move out of the hostel for a short period to stay with their wives, and then move back later. George, for example, usually lives in the hostel, but during our second interview he told me that his wife had come to stay with him for six months. They were renting a room in a nearby township for the six months, after which George would return to the hostel. He said that there was no specific reason for her visit, but he did indicate that they wanted more children (they already had three children at the time of the interview). Interestingly, George and his wife (from Bushbuckridge) had never before stayed together for such a long period.

### *6.2.2 Household resources*

Certain of the rural homesteads mentioned above had been built by the respondents themselves. Some of these homesteads have no electricity or running water inside the house. Other respondents stated that their rural homesteads are brick houses with electricity and inside taps. Many of these households have television sets, as there are reports of respondents watching television with their children. These different settings mean that the lives of the migrants' families are quite dissimilar: Sebastian's wife (in KwaZulu-Natal), for example, fetches water daily for the family's use from a nearby river while Robert's wife (in Xaixai, Mozambique) runs a hair salon and a public phone service, and employs a fulltime domestic worker. In other cases the families own cattle (the highest number is 25 cattle) or land on which various crops (mainly vegetables and maize) are planted. Simon's extended family (in Swaziland) and Jerome's wives, children and daughters-in-law work in the fields, but Jerome also employs extra seasonal labourers at his home in Nyambani, Mozambique.

There are thus many different patterns of rural living and the circumstances under which the rural families live are quite diverse. The infrastructure in the area in which the homestead is built (the availability of electricity or running

water); the family of origin's wealth (inherited cattle, land, houses or small businesses) and the husband and wife's initiatives (cultivating land, selling goods or delivering a service such as mending clothes) all play a role in determining the degree of comfort in which the family is able to live.

### 6.2.3 Long term household arrangements

Except for Martin all the migrant respondents want to return to their homestead after retirement. It should be borne in mind that retrenchment in the goldmining industry in South Africa is a very real possibility and many of the respondents maintained that they intended to keep a rural homestead to which they could return if they lost their jobs. Fourteen of the seventeen migrants live in the mine hostels and therefore nearly all their social ties with the area are directly linked with the mine. Retirement and retrenchments therefore imply that almost all social ties that bind the men to the mining area will be severed and a return to a rural homestead seems inevitable in the minds of the majority of migrants. The one exception, Martin, says: "*I started [working here] at the age of 19, I am now 54, you can just imagine now, my entire life was here.*" Martin, however, also has a child and a girlfriend living close to him, and therefore he is not linked to the area by work ties only as is the case with the other migrant respondents.

The concept *stretched household* as articulated by Spiegel et al (1996: 11-12) is helpful in understanding the household structures of the migrants (see *Chapter 3, 3.3.2*). Although mineworkers do not live or eat with their families, they have a commitment to contribute financially to the household on an ongoing basis. The breadwinning role of migrant mineworkers thus constitutes a major link to children (see also Lesejane 2006: 178).

I would amend the criteria for the term "stretched households" for the migrant respondents in this study by adding periodic contact with their families, which would imply at least two (but usually more frequent) home visits annually, during which time personal relations between household members are reinforced. In practice this means that men are able to fulfil certain roles

associated with being a father and a husband more readily than was the case in the past. The interviews revealed practical examples of paternal involvement which include taking an active interest in the general development and schoolwork of children, and partner involvement which include having sexual relations with wives. The structure of migrant households has thus stayed very much the same over the past decades for these men, but there has been an increase in the frequency of contact between the individual members of these stretched households. Despite this increase in the frequency of contact, migrant men are still removed from their families for the greater part of the year.

### ***6.3 Beauty is in the eye of the beholder: Idealised fatherhood and families***

The respondents and their families lead lives in different worlds with one world being an urban-based mining environment and the other world a rural-based environment. Children of rural wives belong in the rural world and they have few connections with their fathers who live in another (mining) world. Men who are physically removed from their families often shape a particular image of their families and of themselves in relation to these families. It will be shown how these images are, at times, romanticised ideals that have to compensate for the hardships of hostel or shack life. The migrant's roles of husband and father are often intertwined as the children live with their mothers, but this does not imply that respondents do not distinguish between their relationships with their children and with their wives/girlfriends.

#### ***6.3.1 Views on female partners***

The interview scripts provide information from the respondents that facilitates greater insight into their views of what should be and probably also on how they would like it to be. Their representations of themselves are not entirely removed from reality, and thus give some idea of how they view reality albeit a subjective view on the part of the migrant fathers (intrapsychic level).

Mashegoane's (1990: 72) argument in Chapter 3 (3.3.3) regarding the marriage of the migrant worker being more of an institution than a relationship is of relevance in this context. Cultural scenarios often form the basis of such relationships and a cultural image of the economic provider may easily become idealised. At the same time migrant men may begin to idealise the wives and children whom they see so seldom. The migrants create images of their wives, children and homesteads that may be described as romanticised descriptions. This is borne out by the following responses from the respondents when asked to describe their wives:

- *She is a very nice woman. She is a nice woman my wife (Mathew).*
- *We don't have any problems, we stay together. If there is a problem, we sort it out (Winfred).*
- *My wife is a nice person. I knew her as a child, I grew up with her (Nelson).*
- *Oraait. She is very good (Richard).*
- *She is a very beautiful woman and she loves people, and me and my children as well (Richard, second interview).*
- *She is treating me well, she is a very good, nice person (Mac).*
- *According to my side she is a very good person. She is not a person talking very much. She goes to church sometimes, she loves the church very much (Simon).*
- *No she is a good wife, she is very talkative (Mandla).*
- *She is a good wife and she is a Christian (Thabo).*
- *According to me she is a nice wife (Simpiwe).*
- *My wife is fine, she is a good wife (Mahlanga).*
- *She is a person who does not talk too much, she is a good wife (Ted).*
- *She is a woman that I trust, she gives me no problems (Sebastian).*
- *She is all right, she does not give me problems (George).*

These descriptions are all couched in positive terms. The answers are all superficial and give no hint of conflict or any other problems. Many respondents simply describe their wives/female partners as good or nice, but religious women and women who are not talkative are also viewed in a

positive light. One may argue that these responses were given to me as an outsider. Certain respondents may have had the perception that I wanted to focus on problems and therefore assured me there were no problems. Yet, despite the constraints of the interview situation, it was clear that none of the respondents were able to tell me much about their wives as individuals. No details of their wives' daily lives, emotions, personalities and problems are mentioned despite the various attempts I made to obtain more information. In certain cases it seemed to me that the respondents (and even the interpreters) found it irregular and strange that I would want to know more about someone whom they have already described as being a good wife. These responses differ from those of the resident respondents who live with their wives/girlfriends (see *Chapter 7*). *Idealised images* of their wives emerge in this context which corresponds with Mashegoane's argument on a migrant as an "idealised support provider" and Wetherell's argument on "public social expectations" (see *Chapter 3*). My presence, as well as that of the interpreter, may well have triggered these "socially acceptable" responses – responses which would give me, an outsider, an idea of the way in which a man *should* view his wife. In other words they are telling me what they think is socially acceptable or ideal. I am therefore tapping into their *cultural scenarios* as explained by Marsiglio. I observed this same process when I asked them what constituted a good father.

### 6.3.2 A good father?

The themes of *caring*, *financial support* and being *responsible* emerge very strongly in the following descriptions of a good father:

- *A good father is a father who cares about his family* (Sebastian).
- *A good father is a father who cares about his children and who has discipline* (Thabo).
- *A good father is the one who takes care of you, good behaviour* (Mac).
- *It is a man who supports his family. He is also working. I think a good father is like that* (Timothy).

- *A good father is a father who takes responsibility for his children. A good father is a father who does not abuse his children by shouting at them or by beating them (Mandla).*
- *He supports his kids, he looks after his home, he supports his wives, and even the neighbours will like him as a father (Jerome).*
- *He is the one who will give you everything you want, he is the right father (Fernardo).*
- *For me a good father is one who attends church, because there is nothing wrong with that man, he is always on the side of God. He is busy with work, even in his house you can see he is working for his kids. That is how I would describe him as a good man (Richard).*

Guidance is a dominant theme in the following responses:

- *He is the one who does the right things, he always educates ... He is the one who let his children do the right things, to respect, not to do bad things (Robert).*
- *A good father is the one who corrects you from doing wrong things (George).*
- *A good father is a father who does not always beat his children, he does not do bad things. A good father is a father who always looks after his family (Simpiwe).*

These *cultural scenarios* reveal that these migrant respondents do not entertain high expectations of fatherhood. Caring for one's family; giving financial support to family members; being responsible; not engaging in unacceptable behaviour, such as beating children; and guiding children towards acceptable behaviour or setting an example are not indicative of a close relationship with children that involves "intense fathering" or emotional commitment. Even at this level of expectation of what a father should be, one finds that the concept of fatherhood is not perceived to include deep commitment or involvement on the part of the father. For many migrant respondents "good fatherhood" is portrayed as a distant, almost mechanical, relationship.

### 6.3.3 Depictions of family life

The above direct descriptions of wives and children given by the respondents are sketchy, and further discussions revealed more about the type of relationships migrant respondents have with their wives/girlfriends, and the way in which these relationships may impact on the relationships with their children. Certain respondents described the interaction between themselves and their children – for instance Mathew explained how his children are always happy to see him and he does not think they are happy when he is away. When he is with them he tells them stories about Johannesburg. Similarly Simon describes the relationship between himself and his children as *“good ... because I try to teach them right”*. He makes an effort to play with his children and to talk to them. Other respondents may not specifically play with or talk to their children, but they may work together on small business enterprises where informal chatter takes place, or they may watch television together, listen to the radio, or even hold regular religious gatherings.

Richard is one of the few migrant respondents who is actually able to relate details about the lives of his children: *“I work with my children and then I teach them how to work ...we make plastics, we create boxes to put things in, maybe clothing.”* His children also help his wife to sell fruit at the market during the school holidays. He can describe his children’s daily lives in detail, and mentions the following themes in their family discussions:

*We talk about life, how my parents lived – they passed away, the children do not have grandparents. We talk about school – the brother [presumably the eldest son in grade twelve] sometimes teaches us, he tells us what he learned at school.*

Although they have a television at home, Richard is not really interested as he says: *“I love the Bible more.”* They are indeed a religious family and Richard is also a lay preacher. The church seems to play an important role in his family and much of the communication between himself and his children is on

religious matters. The church also seems to provide an ideological link between his hometown and the mine hostel, for example, I asked him if the church services at the hostel are similar to those in his hometown and he answered: *“It is the same because after all we have one God, it is the same God.”* On one occasion the church provided a more tangible link when his wife visited South Africa in the company of a church group.

Richard’s descriptions of his family may appear romantic. One gets the sense of a happy family working harmoniously together without any problems. However, Richard’s descriptions of his family life do reveal that, migrancy notwithstanding, it is possible for fathers to forge and maintain various links with their children. Migrant men are social agents who are not only victims of their environment, but also men who may try to be the best father possible despite the circumstances. Richard may view his relationships through rose-coloured lenses but it is still clear that Richard is sincerely interested in his children’s lives.

Winfred also appears to be as involved as possible in his children’s lives. Winfred is the only migrant respondent who specifically mentions loving one’s children when responding to the question on what being a good father entails:

*He is the one who loves his kids. When they have a problem, he solves the problem, eh ...even if there is a problem at the school, he goes as far as to go to the school to sort it out. I think that he is a caring father.*

This view on being a good father seems to correspond with his behaviour towards his children as he describes it. He mentions considerable communication between himself and his children, and also says:

*No we have a good relationship, like the one who is in standard 10 now, he is trying to educate me to speak English because I can’t speak English. They love me, I love my kids.*



Winfred's portrayal of himself is that of an involved father and he is able to distinguish and describe specific relationships with each of his five children and with his wife. He does acknowledge that he has had casual sexual relationships with other women who live in the vicinity of the mine, although he describes these relationships as "not serious". He claims that his fear of contracting HIV made him discontinue all casual sexual affairs. He also says that he does not have any children other than the five he has with his wife. Winfred is a cheerful and pleasant person<sup>75</sup> who portrays his family relationships in a positive light. He says that he helps his wife when he is at home, that he even changes nappies (his youngest daughter was still a baby at the time of the interviews) and cooks. Despite this positive portrayal of himself, it is clear that this happens only on rare occasions such as when his wife goes shopping and leaves the children with him. Although he says he will allow his children to make up their own minds about their futures it is apparent that he has high aspirations for them and he would not like any of them to end up as mineworkers (although he realises he may not be able to prevent this). He is seemingly disappointed in his teenage daughter who had a baby one month before our first interview (he only told me this in a second interview six months later though), a baby whom he now has to support:

*It affected me badly, I had to come to terms with the pregnancy. I talked to the boy [biological father of the baby] about this but he denied it. We had regular meetings and the boy then accepted [acknowledged] that it is his child but he wants to complete his education first [presumably before taking some financial responsibility for the child].*

He is very proud of two of his sons who are doing well in school and he has high aspirations for them:

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<sup>75</sup> By coincidence I ran into Winfred more than once and I also had the opportunity to observe him in relation to his direct supervisor, Kobus. Kobus was the only person at the mineshaft who ever complained about my interviews – his reason being that he was not personally informed about them. He was described to me by one human resources officer as a racist who wants Winfred to make him coffee instead of talking to me (Winfred was not on duty when I talked to him but Kobus still interfered). Winfred handled the entire debacle splendidly and managed to prevent a standoff between Kobus and me although he did end up cleaning Kobus' office for his "punishment" for not reporting to Kobus.

Question: *This boy next year, he would have finished school, what do you want this boy to do?*

Response: *He wishes to become a doctor, that is his dream.*

Question: *Is it the father's dream or the son's dream? [because of the translation the exact meaning may sometimes be obscured]*

Response: *Both.*

Winfred has asked his two eldest sons to motivate his third son to improve the latter's performance at school. He believes his third son is skipping school and "*plays too much*" and he therefore "*asked the other two to intervene*". Winfred's knowledge of his children's lives was matched only by one other migrant father, Richard, but unlike Richard (who, for example, displayed little knowledge or understanding of his children's school work) Winfred was able to provide more detail on specific children. This knowledge of his individual children makes it possible for him to be involved in their lives in another way – through sibling relationships. His youngest son is able to experience his father's concern/control in his life through the actions of his brothers, who appear to be dutiful sons.

It could be that these positive portrayals of domestic life by Richard and Winfred are possible, as migrant fathers do not live for lengthy periods with their families, and frustrations and confrontation are avoided by the regular departures of the father. In other words, the short time periods the men and their children spend together allow time for advice, storytelling and so on, but the daily stress factors and mundane household aspects are not really experienced. It seems plausible to form an idyllic picture of family life based on short visits through the year. The "difficult" aspects of parenting, such as the daily preparation of meals, organising time schedules, and getting children to bed are left to the mothers who live with the children all the time. A migrant father may easily become a "fair-weather parent" and romanticised images associated with family life where the father is present may result.

The difference between an idealised relationship and a real relationship is illustrated clearly when one compares Martin's relationship with his wife with that with his girlfriend whom he sees regularly. The relationship with his girlfriend appears real whilst the relationship with his wife is portrayed as ideal, but without much substance:

Martin was 56 years old at the time of the interview. He started working on the goldmines at the age of 19. He married his wife shortly after starting work and he has never lived with her for longer than his leave periods. Martin regards his wife in the same light as many of the other migrant respondents regard their wives – he described her as: *“Ah, hundred percent, she attends church she does not even take any liquor.”* He did not offer any more information on her and it seemed as if he regarded the matter as settled as far as the interview was concerned. He regards it as the responsibility of the man to provide an income for his family, and when I asked him what the “job” of a woman is, he replied: *“The job of the wife is to look after my family, to look after my belongings, to look after everything that I’ve got.”* His pragmatic approach to his personal but distant relationship is clear. One could argue that the western ideals of camaraderie between a husband and wife and a relationship in which the husband and wife provide each other with emotional support may not be applicable to Martin in this context. Yet, Martin displayed different emotions when talking about his girlfriend whom he sees every day. He has a son of twelve (at the time of the interview) with her and it seems as if the relationship between them is deteriorating:

*Ah, she [his girlfriend] is not right. She is drinking, sometimes she is also angry. She is shouting at the kid, you find that the kid sometimes come and stay with me, after that I tell him to go back to his mother. It is just like that, she is not a right person.*

He shows emotion when talking about his girlfriend and the only reason he still sees her is because he has a child with her and because his wife cannot join him from Mozambique. He does not share a dwelling with his girlfriend as he lives alone in a shack but he sees her daily because of the amount of time

he spends with their son. When I asked him about the relationship between him and his wife he replied: “*Very, very good.*” In Martin’s mind this relationship is an ideal relationship with no conflict; he provides well for his wife and his children, and he will return to the homestead for which she cares. This ideal relationship seems in contrast to the relationship with the girlfriend whom he portrays as a woman who drinks too much and does not take good care of his son.

It is also possible to detect the same differentiation between his nine rural children and three grandchildren, and his son whom he sees everyday. When Martin speaks of the son he sees every day, his face lights up and he speaks fondly of him: “*He is number one.*” He is also planning to keep this son as an integral part of his life when inevitably he has to return to Mozambique after he retires:

*We will do the very same thing, he will travel as I do. He has documentation as my dependant, he will have a house there, I’ll build him a house, he will have a visa/passport to go home, to and fro.*

Martin cares for all his children but the only close relationship he has is with the son he sees on a daily basis. A close father-son relationship is much easier to foster if there is regular direct physical contact, although there is also an increased possibility of conflict.

Despite the fact that Richard and Winfred’s depictions of their family lives are at times so idyllic that they seem unbelievable, it is clear that they are involved in their children’s lives to a far greater extent than many of the other migrant respondents. In fact, they may even be more involved in their children’s lives than some resident fathers. The question arises why some men relate to their children in a romanticised way while others have very little interaction with their children? This brings to the fore the issue of agency amongst men. Migrancy makes involved fathering difficult and, some might even say, impossible. Apart from financial contributions to the household,

many respondents have little other involvement in their children's lives. However, in terms of the reported practices or activities regarding fatherhood it is clear that, despite the physical distance between men and their children, the relationships respondents have with children vary greatly. Even within a migrant setting it is therefore possible to trace "involved fatherhood" and more "distant fatherhood". Many migrant fathers are interested in their children's education; some play with their children; some watch television with them, several tell their children stories or have discussions with them; a few work with their children at home; some hold religious gatherings, and a few younger dads are even involved in the physical caring for young children (although mainly when their wives are busy with something else). However, in practice, all these activities can only take place when the father is physically present, and for the greater part of the children's lives, their fathers are not present. The greatest contribution of a migrant father to his family therefore remains financial support. Financial support is manifest everyday in the food that is eaten, in the clothes that are worn, and the school that is attended. Financial support from the father is therefore visible everyday whether he is physically present or not.

#### **6.4 *Sexual relations, power and paternal responsibility***

In this particular study certain of the migrants maintained that they were always sexually faithful to their wives. They were often concerned with the financial implications of sexual relations with other women, – for instance, Jerome: *"No, they will rip you off with the money"*, and Nelson: *"I can do that (have a girlfriend), but the biggest problem is that I don't have money."* Other respondents state simply that they remain faithful to their wives and that this is made easier by the fact that they have more freedom (compared to previous decades) to visit their rural homesteads when they take leave.

#### 6.4.1 Rural families do matter

Of the respondents who said that they were faithful to their wives, Mac stated: “*If I want a wife I go home*” or Mathew who, when asked if he had a girlfriend, answered: “*No, I only call my wife if I want a woman.*” Both these men insisted that they do not engage in casual sex with other women. This is particularly interesting in the case of Mac as his father had five wives. Mac is not interested in taking a second wife. The reasons for Mac’s behaviour are not very clear<sup>76</sup> but he implied that it would negatively affect his children if he took another wife. Mac already has ten children with his wife, varying in age between two and 29 years at the time of the interview. He was retrenched in 1994 and only found a job again in 1998. He stayed at home during this period and his presence in his household for those four years made him acutely aware of his children’s needs, and his responsibility to provide for them weighs heavily on him.

Richard is another respondent who also experienced poverty as a child that he ascribes partly to polygyny. This experience of poverty prevents him from ever considering taking a second wife – he says:

*I was really suffering. My father had two wives; we were 16 all of us. Yes, it was bad, I even had to sell some of the things so that I could get money to go to school. It was difficult. That is what made me realise that I must recognise my children. I have four children and I don’t want others to suffer, because of what I experienced when I was still young.*

Thus different aspects may contribute to stable relationships with wives and their children such as changed conditions on the mine that result in the possibility of more frequent contact with rural wives. Experiences of poverty

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<sup>76</sup> Our interview started late due to some *toy-toying* adjacent to the office we were sitting in and the interpreter had to attend to this first. Mac was on his way to send a parcel to his rural home through the Post Office and he was extremely agitated throughout the interview as he was worried the Post Office might close before he sent his parcel. I therefore ended the interview early although I did want to ask him more questions. However, because of the delays in starting with the interview he was clearly not interested in speaking to me again.

may also play a role in rendering men conscious of their duty to provide for their families. Certain migrants wield little influence, let alone power, in the family context except for the money they earn. If the migrant is also aware of the devastating consequences of poverty he will, to the best of his ability, send his wages home. When asked to evaluate himself as a father he will perceive himself to be a good father and provider because, although there is little else he is able to do as a migrant father, he does send his money home and, in this way, saves his children from poverty.

A rural family would soon be cast into poverty or even starvation if a husband stopped sending money home. Moodie (1994: 148f) gives an account of rural women who desperately tried to maintain relationships with their husbands at the mines by visiting the mines periodically. Rural women may know first hand, or may have heard stories of men who deserted their rural families, and they realise the devastating consequences of this behaviour.<sup>77</sup> However, the power that some rural may wield, should not be ignored. Many women head the rural households when their husbands are not there. It is not possible for a man who visits his homestead twice a month (although it was stated in certain cases it is often less regular) to dictate how money and time are spent within the rural household. Although other male relatives may keep an eye on things on behalf of absent migrant workers, it is mostly women who are in charge of the households. This implies that women who receive money regularly from their husbands are relatively free from power struggles within their households. O'Laughlin (1998: 5) explains that rural women with migrant husbands are at times "de facto heads of household". Of course this does not mean that these women lead a carefree existence, but they do wield decision-making power in the daily routines of their children and themselves. It also implies that they are able to spend the money in ways they see fit within certain parameters the husband may be able to set. (Younger wives who live with in-laws and second wives of polygynous marriages have, however, less of such power as fathers-in-law and first wives respectively still dictate to

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<sup>77</sup> It should also not be assumed that urban women necessarily have stable relationships with mineworkers; and these urban women may also be deserted. In some cases children from different sexual relationships (rural or urban) are abandoned, along with their mothers, in favour of another sexual relationship.

them.) Despite rural wives power in the household, they have little power over their husbands' sexual behaviour. In this study there were also migrant respondents who have sexual relations and children with other women of which their wives are unaware.

Thabo is an example of a man who has fathered children with more than one woman. Thabo visits his rural home in the Eastern Cape twice a year and his wife also makes one annual visit to the hostel. Thabo has two teenage daughters with his wife and a three-year-old son with a girlfriend. He claims to have ended the relationship with this girlfriend as she demanded too much money from him, yet it later transpired that he still sees the girlfriend. He has not seen their child in over a year and he does not seem to be concerned about the child's well-being. His wife is unaware of the existence of both the child and the girlfriend. Thabo does not seem very involved in the lives of the children he has with his wife either:

Question: *How would you describe the relationship between yourself and your children?*

Response: *No, our relationship is very sound.*

Question: *Do you tell your children stories?*

Response: *No.*

Question: *Do you play with them?*

Response: *No, I cannot play with children [laughs a little].*

Simon is also trying to conceal a sexual relationship he has with another woman from his wife. Simon and his wife were staying in the "married rooms" of the hostel for a two-week period during the time of our second interview. Simon said his wife washes clothes during the time he is at work, but he does not know what she does during the rest of the time. According to Simon there was no specific reason for her visit. During our first interview Simon had admitted to having a girlfriend but in the second interview he seemed to be a changed man. In the first interview he said his wife was aware of his girlfriend but that she did not approve. He does not have any children with the girlfriend. Simon lives in the hostel and he used to see his girlfriend over the



weekends. If one takes into account that he does try to travel to his rural home once a month, it is clear that he is not able to spend much time with his girlfriend. He spoke in a soft voice about his relationship with the girlfriend and, despite laughing about it with the interpreter, he seems to be ashamed of the relationship. In our second interview there was no interpreter on hand (it seemed to me that both interpreters underestimated his proficiency in English) and he told me he had left the girlfriend at the end of the previous year. This must have been shortly after our first interview and during the time he would have gone home. When I asked him why he had left his girlfriend he responded as follows:

*[He laughs.] I don't know. I saw that, I want to be a ... because I see now that I am not young, I want to say to my child don't do this and don't do this, then I tell him not to do the thing that I do myself. Then I say, now, I want to attend the church with my full life.*

Simon says he is not interested in having other girlfriends again. There is an element of setting an example to his children as well as living righteously according to his religious beliefs. Simon is in his mid-thirties and his eldest child is entering his early teens. The fact that his child is growing up appears to be a catalyst in his decision to be sexually faithful to his wife. Even if Simon tried to deceive me for fear that I might meet his wife,<sup>78</sup> the fact remains that he was not willing to admit to a relationship with a girlfriend, although he had previously been willing to discuss the relationship. The regular physical presence of a wife may thus ensure that other sexual liaisons with women are abandoned (or at least concealed). More frequent physical contact may thus increase the rural wife's power to influence her husband's behaviour even though she may not be with her husband all the time.

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<sup>78</sup> Although it seemed an opportune moment to interview Simon's wife, I decided rather to build on the openness that Simon had demonstrated towards me during the interview. It seemed like a betrayal of the trust he had placed in me to ask to interview his wife at that stage.

#### 6.4.2 Yes, I have a girlfriend

Two migrant respondents, Martin and Ted, are quite open about their extramarital relationships. Martin has nine children and three grandchildren (none of his children are married). His wife lives in Mozambique and he has a girlfriend in South Africa with whom he has one twelve-year-old son. When asked about his wife's views on his having a girlfriend, he replied: *"I did inform her that I have a girlfriend, even though she is not satisfied, but she accepted it."* I inquired whether his wife had any boyfriends about whom he knew and he replied: *"No, the law does not allow that, even if she has maybe, I do not know about it."*

Martin's responses about having a child with a girlfriend show remarkable similarities to those of a much younger Mozambican, Ted, who was 27 years old at the time of the interview. Ted's wife had had a baby in the same year in which the interview was held, and his girlfriend was pregnant with his child at the time of the interview. His girlfriend is also a Mozambican, and she trades in Maputo in goods which she buys in South Africa with money he has given her. When I asked him about his wife's views on his girlfriend's pregnancy, he simply replied: *"I really don't know what she thinks about it."* Ted, like other migrant respondents, was not aware of his wife having sexual relations with other men. When I asked Ted if he would be upset if he were to find out that his wife had had any boyfriends, he replied: *"Even if I can be upset, in the end we will sit down and I will tell her that she is wrong."*

Both these men had therefore informed their wives about their respective girlfriends and the children from these relationships, without apparent concern for their wives' opinions, but at the same time, they expected fidelity from their wives. The double standards regarding sexual relations for men and women are simply accepted by both Martin and Ted, and neither man felt the need to conceal the fact. However, both Ted and Martin regard their responsibility towards the children from the relationships with their girlfriends in the same light as the responsibility they have towards their children with their wives – in Ted's words: *"I will treat them the same because they are all my children."*

Martin and Ted both regard their responsibilities toward all their biological children as equally important and the views of their wives do not seem to matter much.

Martin and Ted are both Mozambicans, a fact which seems relevant in this context because of the forced occurrence of migrancy amongst non-South African mineworkers.<sup>79</sup> The fatherhood behaviour reported by the Mozambicans does not seem to be distinct from that of other mineworkers, except in matters pertaining to wives and girlfriends. The fact that both men are from Mozambique, where polygyny is still widely practised, may have influenced their views on children with other women. Apart from cultural norms that may be peculiar to Mozambicans, almost all Mozambicans live in hostels as their wives are not permitted to join them in South Africa on a permanent basis. The majority of Mozambicans are thus still migrants, and some of them still identify strongly with their Mozambican roots. Double standards may emanate from this, but not all the Mozambican men view polygyny itself in the same way. It has already been shown how Mac and Richard do not want to take second wives due to firsthand experiences of poverty, but certain respondents, for instance, Jerome, still view polygyny in a more traditional sense.

Jerome has two wives who are 15 years apart in age. He portrays the relationship between his two wives as harmonious and caring, as if they were sisters. He speaks proudly of all his children with both wives, although in different ways because of the age differences. His eldest children are adults and contribute to the extended household in various ways. For example, two of his sons are also mineworkers in South Africa, and their wives work on the family fields at home. He is also proud of the son who is in his final year of schooling (the other children left school earlier because they started working, or, in the case of his daughters, fell pregnant). He seems equally pleased with the twins his younger wife had borne him in the period between the two interviews. The overall impression one gains of Jerome's extended family is

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<sup>79</sup> See *Chapter 3* for detail on this.

that of a traditional household, where a custom such as polygyny is still entrenched. The western ideology of monogamy does not seem to be relevant in this context.

To summarise – certain migrant respondents report being sexually faithful to their rural wives. Regular visits to their homes, the fear of squandering money and religious beliefs were given as reasons for their fidelity. Other respondents in the study reported having sexual liaisons with women other than their rural wives, but they remained committed to the rural households. Those respondents who are open with their wives about their relationships with girlfriends may be viewed as patriarchs. However, these patriarchs do take financial responsibility for all their children – they do not abandon some children at the expense of others. In contrast, the respondent who hides his sexual relations with another woman from his wife usually does not take any interest in the child born from the extramarital affair. The respondents who openly admit to adhering to a double standard of sexual practices between the sexes regard their responsibilities towards all their biological children as important, as do men who regard all their children from polygynous marriages as their responsibility.

### **6.5 Concluding remarks**

In this chapter the question was posed as to the way in which men perceive their wives/girlfriends and children when living as migrant mineworkers. In order to answer this question the living arrangements of the migrant respondents were briefly outlined. From this background information it became clear that, despite flexible leave arrangements, migrancy still entails long periods of separation between fathers and children as well as between husbands and wives. These periods of separation give rise to different situations in which certain men have little involvement in their families' lives apart from their breadwinner role, while others strive to keep intimate relationships intact. Some of the respondents find it difficult to say much about their wives and children, and certain men simply do not know any

details of their families' daily lives. Where respondents try to be involved in their families' lives, idyllic portrayals of families emerge. Such "idyllic portrayals" are often used to compensate for the time spent away from the family – this phenomenon was not found in this study on resident fathers. These idealised images were reported partly for my benefit (as the researcher – intrapsychic scripting) but I believe these images also help men to cope with the harsh realities of hard work, boredom and loneliness. Furthermore, there is a plausible element to these portrayals, as fathers and husbands leave the family after a visit, and therefore avoid the mundane aspects and conflicts of everyday life associated with sharing households. In this study different patterns of behaviour were found amongst the migrant respondents as some try to be involved fathers under difficult circumstances, while, for their families, others are simply distant figures who provide money, occasional visits and treats.

From the above one could easily presume that the agency of men as fathers and husbands is thus the only factor that has to be taken into account in order to explain the lack of involvement on the part of the father or else the attempts at involvement. However, the issue of power in the rural households should also be considered. The crux here is the lack of power migrant men experience in relation to their families and households. Many men may not realise this as childrearing and household tasks are usually (i.e. also in non-migrant households) assigned to women. Superficially therefore it may not seem as if migrancy, which entails physical separation, increases women's power within the family. If one considers that these women have to keep the household running and raise children alone it is obvious that women have to make decisions on a daily basis without consulting men. Migrant men are thus largely disengaged from their families, and therefore they either do not know their families or they make an effort to know them as well as possible even if they have to romanticise certain aspects of their relationships with them.

Power aspects in families also relate to sexual relations between men and women. In this study certain respondents believe that they are entitled to

have sexual relations with more than one woman, while others either do not share this belief or they do not state it openly. The respondents who openly stated their right to sexual relations with more than one woman (without granting women the same right) take full responsibility for all their biological children. The man's authority is not (openly) challenged here and, at the same time, one of the masculine universal stereotypes of "man the provider" remains intact. Interestingly the respondent who said he concealed his relationship with another woman from his wife does not acknowledge the child born from this relationship. This was the only respondent among the migrant respondents who intimated that he had a child for whom he does not take full responsibility. It is therefore not possible to deduce a pattern here but a premise may be formulated at this stage which will be further explored and discussed after reviewing the relationships of the resident respondents and their biological children in the next chapter. This premise is that the erosion of a certain form of patriarchy leads to the abandonment of children born out of wedlock.

## **Chapter 7**

### **Analysis and interpretation: Resident fathers in the goldmining industry**

#### **7.1 Introduction**

*Chapter 2* outlined the way in which the goldmining industry in South Africa had become infamously associated with oscillating migrancy – that is, between the rural and urban areas – during the twentieth century. The changes in the goldmining industry – particularly from the 1970s onwards – resulted in a number of mineworkers being able to live with their family members near the mines. Certain of these mineworkers have never lived in a hostel. Mineworkers at the Cooke 3 mineshaft receive a “living-out-wage” if they do not live in the hostel, and in the view of mine management, this living-out-wage is regarded by certain mineworkers as an incentive to move out of the hostel (Potgieter 2002).<sup>80</sup>

The following research questions are further analysed in this chapter: *How do the respondents characterise fatherhood?; What influence do biological mothers or female partners have on father-child relationships as described by the respondents? and How do migrant and resident respondents’ experiences of fatherhood differ?* In order to analyse these questions the household structures, the nature of the relationship between fathers and their children, and the nature of the relationship between the respondents and their wives and/or girlfriends will be the focal point of discussion in this chapter. Although these are three distinct issues, they are nevertheless interconnected. Daily contact with children creates a more conducive environment for playing an active role in the raising of children

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<sup>80</sup> The available statistics from this shaft do not include details on the household arrangements of mineworkers but approximately 40% of the mineworkers live in the hostels (Mothokwane 2003). Although there are a considerable number of black mineworkers who live outside the mine hostels with their wives/girlfriends and/or children or even other family members, some do live on their own outside the hostels.

– something that is not the case with migrant men. Unlike the migrant respondents, residential men do not have idealised images of their family members as they live with family members. Likewise, a wife/girlfriend living together with a man in one household ensures a real relationship and not merely the notion of a woman securing the household as it appears to be the case with some migrants. The dynamics of these households are in stark contrast to the “stretched households” of the migrants working on the same mineshaft.

## **7.2 Household structures**

Many of the men who live with their wives and children near the mine have similar backgrounds to the migrant men. As can be seen from their childhood memories the majority of these men also grew up in rural areas:

*I had a wonderful life, I grew up with my sisters, they gave me respect. I was not sleeping with them, I had my own hut where I slept. I had friends I grew up with. We went to school, we had livestock but there was somebody who took care of the livestock during the week. But on weekends we use to take care of the livestock. We would take part in all kinds of games, yes, we even went to circumcision school.*

Some of them also recall school-related experiences as rural children:

*Ja, if I can say the life of that area is very difficult, it is very difficult because you didn't get a proper care at the rural area and when you go to school, you have to go early because of the distance to the school, 3-4 kilometres you walk to go to school, to wake up early in the morning, sometimes you did not get breakfast then you walk a distance and some of those things affect a child when he is*



*growing up. It is not as usual as with other children, you understand, then maybe if there is a financial problem in the family maybe you go to school without breakfast, bread whatever, and then you come home from school late afternoon there is nothing in the stomach, you understand?*

Although there are certain similarities in the childhood experiences of migrant and resident respondents in this study, the lifestyles of the men in these two categories differ substantially as adults. Thirteen respondents in this study live with their wives/girlfriends and/or children on a daily basis and hence they are referred to as resident fathers for the purpose of this study. Eleven of these thirteen men have either attained a formal educational level of Standard 8 (Grade 10) or a higher educational level. Today eight of these thirteen men work in an administrative or supervisory position (two of them are underground team leaders), although they have all previously worked as general workers underground for varying periods of time (see *Table 3*).<sup>81</sup>

### *7.2.1 Household fluidity and multiple households*

The majority of the resident respondents live in nuclear households consisting of a man and woman together with their dependant children. Two men, Sam and Lucky, have lived in single parent households for the greater part of their mining careers. In certain cases respondents live in extended households near the mineshaft. The divisions between extended and nuclear households may at times become blurred, as is illustrated in Tony's case:

Tony was living with his girlfriend (common-law wife) and her three children at his parents' house at the time of our first interview. Tony's brother, his wife and

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<sup>81</sup> In contrast it was noted in this study that men from Mozambique are not legally in a position to settle with their wives near the mines and they have lower levels of formal education. Many of the Mozambicans can also not speak any of the official South African languages fluently and this limits their career prospects. Although in this study a link emerged between education/more responsible positions and household structures other factors such as nationality also seem to play a role.

children, and certain other family members also shared the dwelling. When I interviewed Tony for the second time he had moved with his girlfriend and their one child to a Reconstruction and Development (RDP) house.<sup>82</sup> As his girlfriend is unemployed, she qualified for the RDP house and the house is registered in her name (Tony claimed that this was actually his idea). Tony's brother, his wife and children also moved to another RDP house in the area. His brother had resigned from his job on the mine some time before and therefore was able to register the house in his own name. After Tony and his brother had moved out his parents still shared their house with Tony's two cousins (one is a taxi driver, the other is a police reservist), his brother's two children (Tony's mother pays their school fees) and Tony's girlfriend's middle daughter. This daughter lives with Tony's parents during the week as their house is close to the school. Tony believes the bus trip from their RDP home is too far for the young girl (she was seven years old and in Grade 1 at that stage), but she stays with Tony and her mother over weekends. Tony's girlfriend's oldest daughter lives with relatives of his girlfriend. Tony is the biological father of their youngest child, but he sees himself as taking responsibility for all three of his wife's biological children although the respective biological fathers of the two older children do make some kind of financial contribution towards their children's upkeep, especially in the case of the eldest daughter. Tony also contributes to his parents' household from time to time when he is requested to buy maize meal. On certain weekends all the family members from his parents' household have a meal at Tony's house and they watch videos together.

Tony's family provides a clear example of the fluidity of households and families, and the complex arrangements within such families. His family is also clearly identifiable as a modified extended family in which, although family members live in different households, there is a regular exchange of goods and services

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<sup>82</sup> A Reconstruction and Development housing project (RDP) known as "Simunye" developed near the mineshaft.

between the households. As can be seen from the example, the relationships in such families are multifaceted and dynamic.

Tony is the only respondent I interviewed who had been born and had grown up in the immediate vicinity of the mine. The other respondents came from other areas and many of them still had family members living in these other areas, even though they may live with wives/partners and all/some children in the vicinity of the mine. As is illustrated in Dean's case many of these households are also characterised by fluidity:

Dean was living alone at the time of our first interview, but by our second interview his wife and their child had moved in with him in a rented dwelling. He also has two other children with his first wife whom he divorced in 1998. This divorced wife lives with her mother, but she visits Dean's mother's house in Limpopo Province when Dean is there. The result is that Dean sees his two eldest children regularly. He supports his three children financially and he told me that he actually shows his payslip to his current wife and his ex-wife before dividing the money equally between them. He subtracts money before dividing it only when he has to pay school fees for the children. His mother and grandmother still live in Limpopo Province where he grew up and he still regards Limpopo Province as home.

Sam's family provides another example of fluidity in households. Sam lives in married quarters on the mine. Initially he told me that he had four children (aged 19, 16, 14 and 7) with his wife. It later came to light that he has two more children (aged 13 and 5) who live in Limpopo Province in a house owned by the family. His unemployed wife stays with these two children and, at intervals, comes to live with him and the other children for a period of a few months. Whenever his wife is at the mine, the two children in Limpopo Province live with his sister. All six children are the biological children of Sam and his wife. When I asked him about the reason for this arrangement, he said:

*Ehm, I can say before I get this house here, these two children was at home and this four started to attend the school here. That is why to take that two from home to here I will, I will eh frustrating them, that is what I am thinking, ja. So the other thing, when the company say they retrench, it is another problem for them to take the transfer here, maybe within a year the children will stay in a third school so that is another problem. That is why I am happy with this four attending here, because this first one will be finishing school now, okay, and the second, he is doing standard nine, yes, so that is eh yes.*

Sam's motivation for this residential separation of the family is therefore related to school attendance. Sam also indicated that it is important to keep the rural house in case of retrenchment, and also as a retirement home. Another household serves as a safety net, although the disadvantage is that the children living in the rural household see their father a few times during the year only, as if he were a migrant father. Sam is thus a migrant and a resident father at the same time (the same situation applies to his wife who sees the children living with Sam only on occasions). He did not mention his two children living in Limpopo Province during the interview except when I asked specific questions about them. It seems as if the daily responsibilities related to caring for the children living with him prevents his forming idealised images of the other two children in Limpopo Province, unlike certain migrant respondents who were discussed in *Chapter 6*.

Another man, Lucky, originally said he had three sons, but it later transpired that he also had another daughter and son with his wife. When I started enquiring in detail about his children, he said:

*... in fact, my children are five, they are not three. I am just mentioning these ones because the others are staying in Durban, that is where I am coming from.*

The youngest son and his middle child, the only daughter, have lived for the greater part of their lives with their mother, who worked as a teacher in Durban. In his initial response about how many children he had, Lucky had referred only to those children who had lived with him while growing up. Today, all his children are adults. He still has close and regular contact with the three sons who grew up with him and who live in the vicinity of his house today. The other two children live in Durban and Cape Town respectively and he only sees them occasionally.

Both Sam and Lucky take responsibility for all their children born within wedlock, but since some of their children do not (or never did) live with them, they have obviously spent more time with those children living with them. These household arrangements tend to result in a closer relationship with the children with whom they share a household – something that was also suggested by the fact that, when initially asked about the number of children they had, both of them referred only to the children who shared their household. They also seem to be more involved with their children on a variety of levels, unlike some of the other respondents who restricted their involvement with their children to education and guidance. This was probably also due to the fact that both their wives were away for long periods at a time, but they were both prepared to take on these tasks. These men, aided by their circumstances, reveal a pattern that is associated with the “new emerging fatherhood” which was referred to in *Chapter 3*.

Among the resident respondents there are thus men who live near to the mine with wives/partners and all/some children but who do not regard these homes as their permanent homes. Complex family arrangements and an unwillingness to settle permanently in an area where there is little job security are usually the

reasons for these double households. The question which now arises is why certain men do settle permanently in the region.

### *7.2.2 My home is here*

Certain respondents live in nuclear households and they regard these as their permanent homes. The respondents who are the most likely to regard their current household in the vicinity of the mine as a permanent home, are those respondents who earn relatively high salaries. A better paying position enables these men to afford better housing and ensures greater financial security. The need for a house elsewhere therefore diminishes and men are willing to invest in their current environment. Investment in the current environment is especially likely if a mineworker's female partner is also employed or has strong community ties in the vicinity. Steven, for example, is a health and safety officer at the mine and his wife works as a nursing assistant at a hospital. His four children attend school in the area and he owns the house in which they live. His parents still live in Paul Pietersburg where he grew up, but Steven, his wife and children go there only to visit.

Lukas has also settled with his family at the mine. He worked underground from 1978 until 1996 and has been a Human Resources Assistant since 1996. He lives near the mine with his wife and three children in one household. Originally he came from Lesotho, but he is in the process of applying for permanent South African citizenship. He seldom visits Lesotho and he has no family ties there.

Isaac completed Standard 10 (Grade 12) and he now works as an assistant safety officer. In Isaac's case his frail elderly parents moved to come and live with him. Isaac has settled with his wife and three children in the township adjacent to the mineshaft.

In cases where the home near the mine is regarded as the respondent's only home, the parents' house either does not exist or they do not regard their parents' house as their home anymore.

Important aspects regarding the households of men who live with other family members near the mineshaft in this study may be summarised as follows:

- Households are often in a state of flux.
- When members of a nuclear family live together, the family may still maintain more than one household.
- Certain respondents live with their nuclear families near the mine in a house that they regard as their only home.

It is therefore important to note that not all resident fathers live with all their dependant children. Some men are resident fathers and migrant fathers at the same time, as they live away from some of their children and together on a daily basis with others. Not all resident fathers live fulltime with their current female partners and, in some cases, the female partners live in more than one household.

### **7.3 *Being a father in a nuclear household***

Resident fathers who live with all or some of their children have daily experiences of fatherhood. Such daily experiences of fatherhood may lead more easily to involved fatherhood compared to the circumstances of migrant fathers. The dynamics between fathers and their children will be outlined below by focusing on the respondents' discourses on fatherhood and the practices of fatherhood that they report.

### 7.3.1 A good father?

When certain resident fathers were asked to describe a good father they responded as follows:

- *Eh, I can say a good father doesn't abuse his wife. The abuse that I am talking about is verbal abuse, physical abuse, emotional abuse, mental abuse (Tony).*
- *If you are a good father it is better that you are working, you get money, if you are working you go to your wife and you plan the money, so you are a good father and when you don't go with the money, you are not a good father you see? (Lukas).*
- *It is one who does not fight with kids, treats his wife well, the one who loves beautiful things, who is not a drunkard (Anthony).*
- *A good father? A good father is one who is always look after the child, play with his children, buying for his children and help them right. Maybe he is happy all the time, stick to your wife (Isaac).*
- *Well if your child is asking for something you see, if you give him or her what she want, I think you are a good father. Even the homeworks, if you help I think you are a good father (Stuart).*
- *A good father is a father to be responsible – that is the first thing. To take care of their family and to take all the responsibility as a father at home (Steven).*
- *A good father try to treat his children very well and then try to support them very well and then you show them love and you say to them: I love you (Dean).*
- *A good father is a father who cares about his family (Sebastiaan).*
- *A good father is a father who cares about his wife, his home and his children. He does not have some bad ways (Ivan).*



In certain of the responses a good father is linked with the relationship the respondent has with his wife/current partner. The answers here reveal similar themes to those of the migrant fathers regarding “good fatherhood” namely, care and support of children, and not engaging in abuse and other forms of “bad” behaviour. However, communication with children, spending time together and expressing love are mentioned far more frequently in the following responses:

- *Okay, eh at the moment right now to discuss with my child and if, you can see that my firstborn is a daughter, and the other one is a daughter, when we all at home, we discuss, I discuss with them, beware of this. I watch the TV with them so I explain something to her my daughter and my son. And then I like to discuss and even if myself I did wrong, I like if one of my daughter give me the way, “Father we differ from you” - so I am very happy about that, I am doing now with my family, trying now to teach each other. Ja, and then my wife, my daughter, my son (Sam).*
- *A good father is a father who cares about his family and he must talk to his children. He must help them when they come from school and help with what problems they may have concerning their education. He must play with his children. He must take them out to the beach and to the restaurants. If they got enough money, they must go out with children and with the wife as well – that is a good father. There must be good communication between the children and the wife. If they are doing that even God can bless them. The father must not have girlfriends, the mother must not have boyfriends (Bernard).*

Another respondent describes the practicalities of being a father with adult children:

*Because I don't have secrets, I am very open to them. If something is bad, I say this is bad, don't do this. Even now, their mother had*

*passed away but they rely on me. They are old enough but they still rely on me (Lucky).*

The reason for the greater prominence of these latter themes in the case of resident fathers may be ascribed to the fact that resident fathers have more opportunities than migrant fathers to interact with their children. It may also be deduced that their experiences with their children influence the way in which they perceive fatherhood in general. Although there are involved and distant fathers within the migrant context, it would appear that involved fathering is far easier when daily contact with children is possible, as is the case with resident fathers. This more frequent contact fosters a closer bond with children, which may then also be expressed in the general discourse on a “good father”. In this general discourse on good fatherhood resident fathers placed far greater emphasis on communicating with and loving children than migrant fathers.

### *7.3.2 Relationships with children*

Resident men leave their houses early in the morning to start their shifts, but many of them spend the late afternoons and evenings at home. Certain of these men busy themselves with various household chores (at times together with their children), supervise their children’s homework and watch television with their children. During weekends they may visit family members, go to church, or eat out on occasion. There is thus frequent interaction with their children. Mothers are, however, still regarded as the primary caregivers by some of the resident respondents:

*Most of the children they don’t care about their father, most of the time they concentrate on their mothers. Mothers are more loved than we fathers. Our time is short, we don’t have enough time to discuss with them, to play with them, you see? (Isaac)*

When Isaac describes his interaction with his children he focuses on the fun activities between himself and his children. He talks about taking them to restaurants catering for children where they are able to play and how he likes to make jokes with them. He does, however, believe that his guidance is becoming more important now that his eldest son is thirteen years old. He has discussions with this son on the dangers of life.

Along similar lines another father, Bernard, when thinking about fatherhood, focuses on the things that he is able to give his child:

*I think she sees me as a good father although I can not see what is in her heart. But whatever she asks from me, I give to her. Right now they are waiting for me in town because I am going to buy her some present together with her mother because she has passed school.*

Although Isaac and Bernard discuss interaction with their children in terms of their ability to provide well for their children, they both regard this interaction as important as their own fathers did not have this type of interaction with them when they were children. Isaac's father struggled to support his children financially although he played a valued role in guiding Isaac's life. Bernard's father deserted his wife and children and they received nothing from him for a period of time. The ability and willingness to buy things for your children are thus regarded as important in light of their own childhood experiences (see "boy-fathers" in *Chapter 5*). The fact that their children are living with them also makes this type of interaction more significant as they spend time with their children by giving them something. Isaac goes with his children to restaurants and Bernard's child accompanies him when they pick out a present for her. Men living with their children therefore have more options for interaction than migrant men who for the greater part of the year are able only to send money or perhaps a present to their children.

Lukas regards his role as a father as entailing more than simply financial support:

Question: *Okay so therefore you would describe yourself as a good father?*

Response: *Yes, I am a good father.*

Question: *And do you think your children will also see you as such?*

Response: *My children will say that I am a good father, I don't make geraas with my children, when they make something wrong I sit down with them and say this thing is not good. My daughter is now 15 years, so I tell my daughter if you go to the boys, you don't get a future, you see? So it is better to get a future, you see?*

Question: *Are you worried about your daughter?*

Response: *Too much, because ai, the children today are very fast, mm.*

Question: *And your sons?*

Response: *Even my sons, I sit with my son, now everything is very fast, ja, I don't want my children to go to nightclubs I want them to sit at home and reading their homeworks.*

Earlier in the interview Lukas and I had the following discussion on the allocation of household tasks:

Question: *Do you help in the house, do you help with the cooking do you help with the cleaning, do you help with the children?*

Response: *No, my children when they come out of school they clean and then my wife come after and she cleans the house and then to cook.*

Question: *But I mean you yourself, you don't work in the house yourself?*

Response: *On a Saturday or on a Sunday I do the gardens, not the cooking, eheh.*

Question: *Do you think that is the woman's work, is it your wife's work, the house?*

Response: *And the sisters, the children because they are old.*

Question: *They are big but is it your responsibility to work in the garden?*

Response: *Yes me and these [pointing to my notes] two boys.*

Lukas is actively involved in his children's lives, but, despite this involvement, he leaves most of the practical work related to raising children to his wife. The result is a strict division of labour in this household. Lukas regards guiding his children as an important aspect of fatherhood.

Likewise, Sam also tries to guide those children living with him:

*... when we all at home, we discuss, I discuss with them, beware of this. I watch the TV with them so I explain some things to them ... even if myself I did wrong, I like one of my daughters give me the way: "Father we differ from you", so I am very happy about that ... [we are] trying now to teach each other.*

Unlike Lukas, Sam explains the way he and his children do household chores together:

*I clean the house, spring clean Saturday, the rest of the week just here and there, and then I cook, and even if my wife is here or not here, the same thing. And I make the washing, ja, like now my daughter is here, I do the washing, ironing, when they come home from school they get things ready and then they can help me with the ironing.*

The fact that Sam's wife is not living with them most of the time probably contributes to his domestic skills, but it seems that Sam is also *willing* to carry out these tasks. The disciplining of their children is another area in which Sam takes the lead. Sam indicated that his wife used to spank the children when they were small, but he did not approve of this and said to her:

*Ja, but I sit down with her [his wife] and I said don't beat her [eldest daughter], if you beat them you don't teach your child, you don't teach like that, when she is doing something wrong, don't beat. Sit down and discuss with them, tell them you did wrong here and there. You beat, you don't teach, ja, and she [the daughter] will never understand nothing.<sup>83</sup>*

Similarly, Tony is a resident father who not only lives with children but also shares in everyday responsibilities with the children. For example, Tony related his experiences of shopping at a supermarket with a toddler who wants everything that she sees. Certain respondents – such as Tony and Sam – are involved in the routine aspects of their children's lives and this could lead to close relationships and caring for children. The occurrence of such parenting is indicative of a pattern of the "new emerging fatherhood", but this type of daily, involved parenting was not found amongst most of the respondents.

To sum up – although involvement with children manifests in different ways, the resident fathers do concern themselves with their children. All the resident fathers were able to discuss their children as individuals with specific personalities. This is not typical of certain migrant fathers who struggled to remember the ages of all their children, or who were unable to relate anything specific about a particular child. Although certain migrant men did manage to establish personal relationships with their children, all the resident men were able to maintain personal relationships with their children.

### *7.3.3 Education of children*

Generally the respondents (with certain exceptions such as Sam) regarded the physical care of children not so much their concern, though certain of the

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<sup>83</sup> See a discussion of Sam's aversion to corporal punishment in *Chapter 5*.

respondents are involved in their children's schooling, for example, by making sure that they do their homework. Many of the men regard education as the key to success in life, – Dean: *“And then I want to put them [his children] in school so that they can get a better education and so on.”* Another example is Bernard, who said that he does not want his son to come and work on the mine. When I asked him if he did not consider mining to be a good job, he responded:

*No, mining is a good job, but it is not a good job for my child [laughter from respondent and interpreter]. I am working underground, I don't think my child should also come and work underground. There is high risk underground; there are a lot of accidents underground. I came to work in the mine because I did not have enough education. I decided to come and work at the mine because they don't really care about education; they only need your strength. That is why I am saying I am trying by all means that my children must have good education, they must not come and work in the mines.*

One senses that mineworkers often ended up in the mining sector because they could not find a better job elsewhere. The men want their children to be able to make choices regarding their occupations. There is a general feeling amongst resident men that they cannot choose an occupation for their children. Yet several of the men would prefer their children to be educated to enable them to take up a professional occupation, such as medicine or law. Men with older children, who are about to make career choices, are considering a wider range of career options together with their children. Steven's eldest son, for example, wrote his Grade 12 examinations just before our first conversation, and he said:

*We are going to look at the results and then sit down and take a decision and eh listen to their views what he want to do, maybe electrical training whatever, or do the computer whatever, or maybe*

*if he want to come in the mining industry, if he want to come and work here, but, what he want to do.*

In our second interview it transpired that his son had become a learner miner. Steven seems to be sensitive about his children's abilities and he stated that his second son would never be able to work in a mining environment because he is "soft" and he is interested in other things, such as music. Resident fathers with good positions on the mine (such as Steven, see *Table 3*) seem to be in a position to help their children to make career choices suited to their abilities and personalities.

Similarly, Lucky's children demonstrate a wide variety of occupations: one son is a nurse; one son a policeman, another son a clerk, his daughter is a shop assistant, and his youngest son is studying chemical engineering at the University of Cape Town. Likewise, Sam's eldest daughter was also in her final year at school at the time of our interview and he indicated that they were also discussing her career options. He was thinking of enrolling her at a Technikon but he made it clear that she has the final say regarding her career, even if he may not like her decision. Another example is Lukas whose eldest son was studying mechanical engineering at a college. Lukas thought that banking would be a more suitable career for his second child – a daughter who was still at school at the time of our interview.

These discussions regarding future career plans and the range of different occupations considered for different children indicate clearly that these fathers see different options available to their children. Seemingly these various options are discussed with the different children at appropriate times, and the individual children's abilities and interests are also taken into consideration during these discussions. These discussions and the concern on the part of the fathers suggest caring relationships with children where the wellbeing of the child is of importance. Where fathers with young children may have vague, idealistic



notions of their children's career options, fathers with older children take into account practical considerations such as interests, potential and opportunities. Although migrant fathers are also practical when considering options for older children, the resident fathers are in a position to explore a wider range of career possibilities. The general (relatively) high levels of education and the fact that they are fairly close to many educational institutions also contribute to their ability to explore career options together with their children. Yet, it is also evident that resident fathers know their children well and therefore they are able to assist them in exploring their future careers in a pragmatic manner. This is in stark contrast to Jo – a migrant father – who could only say he wants his children to be “*working in the offices*”.

#### **7.4 The impact of the mother-father relationship on fatherhood**

This section will first detail the mineworkers' descriptions of their female partners. Thereafter issues of faithfulness and bearing children with different partners will be explored.

##### *7.4.1 Relationships with female partners*

It seems that, similar to the migrants, most of the resident respondents found difficulty in describing their partners characteristics in detail. Yet it is clear that many of them have a high regard for their partners and certain intimate a close relationship with their partners.

The following responses by respondents were given when asked to describe their female partners:

- *She is all right (Anthony).*

- *I would say she is talkative ... not too many questions. She is a lady who wants to succeed in life (Tony).*
- *My wife is a very quiet somebody, she doesn't like movies. She is always in the house, when she goes out, she comes back, she doesn't go around with friends and everything (Isaac).*
- *She was a very good wife although she was very quiet. She did not like to talk a lot. She was very, very confidential, like you see most of the wives they like to have friends, friends always come and visit and she must also visit. She did not like to do that, because she was a very busy wife, if she was not at work she was doing something in the house. That is how I can describe her (Lucky)<sup>84</sup>.*
- *My wife? My wife, ja, she understands what I am talking with him, and eh, okay, next week, maybe she is doing some there and there, but we sit down and talk, we fix, we rectify and then before we get something bad. She is right, she is cool, she is not drinking and then, so, she is right (Sam).*
- *Mm sometimes she [his girlfriend] is rude, sometimes she is right ... truly when we are talking about the others [two women he had children with] you see, she doesn't like that at all (Stuart).*
- *Oh she is a very good person, he<sup>85</sup> can take care with me, he is a person with understanding although sometimes things is, were serious. She is that kind of a person. If maybe I've done a wrong thing with her, and then she will move to give forgiveness, so she is a very good person (Steven).*
- *Eh ... I think my wife ... she support me a lot of time and then she tell me, don't lose hope in your life if you want success, and then forget about everything from the past and really I love her (Dean).*
- *My wife is oraait, she is only cool, not to much talking, mm (Lukas).*

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<sup>84</sup> Lucky's wife passed away a few months before this interview.

<sup>85</sup> In certain African languages gender is not always indicated in the single pronoun and these grammar rules are carried over here into English. One therefore finds that 'he' and 'she' both refer to his wife in this quote.

- *I don't have problems with my wife, she is not a very talkative person. When we do have problems, we sit down and solve those problems. I love her very much because she gives me some advices. She loves me very much. I always agree with her because we have the same ideas (Bernard).*
- *She is fine, she is a woman who likes beautiful things. She does not want to be provoked, if she has been provoked, she becomes very upset, but she forgets very soon (Ivan).*

The aspect of communication and how this relates to differences of opinion that arise in relationships seem to be salient in the above responses. Many of the respondents value a woman with whom one may sit down and discuss things. Several of the men also appear to appreciate a “quiet woman”. It seems that the term “quiet woman” refers to someone who takes her household and childcare duties seriously, does not quarrel with her husband, and does not have time for idle talk with friends.

Despite the brief descriptions of their female partners given by the resident respondents, the majority of descriptions are slightly more detailed than those of the migrant respondents. These descriptions may be an indication that the resident men know their female partners better than do the migrant men. The focus of the fourth research question, however, is on the way in which the relationships between fathers and children are often connected to the relationships that exist between fathers and mothers or female partners. Men and women may have children together but they do not necessarily live together. Children may therefore live with one of their biological parents, but not necessarily with both.

#### *7.4.2 Biological, economic and social fatherhood*

*Chapter 3* outlined the distinctions between biological, economic and social fatherhood. The kind of relationship mothers and fathers have with each other often determines the way in which – or even whether – biological fathers are involved with their biological children. In certain cases partners may not be legally married although their relationship may be deemed to be the same as a marriage (sometimes called a common law marriage). Tony, for example, refers to his partner as his wife even though he is separated, not divorced, from his first wife, and thus not legally married to his current partner. In this section the intricacies of the relationships with partners and the children involved are examined.

Certain respondents had had children with other women, but they did not include these children in their original responses to my question on the number of children they have. Although their wives/current partners are aware of these children, they generally do not approve of any contact with such children. Isaac, for example, sees his daughter (who was 15 years old at the time of the interview) and her biological mother when he occasionally visits members of his extended family in the same area as they live, but this is without the knowledge of his wife. Isaac had three sons with his wife a few years after he had had a daughter with another woman. Ironically, before telling me about this daughter, I asked him if he and his wife still wanted to have more children, and he answered: *“I was looking for a daughter, but no more.”*

Another respondent, Lucky, had five children with his now deceased wife. Later in the interview he told me that he once had a girlfriend with whom he had had a daughter after his marriage. He estimates this child to be around twelve years old (much younger than his other children), but he had lost contact with the mother and the child. It does not seem as if he regards this child as his responsibility, and he mentioned that he thinks this former girlfriend had married in the meantime. Where Isaac thus felt some degree of responsibility towards his biological child, Lucky does not appear to feel the same responsibility. In certain cases a biological father may be willing to shift his responsibility for children to

others without establishing whether such a biological child is indeed cared for. This may imply that certain biological fathers accept the assumption of social fatherhood on the part of other men in respect of their biological children.

In contrast, Stuart (originally from the Eastern Cape) told me from the outset that he had three children. He had had the oldest boy (16 years old at the time of the interview) with his girlfriend. Stuart has been living with this girlfriend since leaving school. He also has two daughters (11 and 8 years old at the time of the interview) with two different women who live in other provinces. His girlfriend does not want any contact with his two daughters and he describes how she becomes upset when he tries to talk to her about them. He does, on occasions, send money to these other two children, but he does not think they are struggling financially as their respective mothers are employed. Stuart feels a degree of responsibility towards his biological children but it would appear that this concern is restricted to their material wellbeing. Since the children are apparently cared for physically he is not willing to upset his partner by trying to play a bigger role in his children's lives.

There is a general unwillingness on the part of these abovementioned women to take on the role of social parent to the biological children of their husbands/partners. A clear reason for this unwillingness is intolerance of their partners' infidelity. In cases where partners had sexual relations with other women whilst in relationships with their current partners, these current partners will not tolerate any contact at all. I would also argue that fear that the man may continue with a sexual liaison with the other woman may also contribute to this behaviour. Furthermore, money that is sent to the biological children of a liaison between a husband and another woman is money that could be used for the benefit of the current partners' own households and children. In cases where there is little money available, women will be less likely to support their husbands in giving money to other children. Yet, in the following relationships the women act differently to those described above:

Jo, who is also from the Eastern Cape, has a daughter of 11 years and a son of 8 years with two different mothers. He has a girlfriend at the moment, but she is not the mother of either of his children, although he plans to have children with her sometime in the future. His daughter visits him on occasion, and he deposits money into her mother's bank account for her schooling. He has little contact with his son, but he knows he is not yet at school. His girlfriend, unlike Stuart's girlfriend, has no problems with his relations with his children, and he said: "*She even buys clothes for them.*"

Another case of social parenthood is illustrated by Bernard, who lives with his wife and their biological son, as well as with a daughter from a previous relationship. He has no reservations in regarding this child as their child. His daughter's biological mother left the child in his care when the child was two years old. It seems as if his wife has no problems in accepting this child either.

Steven is another example of a man who had a child with a girlfriend. Steven and his wife have four sons together and they all live in one household. He also had a daughter with another woman before marrying his wife. He discussed his responsibilities towards this daughter with his wife, and they decided to assist financially with her schooling. Her mother has also married someone else, and the daughter grew up with her grandmother (it seems as if the husband of the biological mother did not take up the challenge of social fatherhood in this instance, and the grandmother became the social parent). Steven's sister was a friend of this former girlfriend, and the money reached the child via the sister. The daughter is now an adult, but she telephones Steven occasionally for a friendly chat.

The difference in attitudes between the female partners of Isaac, Lucky and Stuart compared to the female partners of Steven, Jo and Bernard may be related to their different circumstances. Isaac, Lucky and Stuart's children are

proof of their unfaithfulness towards their female partners, while Steven, Jo and Bernard's female partners met them only after they had had the children. It would thus seem that women living with their partners (regardless of their marital status) are fairly tolerant and even accepting of children born from sexual relationships prior to their own relationships with these men. If the children are, however, born from sexual liaisons which took place after the fathers had commenced the relationship with their current partner, the fathers have generally little or no contact with these children. The little contact that they do have with these children is kept secret, otherwise it would cause friction in the relationship with their partners.

It does seem, though, that the women who live with their partners are always aware of their partners' other children. This is not necessarily the case with the partners of migrants, who are not always aware of their husbands' other children. Men living with their partners also do not seem to expect their partners to accept the children in the same manner as did Martin and Ted, the two Mozambicans discussed in the previous chapter. Women therefore seem to have more power over their partners' children with other women, and over the partners' responsibilities towards these children, if they live with their partners.

There are also those men who treated children as their own even though they were not the children's biological fathers. Tony, for instance, is separated from his first wife (with whom he had no children) and he now lives with his girlfriend. Although they are not married he considers her to be his wife and refers to her as such. Tony told me he has three children. He is the biological father of the youngest child (together with his girlfriend) only, and the other two children are his girlfriend's biological children whom she had had with two previous boyfriends. Tony, however, states:

*This one is mine, so this one I got with her, but I can't say they [referring to other two children] are not my children because I am the father, I am responsible for them.*

and:

*They are my children, I treat them as my own children because if you start saying these ones are not my children it is going to hurt their mother. She will say, ai, you are not treating my child as your children, you see?*

Tony exemplifies social fatherhood and, since his current partner had these children before she met him, he is quite willing to be a father to all his partner's biological children.

Thus it seems that women sharing a household with their partners (compared to wives of migrant men) have more power in controlling their partners' sexuality, and the relationships he has with children who are not theirs. Although this power does not always mean that he will be faithful to her, none of the men discussed here were willing to risk their relationship with their current partner for the sake of their biological children. An underlying aspect to these relationships is a commitment to monogamy or serial monogamy. In practice this implies a faithful relationship with a current partner.

## **7.5 Concluding remarks**

When comparing the household arrangements of resident respondents with those of migrant respondents, three household patterns emerge:



- Migrant household: A man working and living away from his family for the greater part of his life. He may live in a hostel or on his own in a rented dwelling. His wife and children usually share one household in a rural area and, in certain cases, they live in a homestead with extended family members.
- Fluid household: A man living with some family members in the vicinity of the mine, but he still regards his home to be in a different location (usually the place where he grew up). In some cases such a home belongs to his parent(s). His children, and even his wife, may move between different households.
- Settled household: A man and his wife are settled in their current environment together with their children and, in some cases, other family members.

With regard to the relationships between fathers and children, as well as between men and their female partners, it was found that, compared to the migrant respondents, resident respondents describe these relationships in more detail and with more evidence of closeness. This closeness is demonstrated in what men say about being a father and in the way they portray their relationships with their children. The recognition of the unique personalities of children is particularly noteworthy amongst the resident respondents.

With regard to the question on the influence of biological mothers or female partners on father-child relationships, the following was found in the case of migrant respondents who are, by definition, not living with female (rural) partners:

- he tends to be faithful to a female partner and goes home regularly, or
- he has casual sexual relationships with other women that he conceals, or
- he openly has a girlfriend and expects his wife to accept it.

If a respondent shares a household with a female partner, he is either faithful to his partner or there are discussions regarding his biological children with another woman. These discussions between the partners may result in friction or in joint decisions. Generally, children born from adulterous relationships are neither accepted nor taken care of due to pressure from the female partners. However, if the children were born from relationships before current relationships this may result in social parenting by the female partners. It therefore seems that a woman sharing a household with her partner has more power in controlling his sexuality and the relationships he has with biological children who are not her own. Such a woman thus seems more empowered, and her relationship with her partner manifests greater gender equality compared to the relationship wives of certain migrant respondents have with their husbands.

When a respondent openly states a double standard for men and women regarding sexual relations, there seems to be no questioning on the part of the wife/girlfriend of the husband's sexual practices. However, these respondents acknowledged and took financial responsibility for all their biological children. This is contrary to those respondents who hide extramarital sexual relations and children born out of wedlock from their wives. Children born from such extramarital sexual relations are at risk of being abandoned by their biological fathers.

## **Chapter 8**

### **Conclusion**

#### **8.1 Introduction**

In this chapter the conclusions of this study are summarised by focusing on the research questions. Certain limitations of this research are then briefly underlined. The contribution of this study is discussed by highlighting certain policy, theoretical and research implications derived from the research which results in specific recommendations.

#### **8.2 The research findings**

The main question posed in this study was: *How do black mineworkers in the goldmining industry conceptualise and experience fatherhood in present-day South Africa?*

In order to operationalise this broad question, four subsidiary research questions were formulated:

- How do the respondents characterise fatherhood?
- What are the respondents' recollections of being fathered?
- How do migrant and resident respondents' experiences of fatherhood differ?
- What influence do biological mothers or female partners have on father-child relationships as described by the respondents?

Instead of providing a precise definition of fatherhood, the practice of distinguishing between the different aspects of fatherhood was followed – biological, social and economic. The scripting perspective was chosen as the

theoretical departure point for this study as it is possible for this perspective to encapsulate the three different aspects of fatherhood as well as to differentiate between conceptualisations of fatherhood on individual and societal levels. These levels are known as cultural scenarios, interpersonal scripting and intrapsychic scripting.

The *cultural scenarios* include the cultural expectations of fatherhood which, in the South African literature, were identified as patriarchy, breadwinning and “new fatherhood”. Patriarchy, which is understood in terms of power and control over others, implies that the man makes decisions on behalf of his family. The breadwinner role is closely associated with industrialised settings where the financial support of children becomes the prime obligation of many fathers, and for them, this responsibility depends on waged work. Employment and the ability to provide for children were, for many, terms which became synonymous with fatherhood (see also Lesejane 2006: 178). In the past twenty years there has been a shift in perceptions of fatherhood. In terms of these altered perceptions the relationship between fathers and their children is now viewed as a relationship which entails more dimensions than merely financial obligations towards children. Previous research trends relating to fatherhood, especially in Western societies, focused on the “emotionally absent father”, and then on the caring responsibilities of men with small children. The term “new fatherhood” emerged to describe the latter trend.

Interpersonal scripting includes the realities of the individual’s life world and the way in which actors shape cultural expectations within a specific context. The practicalities of *interpersonal scripting* in the mining sector were described in the discussion on the history of goldmining (see *Chapter 2*) – a discussion which included information on working schedules, housing options and other individual circumstances. In the historical discussion it was argued that the search for profit outweighed concerns for the wellbeing of black mineworkers and their families. This practice of ignoring the relational aspects of black mineworkers became

entrenched in the mining industry. During the late twentieth century political changes and more empowered trade unions resulted in better working conditions of which the most significant for family wellbeing have been the various housing options and the flexible structuring of leave. Overall, mineworkers are now able to see their families more regularly than before, and some mineworkers are even able to live with their female partners/wives and children on a daily basis. Yet, practical and economic difficulties still prevent many mineworkers from settling near mine premises, and migrancy is still common amongst mineworkers.

*Intrapsychic scripting* implies the way in which men present themselves as fathers, adapt any shortcomings in interpersonal scripting, and also the social construction of fatherhood. Positive portrayals of the self and idealised images of other family members may emerge in the respondents' discourses.

To summarise – the agency of the respondent is taken up in the scripting perspective without losing sight of the practical life circumstances and expectations of others on a collective level.

In order to apply the scripting perspective aptly, a qualitative research design was undertaken – this design is imbedded in the social context. In-depth interviews were chosen as the main research method since interviews it is a qualitative method well suited to provide rich data for analysis from the perspective of the respondents. These interviews were augmented with observations and interviews with key informants at the research site. A summary of the findings from the data follows.

### 8.2.1 *Fatherhood is ...*

At the outset of this study it was stated that there is no universally agreed definition of fatherhood. A research question regarding the respondents' conceptualisations were formulated. In answer to this first research question on

conceptualisations of fatherhood, three patterns emerged from the fieldwork. These patterns are summarised by focusing on the way in which the respondents portrayed fatherhood (intrapsychic scripting):

“The father is like a lion” is a pattern of fatherhood that certain respondents related to their own fathers but some respondents themselves also fit into this pattern. The main identifying characteristic of such a father is that he is regarded with fear. Children may also respect such a father if he is able to fulfil his financial obligations towards his children. The main characteristics absent from a relationship with this type of father are affection and intimate interaction. Children spend time with such a father only if they have to. This father is often a patriarch who makes decisions on behalf of his children without consulting them or taking their preferences into consideration. A father fitting this pattern will usually support his family financially if he is employed and thus able to do so.

A second fatherhood pattern is that of a “bad father” who is blamed by other family members for their suffering. Although a father may be labelled as “bad” because he is an alcoholic or because he physically abuses his children, the inability to provide financially for his children was particularly stressed. In order to be labelled as a bad father in this sense means that a child must attribute the blame for the family’s poor financial circumstances directly to the irresponsibility of the father. The father may use his money to buy alcohol or for another family or he may simply not be able to earn enough money to meet the financial needs of the family. Respondents blame fathers for being “bad fathers” since it is believed that individual abilities or inabilities lead to the suffering of families. None of the respondents considered the effect certain labour and economic realities may have on wages. Given the high levels of retrenchments in the goldmining industry this trend is worrying as fathers may be blamed for factors beyond their control. The cultural scenario of a breadwinning father is thus a dominant theme and men who are not breadwinners may easily be labelled as bad fathers.

A third fatherhood pattern identified is that of a “good father”. When respondents described good fatherhood in general, the most salient theme was that of the breadwinner. When respondents referred to their own father/father figure the main characteristic of a “good father” pattern was a close relationship between the child and his father. When respondents reflected on themselves as fathers the breadwinner role was mentioned often, but other themes, such as guidance and loving children, were also mentioned. A “good father” spends time with his children in various ways – by teaching the child, working with the child, playing together or having discussions. Most of the respondents who remembered their fathers as “good” maintained that their fathers had been able to meet the financial needs of their children, although there were exceptions. Although the role of breadwinner is important, a relationship with a father (including spending time together, emotional closeness and sometimes a playful relationship) may be more important than the money a father is able provide.

To sum up – three fatherhood patterns were identified of which the first is a relationship that is distant but respectful (“father is like a lion”); the second a relationship in which the father is experienced as uncaring (particularly if he is not able to provide for his children’s material needs); and a third pattern in terms of which the relationship is characterised by closeness between the father and child. These depictions of fatherhood are comparable to portrayals of fatherhood in the USA in different historical periods: “stern patriarchs”, “distant breadwinner”, “bad fathers” who do not provide for their children; and, “dads” who are more involved in the daily lives of their children. The latter depiction emerged in the twentieth century and the notion of a “dad” developed into the ideal of a “co-parent” or “new father” (Pleck & Pleck 1997: 35-47).

Despite these similarities in the research findings one should neither assume that fatherhood patterns are clearly distinct from one another, nor that fatherhood patterns replace previous patterns. For example, a close relationship with the

father is not necessarily a new phenomenon. Although a father's caring relationship with a child is often described as "new fatherhood", close relationships between men and their children did exist in various contexts in the past, and certain researchers argue that the emphasis on waged labour for men was responsible for reducing the role of the father to that of a breadwinner (Gerson 1993; Connell 1995). Within the Southern African context it is clear that entrenched migrant labour reduced many black fathers largely to the role of breadwinner. Even in this study certain respondents identified a close relationship with a father while growing up. Certain respondents remembered their fathers/father figures with appreciation and, in some cases, even with fondness. Closeness between fathers and children is thus not a new phenomenon although it seems to have become a more salient cultural ideal. Furthermore, manifestations or cultural scenarios of fatherhood are not necessarily mutually exclusive – a patriarch may also be a breadwinner, or, a father who has a caring relationship with his children may still consider the role of breadwinner as central to fatherhood. Fatherhood patterns are thus multifaceted and complex, and should not be reduced to a singular cultural scenario – such as that of breadwinner.

Although most respondents identified the role of breadwinner as an important aspect to being a "good father", other issues were also mentioned, such as care and support of children, communication with children, guiding children, spending time together and expressing love. The respondents therefore did not formulate a one-dimensional picture of fatherhood as they presented various facets of fatherhood depending on their life circumstances.

### *8.2.2 Like father, like son?*

Some of the respondents who described their own fathers' characteristics according to the pattern of "the father is like a lion" want to be/believe they do not



follow this pattern. They want to broaden the cultural scenario of the breadwinning father with that of a more affectionate relationship.

Respondents who related bad memories of childhood only (“I was suffering” or something similar) readily blamed their fathers for their “terrible” childhood if their fathers had been unable to provide financially for them. Certain of these men tried to compensate from a young age for their fathers’ lack of care and I have described these respondents as “boy-fathers”. A “boy-father” is defined in this study as a male child who takes on the responsibilities of an adult in earning an income to support themselves, their siblings and their mothers. These “boy-fathers” come to the fore when there are no adult males to provide for them and their mothers, or when other adult relatives are not able to raise sufficient money for the family’s needs. In the cases that were discussed the men grew up to become responsible fathers who continued with this pattern of looking after others. Such respondents presented themselves in the interviews as responsible men in both their families of orientation and procreation – intrapsychic scripting.

In this study the respondents’ “bad” fathers are presented by way of the accounts of their adult sons and it is not possible to link the respondents’ fathers’ individual life stories clearly with wider social processes. Although the respondents’ fathers’ own accounts of their life stories were not available, it is clear that practical circumstances, or interpersonal scripting, could either enable (as in the case of respondents with employed fathers) or prevent (as in the case of the overburdened fathers of certain respondents) fathers from being breadwinners. It is also clear that the fathers of the respondents were not merely the victims of their circumstances – this is illustrated in the account of one respondent who described a fairly intimate father-son relationship despite having a father who could not provide adequately for his children’s financial needs. It is thus possible to fulfil the role of social fatherhood even though that of economic fatherhood is unattainable.

In those cases where the respondents remembered the father as a “good person”, they often wish to emulate these fathers/father figures. These respondents’ accounts portrayed a good relationship with their own fathers/father figures. These respondents may have admired their fathers/father figures and they try to establish similar relationships with their children.

The above findings of the study are similar to the findings of other studies (Pleck et al 1986: 13; Gould & Gunther 1993: 17ff; Daly 1995: 29). Jung and Honig (in Sharabany et al 2006: 242) also identified the fact that men who had positive experiences of fathers as children tend to model their own behaviour on such experiences. Men who believed they had unsatisfactory relationships with their own fathers may try to compensate for this with their own children. Men may also father differently to their own fathers because society in general changed their stance on fatherhood – an age cohort effect.

When analysing the relationships adult men have with their fathers, a variety of factors seem to influence these relationships. In some cases previous good relationships are continued, otherwise distant relationships may persist, while in other cases previous poor relationships are today amicable. Changed circumstances in relation to household structures (parents move in with adult children, parents live far away, adult children have their own household for the first time) in particular impact on the relationships adults have with their parents. Early relationships with adult males seem to have a lasting impression as they continue to impact on respondents in their current father-child relationships. In their understanding of themselves as fathers, they are often reactionary to their bad experiences as children, or continue with the good experiences they had as children.

### 8.2.3 Migrant men and resident men

When the household arrangements of resident respondents were compared with those of migrant respondents, three household patterns emerged:

- Migrant household: A man working and living away from his family for the greater part of his life. He may live in a hostel or on his own in a rented dwelling. His wife and children usually share one household, but, in some cases, they live in a homestead with members of the extended families.
- Fluid household: A man living with certain family members in the vicinity of the mine but he continues to regard his home as being in a different location (usually the place he grew up in). In some cases such a home belongs to a parent. His children and even his wife may move between different households.
- Settled household: A man and his wife are settled in their current environment together with their children and, in some cases other family members as well.

From these household patterns it is clear that not all mineworkers fit the migrant or resident father categories, as different household members may either move between households or else households may change over time. Households are never static as members may join or leave the household at various times, but, in the Southern African mining context of entrenched migrancy (with flexible leave arrangements and various housing options) certain households are particularly fluid. Although the households may be fluid, the respondents who did not live with any children on a daily basis were compared with those respondents who did.

In the case of the migrant respondents it was found that the breadwinner role is particularly important. Although a migrant father may not be physically present in his children's lives for the greater part of the year, the results of his financial involvement are always visible. Despite the difficulties of a migrant father in

taking on anything but the role of economic father, it was clear that migrants had different experiences of the role of father, and certain migrant respondents had closer relationships with their children than other fathers.

Certain migrant respondents had idealised or romanticised images of their families who lived at a distance. In view of the fact that they do not spend a lot of time with their partners and children who live far away, they are not exposed to the daily household routines and problems. The migrant respondents' descriptions of their children who live at some distance away are vague, general and positive. In cases where migrants have daily contact with certain of their children and not with others, their relations with those whom they see on a daily basis are more intimate and multidimensional. These idealised images relate to similar findings by Mashegoane (1990) in terms of which migrants' wives had idealised images of their husbands. This practice of idealisation comes to the fore when men do not have regular contact with children (and female partners) and they then resort to cultural scenarios of fatherhood. Furthermore, such "idyllic portrayals" are often used to compensate for the time spent away from the family. This phenomenon was not found in this study amongst the resident respondents. These idealised images may help men to cope with the harsh realities of hard work, boredom and loneliness. Where certain migrant respondents may try to be involved fathers under difficult circumstances, others simply remain distant figures to their families – figures who provide money, treats and visit occasionally.

Compared to the migrant respondents, resident respondents described their relationships with their children in far greater detail and with more evidence of closeness. This closeness is demonstrated in what the men say about being a father and in the way they portray their relationships with their children. What is particularly noteworthy amongst the resident respondents is that they tend to recognise the unique personalities of their children. This is in contrast to certain migrant fathers who struggled to remember the ages of all their children, or who

were unable to relate anything specific about a particular child. Although certain migrant men did manage to establish personal relationships with their children, all the resident men were able to maintain personal relationships with their children.

#### *8.2.4 Female partners*

In this study the influence of female partners and/or biological mothers was found to be crucial in father-child relationships.

It is quite obvious that, despite flexible leave arrangements, migrant respondents are still separated from their rural based children and female partners for long periods at a time. These periods of separation give rise to different situations in which certain men have little involvement in their families' lives, while others strive to keep intimate relationships intact. Some of the men find it difficult to say much about their wives and children, and certain men simply have no idea how their families spend their daily lives.

In the case of the migrant respondents the issue of power between partners plays a role in the rural households. Many women head the rural households when their husbands are not there. It is not possible for a man who visits his homestead twice a month (as was stated in certain cases it may also be less often) to dictate how money and time are to be spent. Although other male relatives may keep an eye on things on behalf of absent migrant workers, women are mostly in charge of the households. This implies that women who receive money regularly from their husbands are relatively free from power struggles within their households. O'Laughlin states (1998: 5) that rural women with migrant husbands are, at times, "de facto heads of household". Of course this does not mean that these women lead a carefree existence, but they do wield decision-making power in the daily routines of their children and themselves. It also implies that they have the power to spend money as they see fit within

certain parameters that the husband may be able to set. Migrant men are largely disengaged from their families and this renders them largely powerless.

Power aspects in families are also related to sexual relations between men and women. In this study certain respondents stated that they feel they are entitled to have sexual relations with more than one woman, while others either did not share this belief or did not state it openly. Those men who openly stated their right to sexual relations with more than one woman (without granting women the same right) take full responsibility for all their biological children. The man's authority is not (openly) challenged here and, at the same time, one of the universal masculine stereotypes of the "man as provider" remains intact. It seems therefore that a form of patriarchy is operating where, on the one hand, men have certain sexual rights women do not have but, on the other hand, they have to take responsibility for all their biological children.

It was found that resident respondents described their partners in more detail and in less idealistic terms compared to the migrant respondents. When considering the relationships between men and women and how these relationships affect men's taking responsibility for their biological children, it was shown that children born from adulterous relationships are usually neither accepted nor taken care of. However, children born from relationships that existed before current relationships do result in social fatherhood.

To summarise – when a respondent is not living with his female partner(s)

- he is faithful to her (or them in the case of polygyny) and he goes home regularly, or
- he has sexual relationships with other women and conceals these relationships, or
- he has a girlfriend openly and expects his partner to accept the situation.

When the respondent shares a household with his female partner, he is either faithful to her or, if he has children with another woman, his current partner's views largely determine his relationship with such children. Discussions with partners on children born outside the current relationship may result in friction (especially if children were born from adulterous relationships) or in joint decisions (most likely if the children were born from prior relationships).

Thus it seems that those women who share a household with their partners wield more power in controlling their partners' sexuality and the relationships he has with children who are not hers. Current partners may act as "gatekeepers" in discouraging men to have contact with children from previous relationships, or with children born from adulterous relationships. In cases where sexual partnerships have ended, there was no strong emphasis found on the relations between fathers and their biological children. The relationship with a current partner seemed rather to determine for which children the men would be prepared to accept financial obligations and whether they would take on the task of social fathering.

Using the research questions to focus on the different aspects relating to fatherhood may make the analysis on fatherhood appear fragmented. It is important to note that characterisations of fatherhood, recollections of being fathered, the status of migrant or resident father, and the influence of current female partners impact simultaneously on the conceptualisations and experiences of fatherhood. It was found, for example, that partners of migrant respondents are depicted differently from those of resident respondents in the influence they have on father-child relationships. The interplay between these factors should not be underestimated.

### **8.3 Limitations of this study**

It is not possible for this study to answer many of the questions related to fatherhood amongst mineworkers. Certain of the unanswered questions relate to the focus on mineworkers' conceptualisations, while others are related to the research design and setting, or to the researcher-respondent relationship. Each of these will be briefly discussed.

#### *8.3.1 The mineworker's viewpoint*

In this study only men's conceptualisations of fatherhood were given. Ethical considerations regarding the issue of trust between the respondents and I became relevant during the research process. If respondents relate personal and, at times sensitive information, it would be unethical to interview other family members later on. Although certain respondents agreed that other family members could also be interviewed towards the end of a first interview, not one of these promises resulted in actual interviews (see *Chapter 4*). In this particular study it was thus only the voices of men on fatherhood that were heard.

#### *8.3.2 The qualitative design*

It is also important to note that, since this study is based mainly on interviews, the data consists of the *accounts* of men as fathers. Actual interaction between the men and their children was not observed. The respondents' views on issues were given but there was no knowing how other family members may have viewed the same issues. The data comprised the accounts of the respondents throughout this study.

There are advantages and disadvantages to every research design and other research designs could complement the research path followed in this study. Contextual embedded data with respondents who are resident fathers and



respondents who are migrant fathers were required. Judgemental sampling was therefore chosen as the sampling method for this study. This particular sampling method does not allow for generalisations to the entire goldmining population, and it is not possible to estimate the number of men who would fit the fatherhood patterns identified in this study. This study therefore has very little numerical value in the sense that it is not possible to estimate the percentages of men fitting particular patterns.

#### **8.4 Contribution of this study**

The contribution of this study is considered here by focusing on three matters: fatherhood within the goldmining industry, a theoretical approach to fatherhood and fatherhood as a research topic. Specific recommendations related to these three aspects are made.

##### *8.4.1 Fatherhood within the goldmining industry*

Almost all the men in this study stressed the importance of the breadwinner role in their conceptualisation of being a father and, in many cases, the breadwinner role was central. If a relationship is reduced to economic terms, the relationship will be under severe pressure if a father is retrenched and not able to provide for his children's financial needs (as shown by Campbell [1994b] and Crush et al [2001] in their respective studies). Although the breadwinning aspect was central to conceptualisations of fatherhood, there were respondents who enjoyed more meaningful relationships with their children. Those respondents who lived with children were more involved overall in their children's lives, they knew their children better and therefore had more meaningful relationships with their children. Broader expressions of fatherhood may strengthen the link between fathers and children (compare Marsiglio 1995: 92; O'Laughlin 1998). The current drive in the mining sector to allow mineworkers the choice as to where they want

to live (Kebeni 2004) is thus encouraging, as it opens the possibility of living with children fulltime, or at least seeing them on a more regular basis.

### *Recommendations*

The practice of allowing wives to visit hostels may also be extended to accommodate visiting children, as this would increase the time migrant men are able to spend with their children. The wives' visits are at present regulated through the hostel governors, and similar arrangements could be extended to children. The strict division between the world of work and the domestic sphere of mineworkers creates barriers between fathers and their children. Opportunities for children to visit their fathers on occasion may therefore contribute to children and fathers fostering closer relationships.

Facilitating childcare facilities for all mineworkers could also be considered. Management of work places with predominantly male workers seldom see childcare as a priority. The mining industry, with its emphasis on profit, sees men mainly as workers. However, workers should also be acknowledged as fathers with responsibilities towards their children.

#### *8.4.2 Theoretical contribution*

In this study the scripting perspective was found to be useful as this perspective is a multilevel approach. General ideas regarding fatherhood within a society are recognised by the level of cultural scenarios, practical life circumstances are considered by interpersonal scripting, and an individual's particular presentation of the self is included under intrapsychic scripting. This broad outline of the perspective was integrated with the relevant literature in the Southern African context. Cultural ideas of fatherhood as perceived by the respondents, the complex conditions in the goldmining industry, and the uniqueness of an individual respondent could therefore all be taken into account in this research.

This research thus demonstrates that the scripting perspective can be used cross-culturally if integrated with the literature on the particular research context.

A more dynamic element can also be added to the scripting perspective to understand changing cultural scenarios. If experiences almost always clash with normative guidelines, the normative guidelines may change. Different cultural scenarios may emerge due to changed life circumstances. I argued that interpersonal and intrapsychic scripting may, in the long run, influence cultural scenarios. The scripting perspective not only helps to explain the ways in which respondents give account of their lives, but also cast light on why dominant views (or cultural scripts) change over time.

### *Recommendations*

When focusing on fatherhood, multilevel theoretical approaches should be seriously considered as it enables a distinction between individual and cultural levels to aspects of fatherhood. This perspective thus allows for an analysis of individual and collective conceptualisations of fatherhood.

#### *8.4.3 Research on fatherhood*

The focus on men's conceptualisations of fatherhood was intended to help redress the imbalance of gender-related research. The feminist project of the past decades has achieved great success in addressing women's issues, but men as gendered beings were neglected. It was only towards the end of the twentieth century that the importance of studying various gender aspects pertaining to men was recognised. Within this broadened gender framework the focus also fell on men within family and other intimate relationships. However, little attention was paid to men as fathers, particularly within the mining industry, and it is for this reason that the voices of these fathers were given preference in this study.

### *Recommendations*

Even though I did not account for different voices on fatherhood, it is recognised that children, female partners and other family members would add value to research on fatherhood. If all these voices were to be heard in one study, then a different research path should be followed where all potential respondents should ideally give their consent before any interviews are conducted.

It would be preferable to utilise different types of researchers (particularly in terms of gender and race), especially if qualitative work is undertaken, in order to form a more comprehensive picture of fatherhood from different angles.

Apart from in-depth interviews and observation, a researcher can also undertake other research methods such as the keeping of diaries (although only possible with literate respondents) and providing cameras to respondents for taking photographs of certain aspects of home life. These different methods of gathering data will provide more angles to the same topic but from the perspective of the same respondents.

If the aim is to be able to make generalisations on specific issues on fatherhood then a quantitative research design could be considered. However, a method such as a questionnaire would have to be planned carefully to ensure validity and reliability, for example, it was discussed in this study that respondents may interpret a question such as “how many children do you have?” in diverse ways.<sup>86</sup> Furthermore many respondents are semi-literate with various levels of comprehension of different languages, and such respondents would therefore have difficulty in completing a questionnaire. The best way to conduct a quantitative design with a representative sample would thus be to have well-trained fieldworkers who make use of a suitably structured interview schedule

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<sup>86</sup> See also Budlender's (2003) discussion on heads of household in South African census data and Russell and Mugenyi's (1997) critique on the validity of certain quantitative designs in African contexts.

available in various languages. This would automatically lead to an expensive research design which would have to be justified.

### **8.5 Concluding remarks**

Although the goldmining industry in South Africa is declining it is still an important industry together with various other mining industries. In *Chapter 2* it was explained that during the twentieth century migrancy became an entrenched practice that removed black men from their families. To change this inherited system and to empower all mineworkers and their families to arrange their households and family practices as they see fit, is a major challenge for all stakeholders.

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## **Addendum 1: Timeline**

*Important dates of events that impacted on the family lives of the mineworkers in the goldmining industry in South Africa:*

- 1886 Discovery of main gold reef in Johannesburg (Davenport & Saunders 2000: 95).
- 1887 Establishment of the Chamber of Mines (Davenport & Saunders 2000: 610).
- 1894 Glen Gray Act – restricts Blacks’ access to land (Davenport & Saunders 2000: 190) and stipulates that adult black men had to pay taxes if they were “not working” (Wilson 1972: 147).
- 1899-1902 Anglo-Boer War disrupts gold mining.
- 1904 Pre-war production levels are achieved by “importing” Chinese labourers and Shangaan workers from Mozambique (Davenport & Saunders 2000: 237).
- 1910 Formation of the Union of South Africa (Allen 1992: 164).  
The last Chinese labourers are shipped home and the unskilled labour force consists only of Africans (Allen 1992: 178).
- 1911 Mines and Works Act – establishes the colour bar for different occupational positions (Davenport & Saunders 2000: 634).
- 1913 The Natives’ Land Act – entrenches the unequal distribution of land by making it illegal for Africans to own land outside the Reserves (Allen 1992: 213).  
Banning of “tropical recruitment” (people living north of 22° Southern latitude, also referred to as the “tropicals”) due to pneumonia, tuberculosis and other lung diseases among these workers (Crush et al 1991: 41).
- 1914-1918 First World War.
- 1919 All mining houses belong to the Chamber of Mines.
- 1920 Black mineworkers strike for higher wages (Allen 1992: 284; Davenport & Saunders 2000: 358).
- 1923 Natives (Urban Areas) Act – prohibits the sale of land to black people in urban areas (Beittel 1992a: 193).

- 1925 Wage Act – gives power to Wage Board to determine wages of workers in particular industries (Davenport & Saunders 2000: 636).
- 1926 Mines and Works Amendment Act – strengthens legislative colour bar (Davenport & Saunders 2000: 634-637).
- 1932-3 Recruitment from the northern borders (people living north of 22° Southern latitude) re-emerges (Crush et al 1991: 37; Davenport & Saunders 2000: 614).
- 1935 The internationally fixed price regime of gold introduced (James 1992:18).
- 1940s Discovery of gold on the Orange Free State fields (Davenport & Saunders 2000: 615).
- 1939-1945 Second World War.
- 1942 War Measure 145 bans strikes in South Africa (Crush et al 1991: 57).
- 1946 Fagan Commission Report is published, which encourages labour stabilisation by Africans bringing their families with them to settle in town (Davenport & Saunders 2000: 360).  
Mineworkers strike for better wages and hostel conditions (Moodie 1994: 212).
- 1950 Group Areas Act – stipulates that specific areas are allocated exclusively for people from a specific racial group (Beittel 1992a: 193).
- 1956 Tomlinson Commission Report at first reports that agriculture in the Reserves could only carry 20% of families living there, but by altering the criteria it is then reported that 51% of families could be carried, if certain areas could be added and developed (Davenport & Saunders 2000: 392-393).
- 1959 *Chibalo* is officially abolished in Mozambique when the Portuguese authorities sign the International Labour Convention and the Abolition of Forced Labour Convention. In practice, *chibalo* carries on (Mantshine 2004).
- 1960 British Prime Minister Harold Macmillan's "Winds of change" speech – this speech includes stating that Britain does not support the South African apartheid policies (Davenport & Saunders 2000: 409).
- 1961 The Union of South Africa becomes the independent Republic of South



*Timeline*

- Africa, and ceases being a member of the Commonwealth (Davenport & Saunders 2000: 523).
- Tanzania announces a recall of their 14 000 citizens at South African mines; none were left by 1966 (Crush et al 1991: 104).
- 1962 The founding of FRELIMO – the liberation movement that later became the ruling party in Mozambique (Shore 1983: xxvi).
- 1965 Zambia announces its withdrawal from South African mines; no Zambian citizens were left by 1968 (Crush et al 1991: 104).
- 1966 Formal independence of Botswana (Hanks & Liprie 1993:178).
- 1968 Two-tier pricing system replaces the fixed gold price system (James 1992: 18).
- 1969 Assassination of Eduardo Mondlane, the first president of FRELIMO; Mondlane is succeeded by Samora Machel (Shore 1983: xxvi-xxix).
- 1972 The fixed gold price system totally abandoned (James 1992: 18).
- 1973 Black labour strikes (First 1983: 49-50; James 1992: 6; Davenport & Saunders 2000: 614).
- 1974 Air crash with Malawian mineworkers (Davenport & Saunders 2000: 614); Hastings Banda, the president of Malawi, withdraws over 80 000 workers from the South African mines (James 1992: 5).
- 1975 Mozambique is declared an independent People's Republic (First 1983: xxx).
- 1976-92 War between Mozambican FRELIMO government and Renamo (the latter supported by the South African government).
- 1979 Riekert Commission and Wiehahn Report recommended residentially united black families (for those with urban status) in urban areas (Davenport & Saunders 2000: 461).
- 1980 Gold price reaches record high of \$800 per fine ounce (Davenport & Saunders 2000: 614).
- Independence of Zimbabwe (Potts & Mutambirwa 1990: 677).
- 1982 Establishment of the National Union of Mineworkers and its official recognition by the Chamber of Mines (Davenport & Saunders 2000: 616).

*Timeline*

- Wage demonstrations because of differences in wages paid by different mines (Moodie 1994: 245).
- 1983-5 Gold price falls dramatically, to below \$300, at the beginning of 1985 (Davenport & Saunders 2000: 474, 614).
- 1985 State of emergency proclaimed in South Africa (James 1992: viii).
- 1986 Abolition of the influx control and the repeal of the Urban Areas Act (Davenport & Saunders 2000: 511).  
Samora Machel, Mozambican president, dies in an airplane crash (Davenport & Saunders 2000: 553).
- 1987 Abolition of the legislative colour bar, i.e. the Mines and Works Amendment Act of 1926 (Crush et al 1991: 79; Davies & Head 2000: 616).  
Nationwide mine strikes (Moodie 1994: 303).
- 1988 Chamber of Mines ceases recruitment of Malawian workers due to the claimed high HIV/AIDS rate amongst these workers (Chirwa 1997: 629).
- 1994 First democratic elections in South Africa which is won by the ANC.
- 1998-9 Gold price falls dramatically (Davenport & Saunders 2000: 614).
- 2000 Hostile takeover of Randfontein mine from JCI by Harmony (including the mineshaft where the fieldwork for this study was done).
- 2004-5 Failed hostile takeover of Gold Fields by Harmony.

#### Addendum 4

#### Consent Form

My name is Marlize Rabe and I am currently working towards a doctoral degree in Sociology.

My research focuses on mine workers and their experiences as fathers. I would like to interview you by asking you a few questions on your life history and specifically your experiences of fatherhood. The aim of the research is to gain an understanding of your life experiences. I want to interview a number of fathers with different backgrounds and that is why you were selected for this research. Should you agree, I shall record our conversation on audiotape. The interview will take approximately one hour. I would like to do two follow-up interviews with you in the near future. Your participation in this research is voluntary and you may refuse to answer any questions.

The management of Harmony Mine (Randfontein) and the branch of National Union of Mineworkers at this mine are aware of, and have given their consent, to this research.

Our conversations will be treated as confidential by the interpreter and me. Your name will not be linked with the information you provide. The results of the interviews will, however, be communicated to Harmony Mine (Randfontein), but no specific detail will be linked to specific individuals.

#### Consent

I, Marlize Rabe, will not implicate any individuals by discussing the detail of our conversation.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

I, \_\_\_\_\_, the interpreter of this interview will not discuss any of the information of this interview with other people.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

I understand that my views and the information I provide in these conversations will not be linked to me personally.

I agree to take part in the research

I agree that our conversations can be recorded

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Addendum 5

## Interview schedule

As you saw in the consent form, my name is Marlize. I am interested in men's, specifically miners', experiences of fatherhood. Is there anything you would like to ask me before we start?

### *Own identity:*

Tell me who you are.

### *Current daily life and living arrangements:*

Tell me about your life here on the mine.

Where do you live?

With whom do you live?

### *History as mineworker:*

When did you start working on the mine?

How old were you then?

### *Life before the mine:*

Tell me about your childhood.

With whom did you live? Different people at different times?

### *Relationship with own father:*

Tell me a bit about your own father.

How would you describe your relationship with your father when you were a child/young man?

Is your father still alive?

Do you have contact with your father?

How would you describe your relationship with your father now that you are an adult?

What is the best thing your father ever did?

What is the worst thing your father ever did?

### *Current family and household arrangements:*

Are you married? Do you have a girlfriend?

How often do you see her/ them?

Tell me more about your wife/girlfriend/partner.

### *Children:*

Do you have children? Do they live with you? How often do you see them?

Tell me more about you children (age and sex of children/relationship with mother of children).

How would you describe yourself as a father?

### *Fatherhood:*

Describe a good father to me.

Do you think you are a good father? Why?

How do you think your children will describe you?

How do you compare with your own father as a father?

**Table 1: Home language, accommodation, marital status and number of children**

	<b>Name + Age</b>	<b>1<sup>st</sup> language</b>	<b>Accommodation</b>	<b>Marital status</b>	<b>Children</b>
1	Martin 54 years old	Shangaan	Renting shack, stays alone	Wife + girlfriend	9 with wife 1 with girlfriend
2	Timothy Young	Shangaan	Hostel (5 in the room)	Wife	2 with wife
3	Jerome 48 years old	Shangaan	Hostel (5 in the room)	2 wives	9 with wife 1 3 with wife 2
4	Mathew 49 years old	Shangaan	Hostel (8 in the room)	Wife	7 with wife
5	Winfred 40 years old	Shangaan	Hostel (12 in the room)	Wife + girlfriend	5 with wife
6	Nelson 51 years old	Shangaan	Hostel (9 in the room)	Wife	5 with wife
7	Jacob 29 years old	Shangaan	Township with wife + children	Wife	2 with wife
8	Richard 44 years old	Shangaan	Hostel (10 in the room)	Wife	4 with wife
9	Mac 50 years old	Shangaan	Hostel (12 in the room)	Wife	10 with wife
10	Robert 29 years old	Shangaan	Hostel (4 in the room)	Wife	2 with wife
11	Anthony 46 years old	Xhosa	Location with wife + children	Wife	4 with wife
12	Simon 33 years old	Seswazi	Hostel (4 in the room)	Wife + girlfriend	4 with wife
13	Tony 33 years old	Xhosa	Township with girlfriend	Separated from wife, lives with girlfriend	1 with girl-friend +2 of girlfriend
14	Mandla 54 years old	Shangaan	Hostel (6 in the room)	Wife	6 with wife
15	Isaac 38 years old	Southern Sotho	Township with wife, children and parents	Wife	3 with wife, 1 with previous girlfriend
16	Lucky 52 years old	Zulu	Township with one son	Widower	5 with wife, 1 with previous girlfriend
17	Sam 44 years old	Northern Sotho	Married quarters with 4 children	Wife	6 with wife
18	Stuart 35 years old	Xhosa	Township with girlfriend	Girlfriend	1 with girl-friend; 2 with other 2 women
19	Steven 46 years old	Zulu	Town with wife + children	Wife	4 with wife, 1 with previous girlfriend
20	Thabo 43 years old	Xhosa	Hostel (3 in the room)	Wife	2 with wife, 1 with previous girlfriend
21	Dean 38 years old	Tsonga	Township with wife	Divorced 1 <sup>st</sup> wife Married 2 <sup>nd</sup> wife	2 with 1 <sup>st</sup> wife 1 with 2 <sup>nd</sup> wife
22	Lukas 42 years old	Southern Sotho	Married quarters	Wife	5 with wife

23	Simpiwe 32 years old	Southern Sotho	Hostel (8 in the room)	Wife + girlfriend	3 with wife
24	Bernard 30 years old	Shangaan	Township with wife + 2 children	Wife	1 with other woman 1 with wife
25	Mahlanga 42 years old	Southern Sotho	Township, alone	Wife	3 with wife
26	Ted 27 years old	Shangaan	Township, alone	Wife + girlfriend	1 with wife girlfriend is pregnant
27	Sebastian 41 years old	Zulu	Hostel	Wife	1 with wife
28	Ivan 30 years old	Xhosa	Township with wife	Wife	None
29	George 37 years old	Tsonga	Hostel	Wife (customary marriage)	3 with wife
30	Jo 31 years old	Xhosa	Township, alone	Girlfriend not living with him, no children	2 with 2 different women

**Table 2: The mineworkers and their fathers**

	<b>Name</b>	<b>Father</b>	<b>Father's occupation</b>
1	Martin	Passed away when son adult	Contract worker in South Africa
2	Timothy	Still alive	
3	Jerome	Passed away: 1973 (pol)	Mineworker: Machine operator
4	Mathew	Passed away: 1982	Worked for transport organisation in Mozambique
5	Winfred	Still alive (pol)	Instructor at mine
6	Nelson	Passed away (not long ago)	Worked for unknown company
7	Jacob	Still alive	Teacher in Muslim church
8	Richard	Passed away: 1995 (pol)	Worked in restaurant in Mozambique (3 years at mine)
9	Mac	Passed away: 1973 (pol – 5 wives)	
10	Robert	Killed: 1992	Wealthy businessman
11	Anthony	Passed away: 1983	Tractor driver
12	Simon	Still alive	Farmer
13	Tony	Still alive	Painter at Town Council
14	Mandla	Passed away (long time ago)	Unknown job in Gauteng
15	Isaac	Still alive	Mineworker
16	Lucky	Father passed away, grew up with uncle who passed away in 1992	
17	Sam	Father passed away: 1973	Security guard
18	Stuart	Passed away: 1987	Worked in mine office
19	Steven	Still alive	Worked at Railway
20	Thabo	Passed away: 1964, mentions grandfather	He does not know
21	Dean	Passed away: 1968	He does not know
22	Lukas	Passed away: 2000	Unknown job in Germiston
23	Simpiwe	Passed away: 2002	Mineworker in Welkom
24	Bernard	Still alive	Barman at Randfontein mine
25	Mahlanga	Passed away: early 1960's	Mineworker in Buffelsfontein
26	Ted	Passed away: 2000	Mineworker at Randfontein
27	Sebastian	Passed away: 1965 (mentions uncle and cousin)	Watchman at a hospital
28	Ivan	Passed away: 2001	Mineworker at Randfontein: Instructor
29	George	Passed away: 2001	Farmer
30	Jo	Passed away: 1997	Subsistence farmer

pol = polygyny: father had more than one wife

**Table 3: Formal educational levels, residential status and current position**

	Name	Residential status	Formal educational level	Current position
1	Martin	Migrant	Form Four (Mozambique)	HR assistant from 1978 (worked underground from 1975)
2	Timothy	Migrant	Attended school for few years	Generalist
3	Jerome	Migrant	Grade 4 (Standard 2)	Generalist
4	Mathew	Migrant		Generalist
5	Winfred	Migrant	Standard 6 (Mozambique))	Team leader
6	Nelson	Migrant		Washer (never worked underground)
7	Jacob	Resident	Standard 5 (Mozambique)	Supervision team leader
8	Richard	Migrant	Grade 8 (Standard 6)	Assistant underground, later above
9	Mac	Migrant		Production assistant
10	Robert	Migrant	Standard 9 (Mozambique)	Generalist
11	Anthony	Resident		Team leader
12	Simon	Migrant	Grade 7 (Standard 5)	Issue material for safety department
13	Tony	Resident	Grade 12 (Standard 10)	Section clerk (short period underground)
14	Mandla	Migrant		Teaman (underground before)
15	Isaac	Resident	Grade 12 (Standard 10)	Assistant safety officer
16	Lucky	Resident		HR Assistant (one year underground before)
17	Sam	Resident	Grade 10 (Standard 8)	HR Assistant (short period underground)
18	Stuart	Resident	Grade 10 (Standard 8)	Surveyor helper
19	Steven	Resident	Electrician: Electrical 8 (company send him for further schooling)	Health and Safety steward (started as electrician assistant)
20	Thabo	Migrant	Grade 6 (Standard 4)	Generalist
21	Dean	Resident	Grade 7 (Standard 5)	Issue material
22	Lukas	Resident	Grade 7 (Standard 5)	HR Assistant (worked underground: 1978-1996)
23	Simpiwe	Migrant	Grade 9 (Standard 7)	Generalist
24	Bernard	Resident	Grade 10 (Standard 8)	Generalist
25	Mahlanga	Migrant	Grade 10 (Standard 8)	Generalist
26	Ted	Migrant		Shaft timber man
27	Sebastian	Migrant	Grade 6 (Standard 4)	Surveyor attendant
28	Ivan	Resident	Grade 11 (Standard 9)	Generalist
29	George	Migrant	Grade 5 (Standard 3)	Supervisor (timber helper before)
30	Jo	Resident	Grade 6 (Standard 4)	Machine operator



