

‘Moms are survivors, because our kids are more ours’: Narratives of Middle-Class, White Mothers in Cape Town

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WRTDEB001

A minor dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the degree of Master of Arts in Social Anthropology

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2013

COMPULSORY DECLARATION

This work has not been previously submitted in whole, or in part, for the award of any degree. It is my own work. Each significant contribution to, and quotation in, this dissertation from the work, or works, of other people has been attributed, and has been cited and referenced.

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Acknowledgments

I am thankful to Molly for allowing me to enter her home and live with her family during my time 'in the field', and all my research participants who gave me their valuable time to share their stories and experiences for the purpose of this minor thesis. I am thankful to my friends who completed my surveys, answered my multiple questions and provided continual support. Thank you to those fathers I interviewed and who provided valuable insights into fatherhood, which can be found in the epilogue.

Thank you to my supervisor, Divine Fuh, for lending his anthropological knowledge and guidance throughout. I am thankful to my family for giving me the opportunity to not only study at Masters level, but to do so in South Africa. Thank you for your continual support and motivation. Lastly, thank you Lucas for your patience, love and support. It would have been harder to complete this minor thesis without you.

Abstract

This paper focuses on how white, middle class South African mothers, living within a 60-kilometre radius of Cape Town's Central Business District, juggle their childcare and work responsibilities. Through use of multi-sited ethnography, I was able to enter the lives of ten white, middle-class South African mothers aged between early forties to early fifties. The data collected was obtained through participant observation, casual conversations and formal, semi-structured, one-on-one interviews.

This minor thesis draws on a body of literature that focuses on the multiple paradoxes mothers' face, such as, the traditional gendered notions of what it means to be a "good" mother, the challenges of time, and coping strategies. This paper explores how the research participants reconstituted their lives after having children. Through an analysis of conversations and field observations this minor thesis demonstrates the everyday circumstances of living through and negotiating daily life as a middle class, white mother in Cape Town, South Africa. In this minor thesis, I aim to demonstrate how parenthood is filled with fears and numerous challenges. The findings make strong case for researching the lives of such women who often suffer in silence.

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Introduction

The challenges faced by working mothers have become particularly predominant in our modern society. The proliferation of self-help books on pregnancy, childcare and responsible parenthood, blogs and other electronic material are indicators of the anxieties which currently shape both individual and collective experiences with children. In South Africa today, these anxieties are also conditioned, not just by the uncertainties of the economy and political stability, but also by the insecurities that shape the micro aspects of everyday life. In Cape Town alone, statistics and media reports about abductions and sexual abuse of children, drug abuse and other crimes mean that parents must pay closer attention than would ‘normally’ be the case. While we are all confronted with this challenge as a nation, it is often women who endure most of the responsibility to protect and care for children, even when employed. Women are faced with reconfiguring their lives after the shifts and novelties conditioned by “childbirth”¹ and subsequent challenges of childcare. This thesis thus examines the ways in which women reconstitute their lives after having children. It seeks to understand how women manage the challenges of concurrently juggling work and childcare by investigating their hopes, opportunities and despairs. Through narratives of motherhood and work amongst middle class, white women in Cape Town, South Africa, I focus on the various strategies used by women to cope with the *precarities*, instabilities and opportunities of life after having children. To frame it more ‘intelligibly’, how do women (seek to) *smile* in the midst of the *suffering*, engendered by motherhood? I argue that working middle class, white women in Cape Town face multiple paradoxes as mothers, as they manage multiple demands imposed

¹I have placed childbirth in inverted commas as not all mothers give birth to their children. Women can also become mothers through adoption and surrogates. I explore the various definitions of what it means to be a mother in chapter three.

by traditional gendered notions, including expectations of what it means to be a "good" mother whilst managing the demands to provide for their families. Most importantly, I argue that the working mothers who formed the cohort for this study work in paid employment not just as a requirement to support their family and/or desire to maintain a certain lifestyle, but also as a means of preserving their personal identity often destabilised by the *precarities* and shifts engendered by childbirth.

In this chapter, I provide the background, problem statement and objectives of this minor dissertation, showing the ways in which the research question developed from my personal experiences growing up as a child in a middle class family, as well as my fears and anxieties about having children.

1.1 Background

In Marian Keyes'² novel '*Sushi for Beginners*' (2000) I was drawn to a particularly interesting dialogue³ between two best friends, a career woman who is struggling with her new job and a full-time mother. Throughout the book, both women desire to be in the other's position and neither is fully satisfied with their own life, in spite of their privileges and opportunities. According to the character Ashling, Clodagh (her friend) has the ideal life: a family, with a charming husband and two beautiful children, financial stability due to her husband's high income, and a large home. Clodagh on the other hand, envies Ashling's career, social life, and personal freedom. Although a non-fiction text, Keyes' account of motherhood draws upon issues that women face on a daily basis in juggling the smiles and sufferings of motherhood. What attracted me to this dialogue in particular was a statement made by Clodagh about not being just a mother but also a "person", emphasising that often a woman's identity changes when they have children. This adjustment often challenges women to seek to adapt to new circumstances, as shifting from "woman" to "mother" often carries many new responsibilities and huge personal sacrifices. This small example highlights the struggles a "stay-at-home" mother may face regarding her personal fulfilment(s) and independence. Although, in this case, she has the luxury of not having to work due to financial security, Clodagh still feels that her personal identity has been inhibited as a result of childbearing, in spite of the opportunities and resources at her disposal to create stability in

²Marian Keyes is a popular novelist who specialises in women's literature.

³Appendix I - '*Sushi for Beginners*' excerpt.

her life. Clodagh's story resonates with an increasing number of middle class women who now see feminism as having betrayed their cause, especially in relation to the 'double burden' of concurrently juggling work and children. In this thesis, I question whether employment provides mothers with an escape mechanism from the repetitive tasks of motherhood. Do mothers feel pressurised to choose their career over their children or vice versa? What balancing strategies do women then adopt to allow them to concurrently work and care for their children? In other words, how do they attempt to stabilise their lives after the shifts and uncertainties created by childbirth? What opportunities exist, and if so, how do they take advantage of these opportunities?

1.2 From Personal to Political: My Personal Experiences with the Subject

The motivation to research motherhood and work emerged from my personal story as the child of a working class mother. My childhood experiences regarding my relationship with my mother have contributed to my interest in the transformations women face in their day-to-day lives after having children. The contemplation of perhaps one day becoming a mother both worries and excites me, a situation which some could qualify, in Chabal's (2009) terms, *"the politics of smiling and suffering"*.

My anxieties about motherhood directed my attention to better understanding women's individual and collective experiences of becoming mother. The feminist movement seem to have provided my generation, (those born in the 1980s), with the opportunity to overstep hitherto traditional gender expectations of women remaining within the domestic as homemakers and caregivers. As a young middle class 'child' from British parents, domesticity is far from my dreams as a successful woman. My ambition is to have a career, to be successful in my occupation and subsequently have financial stability. Both my parents have worked since completing their university education and the dual-income has allowed my family to live comfortably without financial insecurities. My younger sister and myself, have been privileged enough to have been able to complete our higher education without leaving the institutions with debt, and if I were to have children, I would also like to provide for them in a similar way. Therefore, I have decided that until I gain stable employment as a successful careers woman, I will not have a child. As seen above, this decision emerged from my personal experiences and the subsequent expectations I have of myself to provide for my

child and family. In Pierre Bourdieu's terms, it is plausible to argue that my decision is deeply shaped by my "habitus", hence the idea that I am a product of, and currently reproducing my socio-cultural history. Habitus, is the "sense of one's place...a sense of the other's place ... [implying] a web of complex processes [which] links the physical, the social and the mental" (cited in Hillier et al., 2005). It seems that the life choices I have made and that I plan to make are influenced by my upbringing. Yet, it would be wrong to over-credit my social history and forget the extent to which the contemporary world and its ideologies of what it means to be an independent woman and parent defines the way in which I negotiate both personal and collective choices about daily life, especially children.

Having successfully completed a Bachelor of Science degree and a Philosophy Doctorate in Biochemistry, my mother took a ten-year break from her career to care for my sister and myself in our early years. It intrigued me that my mother, with such high qualifications, was able to adapt to managing the home and looking after her children for such a significant part of her life. I on the other hand, would not wish to sacrifice ten years from my career to raise children, hence my anxieties about childbirth and motherhood. For the purpose of this research and my own curiosity, I asked my mother if she would mind divulging her personal experiences concerning work and childcare⁴. She disclosed that both my parents decided that for a certain period my mother would be a "stay-at-home" mum, believing that it would be best for the children to be with their mother rather than employ a nanny. My mother enjoyed observing the childhood "milestones" (see My Mother's Account in the appendices) first-hand and felt this was more important to experience than to continue her career at that stage. Subsequently her priorities changed after having children. When my sister and I were aged seven and nine respectively, my mother decided that she would return to work and continue her career. Although it took a few years before she obtained the position she was qualified for⁵, today she feels she has achieved her career goals.

My mother's experiences raised many questions for me, about how other women adapt to becoming mothers, what choices they make regarding work and childcare, and the reasons for which those choices are made. Hence, when I moved to Cape Town, South Africa to undertake MA studies at the University of Cape Town, I could not help but pursue these questions further, especially in relation to how women who would 'normally' be classified as 'privileged' experience and deal with the anxieties of motherhood. Following a recent media

⁴Appendix II – My Mother's Account.

⁵My mother's skills were outdated due to her career break and needed updating.

debate in the UK about whether feminism has failed the working class⁶, I became curious to understand how middle class, white women in South Africa live through juggling work and motherhood.

In *'The Monster Within: The Hidden Side of Motherhood'*, Barbara Almond (2010) highlights a wide variety of fears that women have concerning motherhood. These include, for example, fears that their child will have undesirable characteristics and that they (that is the women) would be “bad” mothers or suffer from feelings of ambivalence towards their child. Even though peculiar to certain individual women or groups of women, this phenomenon is common worldwide (ibid). A study conducted by Kathryn M. Rizzo et al. (2012) suggests that those mothers who are more “intense”, concerning extensive discipline, in their parenting techniques in an attempt to be “better” mothers, are more likely to be unsatisfied and subsequently suffer from mental health issues. What then constitutes a “good” mother? Who judges what a “good” mother is? Do women suffer from personal or societal expectations, or a combination of both? How do mothers deal with or live up to these expectations? These are some of the pertinent questions that this minor thesis attempts to answer.

1.3 Statement of the Problem

“Motherhood, often without adequate financial and emotional support, continues to be a source of great pain for most South African mothers” (Meer, 1985).

A significant amount of the literature available concerning South African women focuses on the poor, working class, particularly of ‘African’ descent (Ackermann et al., 2002; Jewkes et al., 2005; May, 1998). With regards to research carried out on motherhood in South Africa, the bulk of the literature encompasses HIV/AIDS infection (Ackermann et al., 2002; Pronyk et al., 2006); gender roles and female subservience (Pronyk et al., 2006; McClintock, 1991; Casale et al., 2002; Jewkes et al., 2005; Kim et al., 2002); work opportunities pre- and post-apartheid (Sachs, 1990; Seidman, 1993; Woolard, 2002); race (McClintock, 1991; Brown, 1987; Schapera, 1928) and childcare (Jewkes et al., 2005; Seidman, 1993; McClintock, 1991). Relatively little research however considers solely the multiple paradoxes women face in negotiating their daily lives regarding the multitude of roles mothers are expected to play in childcare, financial support, and if married, the contemporary role(s) as a wife. In Europe and the United States, literature on these subjects increased as the number of women in the

⁶See the UK *the Guardian* report, ‘Has feminism failed the working class? Our readers respond, Tuesday 2 April 2013.

workforce grew (Bianchi, 2000; Gauthier et al., 2004; Kitterød et al., 2006). In South Africa, there is a significant gap in the literature concerning the multiple paradoxes that white, middle-class South African mother's face in post-apartheid South Africa.

Traditionally women of various races in South Africa have had a lower status compared to men (Hinks, 2002; Grün, 2004). In the post-apartheid period (that is since 1994), there has been a global "recognition for women's rights through the United Nations and in many different countries of the world" (Klugman, 2008: 222) including South Africa. However, the issue of women's subordination remains in a variety of contexts and communities globally.

Dugard et al. argues that there remains to be a "sexual division of labour within most households" (2009: 546) in South Africa. While Dugard et al. does not specify the race or locality of the South African women discussed in their introduction, it seems reasonable to speculate that, like many other studies their interest lays in focusing on poor, working class women of often black descent. They state that in many parts of South Africa women are still expected (if not required) to maintain the home, provide childcare, collect firewood, and cook. Unfortunately, this expected gender role usually prevents many women from earning an income outside of the home, hence forcing many to live their lives as 'housewives' or 'house women'. In such studies, women who are considered successful or middle-class, especially the 'white' are often under-researched, perhaps due to the tendency in South African anthropology to study "*subalterns*" (Nyamnjoh, 2012). There is thus a need to explore the different ways in which a variety of women experience gender, as well as everyday life in post-apartheid South Africa, including hopes, despairs, struggles and strategies for survival.

In an attempt to counteract gender-based poverty⁷ "social protection programmes" (Patel et al., 2011: 229), such as the "Child Support Grant" (ibid), were created by the state, to fight gender inequalities in South Africa. The Child Support Grant was available to "primary caregivers" (ibid: 230), typically female members of the family, to help support their children. These Child Support Grants aimed at repairing deep gender inequalities, easing the burdens women face whilst struggling to juggle work and childcare, by helping to increase school attendance, thereby allowing women the time to find other sources of income for daily subsistence. These grants were "feminised" (ibid: 231) as there was an "overwhelming expectation [from the state] that women should provide primary care for their children"

⁷Gender-based poverty is when one sex is poorer than the other because of their biological differences.

(ibid). The idea that ‘traditional’ gender expectations continue to exist for women in South Africa is further supplemented in Walker’s (1995) analysis of motherhood in South Africa. In her work, Walker concludes that South African mothers are considered nurturers, hence meaning that a woman’s identity is inextricably linked to motherhood.

There has been a considerable increase in the number of women in the South African workforce in “recent history” (Herbst et al., 2007: 57). Subsequently, the “traditional role of women in society” (ibid) has, and is changing, and if not, is expected to change. According to the 2004 South African Census, “1.7 million women entered the labour market between 1991 and 2001, pointing to a 23.6% increase...during this period” (ibid). Herbst argues that during this period women in dual-earner partnerships were still likely to “perform most of the domestic chores and remain responsible for child care and domestic responsibilities (Douglas & Michaels, 2004; Maconachie, 1990; Ozer, 1995)” (ibid) indicating a doubled-burdened paradox. Thus, even with institutional support mechanisms and policies to support women and facilitate their responsibilities as mothers, they continue to be overburdened when they enter the labour market as mothers. Yet, there is little research into how women experience this particular form of double-burden, and the strategies they employ to balance both work and motherhood in South Africa.

Due to the complexities of the apartheid era, much of the literature written on motherhood in South Africa mainly focuses on comparing the different practices of mothers from various races and classes. Amongst these, there are few studies on white, South African women, as the majority of research tends to focus on poor, working class communities, particularly those of black and coloured race. As Francis Nyamnjoh argues in his critique of anthropology in South Africa, there is a significant lack of research projects that focus on “studying up” (Nyamnjoh, 2012).

The few studies that have researched white South African women generally focus on women’s identities. The thesis compiled by Tamara Copeland entitled “*White Women in South Africa: An Inferior Gender within a Superior Race*” (1989: 1) attempts to identify white South African women’s sense of self during apartheid. Copeland argues that South Africa’s “continuing history of social and political repression” (ibid) played a role in inhibiting white South African women “from achieving a higher level of consciousness” (ibid). Copeland further argues that 19th Century white South African women were influenced by “Victorian morals and values” (ibid: 72) which often resulted in marriage and motherhood as women were confined to domestic roles leaving little time for employment or other outlets

of self-expression (ibid). A lack of independence and income amongst white women generally meant that these women relied on both “financial support and protection” (ibid), increasing their dependence on their partners. While the situation is expected to have changed since the end of apartheid, the lives and experiences of white South African women have not attracted the attention of social researchers. Therefore there is a need to understand the ways in which white middle class South African women are affected by the struggles of participation and citizenship in the new South Africa, and the various strategies they develop to deal with the challenges of juggling motherhood and work.

This thesis thus focuses on how white, middle class South African mothers living in Cape Town juggle their childcare and work responsibilities. It fills in a research gap on the experience of gender and citizenship amongst white women in South Africa, seeking to understand the troubles that confront them as mothers, as well as the strategies they develop to deal with the many challenges and expectations that face them as working mothers. I argue that these women face multiple paradoxes as mothers, such that, they struggle to manage the demands imposed upon them by traditional gendered notions of what it means to be a "good" mother whilst concurrently managing the demands to provide and care for their families. My study demonstrates that mothers work in paid employment not just as a requirement to support their families, and/or maintain a certain lifestyle, but also more importantly as a means of preserving their personal identity.

I further argue that white, middle class South African mothers adjust their daily schedules around their children and further struggle to find enough time in the day to complete their routine tasks. Consequently, they have little time to ascertain and accomplish their own personal interests, even those that help to ferment and distinguish their social group as middle class, such as, pursuing leisure activities. The women of this study were able to reconstitute their lives after having children by adopting a multiplicity of coping strategies to help them manage their time in the face of adversity. Paradoxically these women also face issues surrounding the ethical implications of hiring outside “help” in post-apartheid South Africa or succumbing to the traditional role of carer and nurturer. Overall, this minor thesis examines the everyday circumstances of living through and negotiating daily life as a middle class, white mother in Cape Town, South Africa.

1.4 Research Objectives

I hope that this thesis will provide the women I interviewed with an interesting overview of mothering experiences of other women in similar situations, as well as solace that the paradoxical pressures experienced are collective. That is not to say that these women should accept these pressures as being satisfactory or static, however, and should thus be treated with caution in that regard. The aim of my research is thus to uncover those “silenced”⁸ experiences from white, middle class South African women’s personal narratives regarding “good” mothering, childcare, time management and coping methods.

My research looks at how ten working mothers cope with “two” jobs, gendered family roles regarding childcare and feminism versus femininities⁹. There are only a handful of studies in the current literature, which have “examined women’s subjective perceptions regarding their success in balancing work and family” (Wallis et al., 2003: 30). I hope that my research will contribute to filling a gap in the literature on white, middle-class South African women, and that it may encourage further research in this area. My aim has been to collect in-depth data on a selection of these women, which I will look at in detail, rather than undertaking a broader review of South African mothers from different classes and races.

1.5 Thesis Structure

This minor thesis is divided into six chapters. Chapter one introduces the thesis by providing the background, presenting my motivation for the thesis, as well as presenting the research problem. In this chapter, I argue and show that white middle class and ‘privileged’ women in South Africa remain to be understood, and are therefore still to be identified as research subjects in South Africa. Chapter two outlines my methodological and ethical considerations. I discuss anthropological research from an “outsider” versus “insider” perspective, the field site and the limitations that I faced during my research. Chapter three attempts a conceptualisation of motherhood and introduces my informants/case studies, providing a profile of each. In chapter four, I present the data by discussing notions of “good” motherhood amongst the women I researched as well as the impact of gender roles and stereotypes on them. Here I also explore how my informants divide both child and homecare responsibilities with their partners. In chapter five, I look at the place of time in working

⁸The pressures placed on women on being “good” mothers can often result in fewer shared conversations on mothering techniques for fear of being seen as a “bad” mother.

⁹I use the phrase “feminism versus femininities” to describe the contradictory pressure women face; that of being a feminist or of fitting into the traditional idea of what it means to be feminine.

mothers lives. I argue that a mother's greatest commodity is time, since time pressures contribute to a mother's daily challenges both in the home and at work, as well as to her identity as a "good" mother. In chapter six, I explore how my informants employed various forms of "help" in an attempt to reconstitute their lives after having children. This thesis concludes with a summary of the key findings.

University of Cape Town

Notes on Method

In this chapter, I present my research journey into the fieldwork for this dissertation and the data collection methods and tools that were used.

2.1 Research Design

This research project involved observing and engaging with white, middle class mothers in order to establish the various paradoxes that were at play when these women entered motherhood. For the purpose of this research, I carried out a multi-sited ethnography, by entering the lives of ten different women. Falzon, (2009: 1-2) describes a multi-sited ethnography as one wherein research is carried out in more than one location: “The essence of multi-sited research is to follow people, connections, associations, and relationships across space (because they are substantially continuous but spatially non-contiguous).” While I carried out participant observation in one woman’s home, the rest of the participants were interviewed either at their place of work or at their homes. Although Afrikaans was the Mother Tongue of four of the mothers I interviewed, they felt comfortable conducting the interviews in English.

The interviews were recorded electronically and my questions broadly enquired about each of the women’s experiences as a mother. The interviews were semi-structured in the sense that I allowed the interviews to take their natural course, giving my informants the flexibility to direct the discussion and speak widely into a number of themes concerning their lives, even though I often tried to bring them back to some of my guiding questions to ensure comparative data. The interview questions covered topics, such as, balancing childcare and

work, sharing childcare and household responsibilities, challenges of motherhood and experiences of raising children.

During this period I also participated in informal conversations (some of which were recorded electronically). Having immersed myself into the lives of my participants to various degrees, I further carried out observations of interactions, relationships and daily life, I communicated with my informants over the phone, on Skype and via email. This minor thesis is therefore to some extent, a collaborative effort in its various forms.

2.2 Research Site

Data collection took place in the Greater Cape Town region, which I use to describe those suburbs that span within a 60-kilometre radius of Cape Town's Central Business District. Excluding only one, all the women I interviewed live in "white" communities¹⁰ where the majority of the population is classified as middle and/or upper class. For ethical considerations and following an agreement with the informants to protect their identities, I have chosen to shield their identities and neighbourhoods.

The city of Cape Town is located in the Western Cape Province, and is the "second-most populated city in South Africa after Johannesburg" (Statistics South Africa: 2011), with a "total population of 3,740,025" (ibid). The population is composed of the following racial groups: "Coloured 42.4%, black African 38.6%, white 15.7%, Indian/Asian 1.4% and other 1.9%" (ibid). Together with the Gauteng, the Western Cape Province has the highest percentage of white people in South Africa. The most common languages spoken in the region are Afrikaans, IsiXhosa and English (ibid) respectively.

I chose to conduct my research in the Greater Cape Town region, as it is where my immediate contacts were located. I have been living in the Greater Cape Town region since March 2011, originating from the United Kingdom. On arrival into the country, I had no immediate contacts other than with Molly who I organised a voluntary placement with. Molly owned a family-run business, "Earth News"¹¹ which was established in 2008. Molly posted her business on a global volunteering website offering volunteers the opportunity to gain experience in environmental journalism, providing both accommodation and board. This situation suited me perfectly as I enjoyed learning new skills and ideally wanted to stay with

¹⁰"White" communities in South Africa are those where the majority of the population living in a particular area is white.

¹¹Earth News is a pseudonym.

a South African family on my travels. This enabled me to learn more about the country from a “native”¹² South African perspective, and become an “adoptive” member of the family. Through Molly and her family, I have made many friends and acquaintances and this was a perfect situation to begin “recruiting” informants for my thesis. Since my immediate connections were located in the Greater Cape Town region, I have limited my research to this area, however I believe the issues raised will be applicable to women living in other localities.

2.3 Research Participants

The participants in this study are white, middle-class South African mothers aged between early forties to early fifties. Molly was my initial research participant. Prior to beginning my thesis, I had moved out of Molly’s home and into shared accommodation when I enrolled at the University of Cape Town. My work schedule and the travel distance between us meant that I did not see Molly on a regular basis. We stayed in contact however and she was happy to participate in my research project. My ‘firsthand’ experiences of living with Molly and her family provided the perfect entry point and I returned to her home for the initial phase of the research project. Our connection had great potential for me, in terms of starting my fieldwork with a family who were familiar with me in their private space, and who would not necessarily be uncomfortable with me returning to research their lives as an ‘anthropologist’.

After re-entering Molly’s home and observing daily interactions and experiences through an anthropological lens, I felt it necessary to widen my research scope by identifying additional research participants. My association with Molly increased my interest in observing the interactions between other women in similar circumstances.

I found my additional research participants by a variety of means: I contacted close friends to ask whether their mothers would be interested in participating; I posted a message on my social media websites in the hope of attracting potential participants; and I approached a female member of staff at the University to be a research participant, which led to snowball sampling.

Two of the women were personal contacts, Molly and Betty; three of them were my friends’ mothers, Mary, Laura and Harriet; and four of the women were introduced to me via

¹²I’ve put the word “native” in inverted commas as white South African’s descend from Europe and there have been anthropological debates of what constitutes a “native”.

snowball sampling, Janet, Danielle, Claire, Emma and Rachel. Four of my research participants' first language was Afrikaans, but all were fluent in English, and the other six women's first language is English. My research participants were all aged within a ten-year bracket stemming from their early forties to their early fifties. I was introduced to this age group via snowball sampling.

2.4 In 'the Field'

The majority of data collected for this thesis was obtained through both casual conversation and formal, semi-structured, one-on-one interviews. The initial six weeks in the "field"¹³ commenced at Molly's home, from June to July 2012, just over a year from when I first stayed with Molly and her family. During this period, I was invited to stay over during the week to reduce my travel costs and time spent in transit. This generous offer provided me with the opportunity to engage with the family during their personal time, after working hours. This form of research is termed "deep hanging out"¹⁴, as immersion into the household and my previous relationship with Molly and her family meant that I was treated as an adopted member of the family. In return for being offered the opportunity to stay at the house, I helped with domestic chores, carried out grocery shopping, fetched her daughter from school and participated in mealtime preparation. This first phase of the research involved many informal conversations with Molly, her family and her employees. I proceeded to ask many questions about anything I observed that I did not understand but more often than not information I received information without having asked, particularly by Molly. I felt that I was often regarded as one who provides a listening ear, one of moral support, particularly if Molly felt frustrated with the business, her children or her partner.

When in 'the field' I noted down my observations regarding movements around the home, conversations between people in person and on the phone, and movements of the family members in and out of the home. I made a note if I felt that the body language of my informants changed when I was present, such as gestures, changes in pace of physical movements, facial expressions and tone of voice.

¹³The "field" is the term used to describe the time that I spent conducting fieldwork.

¹⁴Anthropologist Clifford Geertz coined the term "deep hanging out" in 1998 to describe the anthropological research method of immersing oneself in a culture, group or social experience on an informal level.

Onsite, I followed Molly around the home, within reason¹⁵. Initially I carried my recording device with me at all times but subsequently found it most effective to listen, without relying on the recorder, and to then write up my observations and conversations afterwards. During the day, Molly would work on her laptop, which often meant we were in a static position for a few hours at a time. I took this opportunity to type up my observations on my personal computer. I had no qualms typing in Molly's presence as it felt like I was a member of the business team. After 'deep hanging out' at Molly's, the themes, routines and discussions began to repeat themselves, hence it was time to direct research beyond her family.

The second phase of the research involved moving beyond Molly's homestead and getting in contact with the additional nine mothers, as well as organising times, dates and locations for the semi-structured interviews to take place. I used the recording device for each of the interviews, which I later transcribed. During the interviews with everyone other than Molly, I had to probe more, considering that I had not been present in their homes, and as a result I suggested topics for discussion that were mentioned in other interviews to set a platform for conversations to begin. Throughout the interview process, I provided anecdotes of my mother's experiences in an attempt to create a less formal and more conversational dialogue with the research participants. However, I was careful not to ask leading questions. Some of the participants were more open about their experiences as mothers than others were and I could sense when the research participants spoke with an air of caution. At these junctures, I would occasionally change topic to something more light-hearted until I felt the research participant had begun to relax.

I met five women (Laura, Betty, Danielle, Emma and Rachel) in their place of work for the interview process, and the other five women I met at their homes. I noticed a significant difference between the two groups; those women I met at their home appeared much more at ease, relaxed and welcoming. Those women who I interviewed in the workplace appeared more stressed, on edge and seemed to divulge less personal information without being probed. I was aware that entering the workplace, especially one overwhelmed with deadlines and schedules, that I would be taking up important time in these women's already limited time schedule. I therefore felt less inclined to digress too much from topic.

Those women interviewed at home had their children present in the vicinity. In all but one case, the children were out of earshot during the interviews. Claire's daughter, Jessica,

¹⁵If I sensed Molly needed time alone I would continue my research elsewhere, either in the living room, outdoors or in the spare bedroom.

however, was three years old during the interview, and required constant supervision. This did not impair the interview process, but rather meant that there were occasional interruptions.

During the interviews, my research participants often divulged information regarding their friends' experiences, as well as their own, but seemed reluctant at first to discuss their partners' roles in childcare and home maintenance. Although the women were aware that I would be using pseudonyms throughout, it was only towards the end of the interviews that the women discussed any frustrations they had with their partners. I realise that as a researcher, the research participants may have put subconscious barriers in place as a protective mechanism against an "outsider". Other than a few conversations over the phone or by email, the research participants did not know me well enough to completely trust my research intentions¹⁶ of using their material to produce a Master's thesis. Therefore, it was only natural to treat me at first with caution and suspicion.

2.5 Data Analysis

Throughout phase one and two of data collection, I wrote detailed field notes and recorded the semi-structured interviews (as well as a few conversations from the beginning of phase one). Each interview was transcribed and printed, from which a thematic analysis was manually done, ensuring that the thesis' thematic focus is grounded in the ethnographic data, and not pre-determined or imposed by an utterly deductive framework such as my interview guide. This ensured that the research participants and their experiences speak through the findings. Both the field notes and transcriptions were annotated, highlighted, colour-coded, and ordered on multiple occasions. This allowed patterns to be detected, coherent arguments to be formed and then placed in a logical order.

2.6 Limitations

The research proposal I prepared prior to entering the field was initially focused on how Molly managed the transition from "private" to "public" whilst working in a home-based family business. After a few weeks of conducting my fieldwork however, I realised that all the decisions that Molly made on a daily basis surrounded the well-being of her children in

¹⁶I often had to reiterate at the beginning of each interview the purpose of my research project.

one form or another, and there were multiple paradoxes as a working mother. I decided that my research was limited by only referring to one case study and instead I used various contacts to find other mothers to interview. Although the time constraints of the research period meant the number of people interviewed were limited to ten, the data collected has been valuable in assessing white, middle-class, South African mothers as a social group and will provide the basis for further research on this topic. I was in contact with approximately twenty women in total, but half the potential research participants fell through due to time constraints on their side or messages not being responded to. I would have preferred to have lived in the home of the ten women for a week or so, as I believe this would have enabled me to witness another part of their 'reality' and compare what was said to what was done, thereby providing a richer source of data.

On a couple of occasions, I realised after the interview that I had more questions that I would have liked to ask. I subsequently emailed those participants to ask if they would mind sending their responses, and on only two cases did I not receive responses due to time constraints on their part.

Two of the women I interviewed, Mary and Laura, had children above the age of nineteen at the time of the interviews and therefore my interviews with them relied on their reconstructions of past experiences. Their youngest children still lived with them, but their day-to-day schedules had changed from what they were when their children were young and relied on constant supervision. Therefore, their recollections may not have been as accurate as if they had still been looking after young children.

I was limited in the extent to which I was able to experience the lived reality of the participants, as I myself am not a mother, and I was only able to use my experiences of being mothered and my personal observations to relate to these women. It could therefore be argued that I was an "outsider" in that sense, and because I am not South African. On the other hand, I am white, and I was brought up in a middle-class home and was able to feign my "insider" status in this regard.

2.7 Ethical Considerations

The Ethical Guidelines and Principles of Conduct for Anthropologists (ASA, 2011) influenced my methods and ethical considerations. This code of ethics states that anthropologists must obtain consent from the research subjects, provide their participants

with all the information about their research projects and alert them to any risks, such as the chance of unintentional exposure despite the anthropologist's efforts to secure the anonymity of the participants. As a researcher it was my primary ethical obligation to treat my participants with care and respect, whilst protecting their identity at all times. Any potentially damaging information that emerged through the study that could have influenced the relationship between employee and employer, or between partners was not included in the thesis.

Throughout my data collection, I remained sensitive to my informant's personal accounts and chose to change my line of questioning if I thought it caused any sign of uneasiness. I chose not to interview both partners for this research project, as I thought it could possibly cause tension if each partner provided conflicting ideas concerning their relationships and parenting ideals. Consequently, the participants in my project had the right to review the data I gathered from our conversations together. However, no participant asked to do this and when I offered them the data they declined it.

I informed my participants about my research question and explained what I was going to do with the information that they would be sharing with me. I received consent from my participants to record our conversations, take notes and tell their stories in my thesis. I offered each participant in my project the right to remain anonymous, as the information they would be providing was of a personal nature, and could have implications for their relationship with their children and partners. I have therefore used pseudonyms for all the names of the research participants and their family members throughout the text. I have also changed the names of the businesses they work for and have removed the names of the neighbourhoods where they live.

Conceptualising Motherhood

In this chapter, I briefly define motherhood, attempting to ‘freeze’ a notion that is constantly shifting and negotiated. After conceptualising motherhood, I then present a profile of each of the mothers who participated in this study. While such profiles are often subsumed under the methods or finding sections, I believe it is particularly important to foreground these women, both as a way of giving them visibility, but also to provide a good background to understand their stories, lives and experiences in the subsequent chapters. Like every good story, it is important to present main actors before delving into the plot or storyline. This, in my view is also a way of ‘giving back’ to these women.

3.1 On Defining a Mother

A mother has been widely defined as a woman who takes on the role of both nurturer and carer of a child, and is one of the few roles that seem to be almost universally gender-specific. The attributes of a mother however, vary from person to person depending on their upbringing and the social environments in which they were raised¹⁷. Lawler argues that the “truths about the self and its development within childhood, in relations with others, and the various obligations which some selves consequently owe to other selves, are the means by which the category ‘mother’...is constituted” (Lawler, 2000: 23-24). If a society confined mothers within the boundaries of the domestic sphere, for example, the definition of a mother would be suited accordingly.

¹⁷ See Appendix III for definitions of a mother as provided by eighteen different individuals.

Michel Foucault's philosophical concept of "subjectivation" states that there are two meanings of a subject: "subject to someone else by control and dependence, and [subject] tied to his own identity by a conscience or self-knowledge" (cited in Dreyfus, 1982: 212). If I use the word "subjectivation" to describe the way in which motherhood is embedded in society, this suggests that a "mother" is also a social construction and an internalised belief; both this construction and belief play a role in shaping a woman's experience with or without a child.

Lawler further argues that women become "tied to the identities [of] 'mother'...through the relations of power and knowledge... [and] they become subjected to the rules and norms engendered by a set of knowledge's about the mother" (ibid: 24). These "rules and norms" however, vary culturally and are an increasingly popular topic of study. Kollock et al. (1985) suggest that "dyadic power dynamics" exist outside of internalised gender roles for both heterosexual and homosexual relations, suggesting that power relations underpin social, political and economic institutions. Rich (1976: 42), on the other hand, argues that "the institution of motherhood is not identical with bearing and caring for children ..." This statement is supported by the large number of divorced, widowed, and even married fathers who are capable of, and do provide the nurturance that young children require, despite their gendered socialisation. Homosexual interactions further blur boundaries and challenge traditional societal norms. Nevertheless, social constructions of what it means to be a mother are widely accepted and consequently normalise women's experiences, maintaining power hierarchies within a largely patriarchal system.

Nancy Chodorow (1978) sought to uncover how the social function of reproduction defined social relations and stated that gendered personalities develop as a result of female mothering and socialisation theory. Chodorow argues that "women's mothering as an organisation of parenting is embedded in and fundamental to the social organisation of gender" (Chodorow, 1978: 34) which subsequently poses a significant challenge for many feminists arguing against the naturalness of women's role as carers. Chodorow's theory goes hand in hand with the essentialist individualist paradigm, which states that mothering is primarily a women's activity not because of the social organisation of work or kinship, but because women psychologically desire to "mother" and men do not (Risman, 1987).

My assertion is that socialisation theory has influenced gender roles and subsequent gender stereotypical behaviours. The traditional belief that childbirth differentiates between all women and men is flawed, considering that there are many women who cannot or choose not to give birth. Adrienne Rich (1976) argues that political and economic institutions use the

ideology of motherhood to define or limit women's role in society. Microstructural theory furthermore suggests that men should be expected to carry out as much childcare as women to promote substantial changes in parenting and to aid generational shifts of parenting due to gradual societal exposure (Risman, 1987). This has occurred to some extent, particularly in Western societies, where men and women's "roles" are perpetually blurring, and mothering is no longer exclusively limited to the female sex. Lawler suggests that "current social relations could be changed and that existing understandings of motherhood are neither natural nor inevitable" (Lawler, 2000: 35). Thus, in this study, I take motherhood not only as an attribute that is 'naturally' enabled by childbirth, but also one that can be acquired, negotiated and created through other forms of practice, which relate to the expectations and social construct of mother. It is a set of relationships, practices, meanings, actions and performances, generally perceived as natural and stable, but often changing and negotiated, hence the anxieties and attempts by the women of this study to become and be recognised as "good" mothers.

3.2 Mother Profiles

Since the rise of feminism, there has been an increase in equality between woman and men both in and out of the home. It is more common, particularly in the 21st Century, for women to have a degree and a career before starting a family, particular in the "Western World". All of the women I interviewed were in their forties to early fifties and were employed in a variety of different positions for a few years each time. Seven of my research participants had an average of at least three past positions and four of the women were employed as academics.

The six women who were not employed in academia had also acquired degrees, five of them before having children. Harriet, had fallen pregnant unexpectedly in her early twenties, and had therefore completed her degree after her pregnancy. Five of the women I interviewed were either self-employed, or had been self-employed at some point in their careers. Self-employment allowed these women to work to their own schedules. Two of the women, Harriet and Molly, had enrolled on a course at some point during their careers. This was either to supplement their employment with further skills, or when considering a career change. However, neither Harriet nor Molly changed their career path due to time limitations with their day-to-day commitments.

Mary (Afrikaner)

Mary was married for twenty-three years before she went through a divorce with Murray. Mary had three daughters, Lilly 33, Rebecca, 21 and Tammy, 19. Lilly helped with childcare when her sisters were born and was *“like a little mini mommy”*. Lilly lived with her fiancé in a town near to Mary. Mary felt that her children had a good relationship with one another, in particular Lilly and Rebecca, whereas Lilly and Tammy had very similar personalities and therefore clashed with one another more often. At the time of the interview, Rebecca was living at home and Tammy was au pairing for a year in Holland.

Mary was the youngest and only daughter with two elder brothers. She was raised on a farm in the Karoo. Her family later moved to a farm on the West Coast of Darling and she attended an all girls' high school before University. Mary's mother was a *“housewife (boervrou,) but served on many Associations, did catering on a large scale from home and was the ‘business manager’ for all kid-related issues”* such as school, university, payments, cars, and lodging.

Mary felt that her parents were strict but her childhood was *“lots of fun”* and there was a lot of emphasis placed on *“the family.”* Her dad was a *“hardworking man with big financial assets”*, and although he had *“lots of money”*. Mary and her siblings *“were never spoilt and had to work for everything”*; they were rewarded for *“performance”* and were encouraged to *“plan and set goals”* for achievements. Mary felt that this *“brought about some very healthy competition”* between her and her siblings.

Mary's mother *“was and is a strong lady of blue-blood background who was the glue”* that kept her *“family together, through turmoil, sickness and health, fights and feuds.”* When any family differences arose Mary and her siblings were *“taught to sit around [their] huge round table called Switzerland”*, which acted as *“neutral ground”* and here they *“were allowed to differ, to tackle the problem, but never the person”*. If they left the table prematurely, they *“were not allowed back in and if any emotions around the table were reflected in our behaviours afterwards and thus away from the table, were punished with forfeiting privileges”*.

I interviewed Mary in her home one weekend whilst Rebecca was entertaining a friend. Mary seemed happy that she had a full house as she had recently been burgled and felt uneasy alone. Mary was very much at ease during the interview process and spoke at length about

personal topics regarding her children, her divorce and her battle with breast cancer. Mary was very welcoming towards me, offering refreshments and snacks on my arrival.

Laura (Afrikaans)

Laura had been married for 33 years at the time of the interview. Laura met her husband, Frank, through her brother, whilst at high school and after she finished Matric they started dating. They still lived in the town where they went to school. Laura studied at the local girls' school and Frank at the local boys' school. They had four boys: John, 29, Alex, 28, Matthew, 24 and Ben, 20 and they still lived in the town where they went to school. Frank worked in a variety of different roles and *“had a very up and down, odd career path.”*

Her three eldest sons were involved in music, whether as a job or hobby, whereas Ben had other pursuits. Matthew and Ben still lived at home. Alex had just returned from the United Kingdom after having lived there for four years, and John lived on a farm outside of the town.

I interviewed Laura at her workplace. The building itself seemed very quiet as we only bumped into a couple of her employees whilst I was there. I felt that Laura was cautious about divulging too much personal information. This may have been because I was friends with one of her sons, and at the end of the interview, she asked that I did not repeat anything to him. I ensured her that this would be unethical on my part and that I would not repeat her words to him. I am missing additional interview questions from Laura, as she did not have time to complete them.

Janet (English)

Janet had been married to Victor for twelve years, and they had two boys, Scott, 10 and Tom, 8. Her husband was an anaesthetist and worked at one of the local hospitals. Janet had a sister and a brother. Her brother lived in the same area and her sister lived in Limpopo with her husband and two children.

Janet's mother was an English literature lecturer before marrying Janet's father, a doctor. Once married, her parents moved to the Eastern Cape from the Cape Town area, which was a temporary move. Janet's mother had *“a very promising academic career. She won a scholarship to France and she was this big star. They ended up living in the Eastern Cape*

and there wasn't really a university in the area and she devoted herself to mothering” Janet mentioned that her and her siblings had a “really happy childhood” and that they are a “very close family”.

I interviewed Janet at her home after she had finished work. Her two sons were being supervised by an au pair and domestic worker; they were practicing their musical instruments and finishing off their homework. Janet led me to the playroom where we sat on the children’s spare beds surrounded by toys. Janet came across as confident by both answering my questions and conversing with me; she always gave me eye contact. Considering I found Janet via snowball sampling, I was surprised with her willingness to divulge personal information.

Betty (English)

Betty had been married for sixteen years to Damien, and they had two girls Melissa, 7, and Rose, 5. Both Betty and Damien completed PhDs and travelled together before settling down. Within two months of being married, they moved to a farm for Damien’s business. They *“operated out of the house and [they] lived in the business. It was an old farmhouse which was converted into a business and that was a hell of a thing because at 08:00 in the morning all the staff would arrive and the bathroom became a lab and the kitchen became the office. That was kind of traumatic at the time but that was an interesting time but he always worked from home and then thirteen years ago he built a laboratory 20m from our home”.*

Betty was brought up in a non-religious home but in *“an environment strongly influenced by Christian ethics”*. Betty’s mom was *“a stay home mom, deeply involved in school activities and our lives”*.

I interviewed Betty at her workplace, a busy location, where she always seemed to be in demand with her students, colleagues or with her other work responsibilities. The roles changed once I entered Betty’s office for the interview from student to lecturer, to interviewer and interviewee. I felt that Betty was forthcoming and provided detailed accounts of her experiences as a mother.

Danielle (English)

Danielle was not married but had a life-partner, Steven. They had two children; Tracy 6 and

Verity, 4. Danielle and Steven met in London where they were both working at the time and in 2005 came back to South Africa. Danielle chose not to marry, as she did not feel like she needed to.

Danielle: I don't want to [marry]. I'm terrified of that. The subject was broached many years ago and I gave it a lot of thought and the answer was "I don't want it, I don't need it, it doesn't change anything about the way I feel about you, I fully intend getting old with you. If you want it and you need it then we'll do it and I'll make it the happiest day of your life" and his response was: "That's the last time I'll ever ask".

Steven went back to University to complete an Honours degree four years ago, as he hoped for a career change. He still planned to complete a Master's degree. This meant that Danielle and Steven had to have a "serious chat" about finances and income.

Danielle: I just said to him if you do your Masters now, you are not going to look for work, I need you to work ... my income will not support [our] kind of lifestyle. We either need to downgrade our [life] style, so that we can live off my salary alone, or I need you to work and do your Masters part time ... [he was not] willing to give up our lifestyle so he's taking this year out to concentrate on building contracts and work and then next year he will come back to do his Masters part time.

Danielle was born and raised as a Catholic and used to be a practicing Wiccan. At the time of the interview, Danielle said she was not practicing any religion. She was one of ten children in a "poor working class family" with a "largely absent mother", who did not work. "[My father] did everything and I was in and out of orphanages. My brothers raised me socially and my father took care of my practical material needs."

I met Danielle in her workplace and we spoke comfortably throughout the interview process. Danielle spoke about her experiences with post-natal depression. We shared our experiences of judgement, secrecy, disclosure and acceptance. Danielle was particularly passionate throughout the interview process and touched upon her difficult childhood.

Claire (English)

Claire had been married for three years to Billy, at the age of thirty-five. She met Billy "relatively late in life" at the age of thirty-four and they had their honeymoon baby, Jessica, who at the time of the interview was three years old. Claire was pregnant a second time

during the interview.

Claire worked most of her life since finishing her undergraduate degree. She was a trained chartered account and worked during her postgraduate degree. Claire and Billy work at the same company but within different sectors. Claire is an Anglican Christian and Billy is a member of the Nederduitse Gereformeer-de Kerk church.

I interviewed Claire at her home one Saturday morning. On arrival, Claire's friend and son (Jessica's playmate) were just leaving the house. We proceeded with the interview on the back patio. Jessica joined us throughout the interview; she occasionally asked to be pushed on the swing, or for a hand with pond dipping. Claire seemed very much at ease at home, and I think it was helpful having Jessica with us during the process. It was evident that they were very attached to one another and preferred to be one another's company.

Harriet (Afrikaans)

Harriet had been married to Nick for twenty years, and they had two children: Adam, 19 and Kirsty, 8. Harriet had Adam in her early twenties and was unable to complete her degree until after the birth. Adam was unplanned and led to Harriet and Nick marrying. Nick was a musician and occasionally wrote for local publications. He often had to travel around the country to play gigs. Each year the amount of time he spent travelling varied, but one year Harriet mentioned that he was away for "*half the time*".

At the time of the interview, Harriet worked at the local pharmacy on a part-time basis, spending the remainder of her time caring for Kirsty. I met Harriet during the week, in the early afternoon. Kirsty was home from school but still in her uniform. I was greeted by Harriet and Kirsty who was playing with her pet chickens. Kirsty entertained herself with the pets in a separate room, whilst the interview took place. There were a few disruptions but they did not have an impact on the interview outcome. Harriet was very open about her grievances about having her first child so young, and about her dissatisfaction at having not gained a career.

Emma (English)

Emma had been married for ten years to Peter and had two sons; Jack, 8 and Rowan, 5. Emma worked in marketing and advertising in a business that she set up with Peter. Peter was a

trained chartered accountant who previously worked as a trust planner at an auditing firm, but eventually he “just got tired of it, when he decided he wanted to lead his own life... We wanted to buy a business that we could both be involved in, and it was never going to be planning a business just for him, so we set out to find something that we could both be heavily involved in. Basically he runs the factory, does finances with his PA back home, and I do the marketing and advertising.”

Emma had two siblings, an older brother and twin sister. Emma had a “very very traditional upbringing. My father worked, my mother stayed at home. My mother was a teacher, but she gave up work when we were very little. I can't remember her working ... she is a qualified teacher, but was always at home with us. And my father worked very hard, he often had to travel for weeks and weeks at a time. So, a lot of my childhood was with my father away, or working long hours. So for all intents and purposes my mother probably single parented most of the time.”

Emma and Peter were both Anglicans; “We're not hugely religious; it's mostly the Easter and Christmas brigade. My children get religious instruction at school, but they don't go to Sunday school.”

I interviewed Emma at her business. It was a small, open-plan office and her husband worked in the same room. I asked Emma if I could interview her outside, as I knew that I would be asking some personal questions, which she may not have felt comfortable answering in front of both her colleagues and husband. Other than with Molly, this was the only occasional where I “met”¹⁸ my research participants partner. At first, Emma was quite held back with her responses, but she soon eased into the process and began to open up to me towards the end of the interview, divulging that her eldest son suffered from dyspraxia and the difficulties she faced as a result.

Rachel (English)

Rachel was homosexual and lived with her partner, Jane with their two adopted children; Brigit 8 and Paul 2. Rachel had only adopted Brigit and Jane had only adopted Paul, as they were not married.

Rachel was married to her best friend Tom, a homosexual man. He helped co-parent Rachel's

¹⁸I say “met” but I really only saw Emma's husband across the room as he was on the phone at the time.

adopted children. Jane worked at a local private practice as a doctor and only got four days off a month, working every other weekend and was “*always on call*”.

Rachel’s mother was “*extremely successful*”, although she did not work whilst bringing up the children. She was the Director of a notable organisation for many years and at the time of the interview, she worked for a law firm. Rachel occasionally felt pressure from her mother for not achieving as highly at work as she would have liked.

Rachel had three other siblings, one who lived locally and two who had emigrated to the United States of America.

I interviewed Rachel in her workplace and I noticed that she kept her voice quite low during the interview, and I wondered whether that was to prevent other people from hearing. Rachel’s situation was different to the other women I interviewed in the sense that she was homosexual, had a partner but was married to her friend. It was “*an unconventional set-up*” but it worked for Rachel. Having married her best friend meant that she had an additional set of hands to help with the childcare. Rachel was very honest about the difficulties she faced as a working mother and went into a little detail about her relationship frustrations.

Molly (Afrikaans)

Molly had been married and divorced twice. She was now living with her life-partner, Charles. She met her first husband, Max, when she was fifteen and they stayed together for eighteen years, and were married for ten of those eighteen. They had two boys: Neil, 26 and Sam, 23.

Molly met her second husband, Oliver, five years after her first divorce. She was with Oliver for seven years but was married for five of them and they had a daughter, Anna 13.

Charles had four children and had been divorced three times, but only had children from two wives. At the time of data collection Molly had split up from Charles as she had found out he had been unfaithful. He had subsequently moved out of the home and was renting a small flat nearby. They were still in communication with one another and were attempting to patch up their relationship.

Molly’s father was a lecturer at the local university and her mother was a housewife. Molly’s mother was educated at university level. Molly explained that at the time when her parents

were married, being a working mother was not considered the proper thing to do. Molly's mother obtained many university degrees in her spare time as a substitute to work.

I interviewed Molly at her home. Neil and Anna were both in separate rooms on their computers. Molly was very comfortable in her surroundings and in my presence, going into detail about her experiences as a mother. However, because I had previously stayed with Molly for three weeks, it was evident that asking a set of semi-structured questions had a different outcome compared to when Molly chose to divulge her personal information in her own time. When being asked a set question it was clear that Molly was thinking over her answer before saying it. When divulging her personal information in the moment though, it was often more emotional and erratic. Therefore, it was useful to compare those responses I received in the interviews to our informal conversations to find the similarities and differences.

Good Mother, Good Woman

“Motherhood has always posed a problem for feminism. Reproduction was the one area where all types of feminist analyses had to contend with an immutable difference between women and men: that women bear children and men do not” (Crowley et al., 1992: 30).

The “Westernised” concept of a “good” mother is someone who is actively involved with childcare, ensuring that their children are stimulated, healthy, and economically and emotionally supported. Pre-1950’s there were reservations concerning women entering the workforce on a full-time basis as childcare became an issue. Johnston et al. comments that “the traditional mother ideology defined a “good mother” as full-time, at-home ... and entirely fulfilled through domestic aspirations (Boris, 1994)” (cited in ibid, 2003: 21). Feminists (Johnston & Swanson, 2003; Rothman, 1989) challenge these assumptions of traditional motherhood as patriarchal. Mattingly’s text on *Gender Differences in the Quantity and Quality of Free Time* mentions that “feminist scholar’s note[d] that interruptions resulting from combining work and family roles plague women’s days more often than men’s. Women tend to have greater responsibility for the care of their children which often means that for each of their roles as spouse, parent, and worker the time available for free-time pursuits is constrained” (2003: 1001-1002).

Gender and societal expectations concerning the role of women (Sayer, 2005; Netemeyer et al., 1996), and the challenges of motherhood may leave one feeling stressed and anxious. The traditional gender role assigned to many women pre-1950s was that of a “housewife” whose main responsibility was to look after the home and children. Jacobs argues that women possessed significant power within the domestic sphere and used the work of psychologist

Diane Ehrensaft to illustrate his point. "While men hold fast to the domination of the "public sphere," it has been the world of home and family that is woman's domain. Particularly in the rearing of children, it is often her primary (or only) sphere of power. For all the exacting and debilitating effects of the role of motherhood, a woman does get social credit for being a "good" mother. She also accrues some sense of control and authority in the growth and development of her children. As a mother she is afforded the opportunity for genuine human interaction, in contrast to the alienation and depersonalisation of the workplace" (cited in Jacobs, 1990: 505). In this excerpt, Diane Ehrensaft argues for the merits of being a "good" mother and compares the role of mother to the role of worker, looking on the latter negatively. It is important to remember that there are women who are satisfied with being full-time mothers; the issue, rather, is limited choice.

Thereupon this chapter looks at gender versus sex theory, masculinities versus femininities, and nurturers versus providers, in an attempt to discuss the various social pressures and paradoxes that have influenced how women mother their children and how they may contribute to a woman's insecurities and guilt.

I argue that a mother has to manage the demands imposed by institutional and traditional gendered notions of what it means to be a "good" mother whilst managing the demands of providing for her family. This chapter is divided into four sections: 'Sex is the Body, Gender is the Mind'; 'On Sexual Stereotypes'; 'Nurturers and Providers: What is a "Good" Mother'; and 'Cosmic Essence of Womanhood'. 'Sex is the Body, Gender is the Mind' looks at the sex-gender concept and the differences in women and men, both biologically and socially. 'On Sexual Stereotypes' explores what it means to be feminine or masculine in a traditional context, the influence these stereotypes have on household chore division and how these stereotypes are enforced by upbringing. 'Nurturers and Providers: What is a "Good" Mother' considers a mother in different contexts, how personal and societal expectations influence ideas on what it means to be "good" mothers, and subsequent guilt for not conforming. The 'Cosmic Essence of Woman' explores current beliefs and ideals concerning gender roles in the public and private space, and how the women I interviewed have broken the mould of the stereotypical feminine female.

4.1 Sex is the Body, Gender is the Mind¹⁹

The sex-gender concept distinguishes the differences between the two, such that sex is the “biological distinction” (Crowley et al., 1992: 6; Butler, 1998: 278; Moi, 1999: 3; Birke, 1992: 69) between men and women, and that gender is “socially constructed” (ibid). The biological distinction then allows individuals to be sorted into “‘females’ and ‘males’ by differences in their chromosomes, genitals and reproductive functions” (Crowley et al., 1992: 58); whereas “gender’ refers to the way ... people are socially constructed to behave and experience themselves as ‘women’ or ‘men’” (ibid). These social constructions influenced the different roles allocated to men and women, and have subsequently influenced the role of the mother and father. Many feminists have contested the sex-gender concept²⁰, and closely associated biological determinism hypothesis²¹, due to their encouragement of gender inequality (Grosz, 1994; Lorber, 1994; Mikkola, 2009; Firestone, 1970; Prokhovnik, 1999).

Childbirth, in particular, is a significant cause for the social differences between women and men. Thus, biologist David Barash claimed in 1977 that “...women have almost universally found themselves relegated to the nursery” (ibid: 301). Shulamith Firestone, a notable feminist, argues strongly against the restrictions imposed by biological determinism and argues that “women can be liberated only by conquering human biology” (cited in Jaggar, 1992: 82) through “artificial means of reproduction” (Crowley et al., 1992: 61); thereby suggesting that women are at fault due to their sex. Simone de Beauvoir in contrast however argues that: “sex is not pervasive: a woman is not a giant ovum; biology cannot justify social norms; social norms are not the expression of biological facts; and social hierarchy can never be explained or justified by biology” (Moi, 1999: 70). In contrast, three of the women I interviewed felt that the act of carrying a child during pregnancy created an intuitive link between mother and baby, and compared this with the father of their children, who they felt did not connect with their children in same way:

Molly: Mothers’ bodies change when they are carrying children and that grows them and men don’t have that, so I think certainly that there was a bit of a difference

¹⁹Moi, 1999: 26

²⁰According to the Oxford dictionary (ibid: 2013), sex is “either of the two main categories (male and female) into which humans and most other living things are divided on the basis of their reproductive functions”; and gender is “the state of being male or female (typically used with reference to social and cultural differences rather than biological ones)”.

²¹Biological determinism is the hypothesis that the biology of an individual is determined by their sex and their subsequent behaviours are pre-determined rather than being socially constructed. This theory has been strongly contested against by many feminists who believe that the biology of an individual cannot and does not influence a “person’s *behaviour* or *capabilities*” (Birke, 1992: 68). Many feminists argue that biological determinism is a means of “existing relations of power” (ibid: 67) between the sexes, which resulted in and continues to subordinate women.

between the parenting ... There's not a higher level that you can reach on this planet than actually becoming a parent. I'm completely in awe of the responsibility that comes with that. We really change the minute we have children. [The] maternal instinct is very strong for me.

Betty: Men don't share what women hear either; if there's a small baby in the house, a really small baby, men don't hear what a mother hears. I know that because every woman I know says it. They don't hear the baby crying, they don't wake up. Our kids slept with us in the same room for quite a long time, they'd both just turned two when they went out. But even now I hear my children breathing, even though they're in a different room. I can hear when their breathing changes but he doesn't. Or I hear Rose wake up but he doesn't even know.

Mary: Moms are survivors, because our kids are more ours, because they're from within our bodies!

The claims made by these women, concerning the differences between motherhood and fatherhood, substantiates those gendered statements of women being natural carers and nurturers. Although women, as suggested here, may have more of an intuitive bond with their children, this is no longer a valid argument for keeping mothers at home and out of the workplace. Gender inequalities, however, still exist, particularly regarding sexual stereotypes.

4.2 On Sexual Stereotypes²²

"Being sexually appealing to men, finding a husband and having babies were advocated as the solution to women's discontents. True femininity was seen as the only antidote to 'penis envy' and as the way to women's fulfilment" (Crowley et al., 1992: 146)

Gender stereotypes are imposed on societies globally, such that "neither men nor women are "naturally" absent [but] their segregation is socially constructed and continually renegotiated" (Ginsburg, 1991). Sex-related stereotypes formed on the premise that men and women should and should not act in certain ways according to their biology. This suggests therefore that a "good" woman and a "good" man act in ways that conform to the stereotypical characteristics of a man and woman. Stereotyping is discriminative and only when "discrimination is removed...will [it] be possible for women and men to be treated as individual human beings, with their own personal talents and preferences, no longer restricted in the opportunities available to them by stereotypical views of the capabilities and appropriate roles for each sex" (Crowley et al., 1992: 15). Beauvoir argues, "One is not born but rather becomes a woman", such that females become women through acquiring feminine traits and learning feminine behaviour. Nancy Chorodow (1978, 1995), however argues that gender is

²²Moi, 1999: 28

constructed from masculine and feminine personalities that develop from unequal parenting between mothers and fathers. She claims that equal involvement in childcare would reduce stereotypical roles through shifting the development of children to be ‘individuated sense of selves’ (Chorodow, 1992).

The stereotypes often assigned to women include “passive, fragile, **dependent**, non-competitive, non-aggressive, intuitive, receptive, afraid to take risks, emotionally labile, **supportive, maternal**, empathic, having low pain tolerance, **unambitious**, sensitive to inner feelings and to responses from other people” (Crowley et al, 1992: 23). Men have been described as “aggressive, assertive, **task-oriented**, outwardly oriented, innovative, self-disciplined, stoic, active, objective, rational, unsentimental, confident, **competent**, courageous, analytic and emotionally controlled...” (ibid). Additionally, Moi describes the stereotype of femininity as “emotional, gentle, kind, understanding, warm, **able to devote oneself completely to others**, helpful to others, **aware of others’ feelings**” (ibid, 1999: 107). I have added emphasis on those descriptive words that I felt were supportive of the traditional gender roles of men and women where women are expected to look after the children and stay home, whilst being provided for by their working husband.

In order to gauge whether their households were subjected to sexual stereotypes, I asked the ten women during my interviews how household chores were divided with their partner. Janet explained that she would have preferred to share the household tasks with her husband but mentioned that it never worked “*out that way*”.

Janet: Victor’s very progressive. He does half the cooking, he does our grocery shop, but nevertheless, it ends up being that “the Mom” does end up taking more of the work, and it’s much harder for women. And I think if men do any of those things they’re seen as superheroes. People always say, “Your husband is so remarkable!” I say, “Well, he does do a few things.” But actually most of the day to day [I’m responsible for], like packing school lunches and being aware of who’s going to play with who, and the school lifts ... it’s the daily stuff that you hold in your head. He does a lot more of the defined tasks. But the general overview of stuff, I think I still do take more of that.

In addition, Betty felt that her husband had fewer responsibilities, which she showed displeasure about but accepted.

Betty: I don’t know if anybody is really happy doing more than their partner, but ja, men don’t see the work that goes into children in my experience. Not just the childcare ... but all the little things; the mending and the sorting out which clothes fit and which clothes don’t, the shopping. In the beginning, I was very resentful. Ja, I do do a lot more than what he does ... the household finances, the school stuff, organise all the play days, all the library things, I take them to the doctor, I do their vaccinations. So I manage the whole household. So our division of labour is very

[gendered] ... he does the farm and increasingly now we have a garden he does the garden, and the swimming pool, it's very traditional ... It would take quite a lot of pressure off me if he did [more].

In contrast, Molly mentioned that she was responsible for overseeing the majority of household tasks, but did not complain about the situation.

Molly: (Laughs) I am the chief cook and bottle washer (laughs). I am the mother, and the father - well here in my house (laughs), and the breadwinner and the nurse, and the cook and the gardener (laughs), the seamstress. I do have a domestic so I don't have to clean too much, thank God. I could never have done that as well. Yeah. I'm the doctor ... Um, many roles, ja.

Claire explained that although she had argued with her partner about unequal responsibilities around the home, they then settled into a routine that involved compromising, although it still resulted in Claire doing more.

Claire: I think with most things in marriage [routine] comes out after a bit of debate and a bit of compromise and somebody always feels like they're doing more than the other, then it usually sort of revolves into a routine that works. So certainly when Jessica came along, for a long time I would do all the grocery shopping and all the cooking because I'm married to an Afrikaans man, so he had traditional values about how South African women keep the homes ... I think it took us a long time to both realise that I was doing this probably too much because I was working basically a full day. And then after a few arguments, we settled into what we're doing now.

Harriet was responsible for the majority of household tasks, and resented being busy the "whole time".

Harriet: Nick doesn't drive, so I do all the shopping, all the errands, running the house and things. So, if you get home you do all of that stuff and in the evenings it's homework and then he goes to work and then I have to do [bedtimes].

Rachel felt that her partner considered her occupation as less hectic and subsequently Rachel was responsible for the shopping. Interestingly, even though Rachel was in a homosexual relationship, both partners had organised themselves into a quasi-heterosexual gendered relationship, such that, Rachel felt that her career was considered a "soft" occupation, which therefore resulted in her being allocated more household and childcare responsibilities.

Rachel: Jane sort of sees me as somehow the one that has to have the double life. I do all the shopping, all the food shopping ... If Jane and I have issues in our relationship it's around the cleaning of the house.

Janet, Betty, Claire, Harriet and Rachel all made complaints about the unequal division of household responsibilities, which were clearly gendered. By definition not every woman or every man can fit perfectly into a stereotype, but "common sense observation makes it clear that most people are more complicated and more variable than can be described by the stereotypic terms 'masculine' and 'feminine'" (Crowley et al., 1992: 23). Unfortunately,

women and men are unfairly judged according to these stereotypes, as “there is no distinction between male (sex) and masculine (gender) or between female and feminine (Moi, 1999: 20).

Jean Baker Miller (1978) considers the idea that each individual evolves according to their “relations with others” (ibid: 28) rather than psychological, stereotypical characteristics. It can be argued that upbringing is particularly significant.

Laura mentioned that she was brought up as a “*very conservative*” Afrikaner, which meant that the idea of a “*house-husband*” was not a possibility, even if she had earned more than her husband - “*we would never even have thought of doing that*”. In addition, Mary felt that South African men were brought up doing very little around the home.

Mary: South African mothers spoil their boys, they pick up after them. Okay, you've got the odd mother who would be threatening, they are the gems you know, they are the guys that you marry. But ja, South African mothers I think they just spoil their boys ... And very few of them can cook because it's regarded a “gay” thing if you cook ... I know they have always been chefs but I mean even back then if you saw a guy and he's a chef you would wonder if he's gay you know, because it really is a “gay” thing ... Most moms are single anyway even if they are married believe me that, in this country especially ... Well South African men don't bring a lot to the table, they are hard [to find] and very few of them who would actually contribute to the household and moving the kids around and all that ... South African men are mostly emotionally absent in their families' lives and [the] household falls back on the mom even if she works 24/7.

Although gender roles significantly influence many aspects of “*marital and family dynamics... it is evident that, both in the family and in the larger society, men as well as women participate in the definition and perpetuation of gender roles*” (Blee et al. 1995: 21). For example, Mary complained about her ex-husband's upbringing and subsequent lack of support regarding both household chores and childcare, yet rather than confront him outright; she “tricked” him into helping out, without addressing the situation.

Mary: In the mornings, I would go to work very early ... and then Murray would sit in bed and the maid would bring a breakfast up to him and he would sit with the kids and they would eat with him. I never had little special bowls with porridge and little fruits cut up for them. They just ate what we ate so, ja, so he would do that out of his own, I never had to ask him ... But I've also found with men you mustn't ask them to do things ... the things that they do out of their own, you must capitalise on them, you must make them feel fantastic. If they want to have breakfast in bed, let them not realise that you are actually dumping the kids on them, just plonk the food and plonk the children and there you go, that kind of thing.

In contrast, Danielle and her partner organised their responsibilities according to what caused them the least amount of stress. The least stressful tasks just happened to be typically gender stereotypical.

Danielle: Steven's an incredibly active father. That's not to say we don't have gender roles, we do, but when it comes to the parenting it's quite evenly divided. Well, I always cook. Anyone looking at our relationship would be like "Oh my word, Danielle works a full day and she comes home and does the cooking". Steven takes care of all the finances, which again becomes horribly gendered, and it's not that I can't do the finances, I have an accounting degree, I can do the finances ... The reason Steven does the finances is if I do it we argue over money. It's better for him to do it and for me not to know what's going on. So he can cook, he just doesn't enjoy it. So on one level it looks like we're kind of very gendered. He cleans up all the chaos in the kitchen, I don't lift a finger over plates or cutlery, I leave the plates 'till last ... I usually just go upstairs to bed and I'll come down the next morning and everything is put in the dishwasher. He takes care of the breakfast run, I wake up to a cup of tea in the mornings, the kids' lunchboxes are packed, but I take care of, the kind of evening run.

Organising household tasks into stereotypically gendered roles may result in undesirable outcomes. Blee et al. argues that "gender role attitudes ... are shaped by factors both in childhood and in adult-hood. Role theory (Weitzman, 1979) argues that children model their attitudes and behaviours on those of significant others; because women are the primary figures for most children, this suggests that mothers will exert a significant influence on the future attitudes of their children" (ibid. 1995: 23). This may lead to continuous recurring gendered role association from generation to generation.

4.3 Nurturers and Providers: Notions of "Good" Motherhood

Historically in Western society, women were expected to be caring and nurturing whilst men were expected to be providers. Ginsburg and Rapp argues that "Western assumptions"²³ (Ginsburg et al., 1991: 328) assume that women are "uniquely natural nurturers [and the] mother-child dyad [was an] essential irreducible unit of kinship [which subsequently bound women to] cultural models of paternity, reproduction, and nurturance" (ibid). In the Oxford Dictionary (ibid: 2013) to nurture and to act as a provider are given the following definitions:

Definition of **nurture**

Noun [mass noun] - the action or process of nurturing someone or something: the nurture of children

Definition of **provider**

²³The feminist movement originated in the West and typically involved the contestations of white, middle-class women. In recent times however, there has been a considerable increase in feminists from different races, classes and cultures. This is because "not all women are the same or live in the same circumstances. In particular, the problems that women experience living in a male-dominated society are different for different women, and so therefore is their interest in change" (Crowley et al., 1992: 41).

Noun - a person who earns money to support their family: *he didn't like the thought of Dad being the sole provider for the family again*²⁴

Cherryl Walker argues for the universal acknowledgement that women are more than just mothers (in both the nurturing and providing role) having many other personal identities, which influence the “practice of mothering” (Walker, 1995: 424). Many feminists have argued that employment provides women with a purpose, contributing to their own personal identity, outside their identities of both “mother” and (when relevant) “wife”.

In 1996 Hays argues that the “dominant motherhood ideology in the U.S.” (cited in Dillaway, 2006: 45) was of “intensive mothering” (ibid). The three main “tenets of ‘intensive mothering,’ (ibid) that women were expected to adhere to if they were to be viewed as “good” mothers were: “(1) childcare [was] primarily the responsibility of the mother; (2) childcare should be child-centred; and (3) children exist outside of market valuation, and are sacred, innocent and pure, their price immeasurable” (Hays 1996, cited in Dillaway, 2006: 54). A “good” mother therefore was one that focused “exclusively on mothering her children” (ibid: 45). The rise in feminism, however, saw a gradual change in the way women were perceived. Women were increasingly recognised for their capabilities, which subsequently resulted in an increase in the female workforce. This raised many questions on what then constituted a “good” mother – one that is available to tender their children’s needs at all times, or one who provides for their family both financially and as a positive role model. During my interviews, six of the women commented on what they believed to be a “good” mother (without having been asked) and whether they felt they fulfilled the role.

Emma, Danielle and Mary mentioned that they thought they were better mothers when they were working.

Emma: I found myself, after my second child, becoming resentful that I wasn't working. And really, now I actually have the perfect balance, because I'm here in the morning, I'm using my brain, I'm engaging with adults, having a fantastic time ... and then in the afternoon I can give [my children] time. If I didn't have [work] I would be sitting at home bored out of my mind. Parenting is just, a lot of the time, mind-numbingly boring, especially when they're very little. So I am definitely a much better parent when I'm working.

Danielle: I struggle with mothering, I struggle with the demands of it ... even though I adore my children [and] I take mothering seriously, but trying to take mothering seriously for me is to work. I work because I am a mother. Working for me is essential to remain a good mother ... [I value] having an identity outside of 'mother' and I also

²⁴Interestingly the Oxford Dictionary online uses the term “Dad”, as an example of a provider in the family context.

hold to a feminist stance that my daughters need to see positive role models that exist outside of mothering.

Mary decided on becoming a mother because she felt it “*would be the natural thing, to combine a professional career with being a good mother*”.

Janet on the other hand contemplated working part-time as she felt that working full-time restricted the amount of quality time she was able to spend with her children.

Janet: I'm a better mom when I'm actually less stressed. Because, the thing is, if you're working long days and you're coming home at half-past four/five, then you're on this run of, you know, drop off the child-minder, start cooking supper, homework, bathing. You're in this, sort of, efficiency mode ... and they're tired, so it's the worst time of the evening to be interacting with the kids. So I much prefer having time earlier in the day when you can do more fun things with them.

Molly subsequently highlighted the paradox of being a “good” mother whilst working full-time.

Molly: It's difficult to be a mother and a breadwinner at the same time ... but at the same time I also think that I am modelling to the children something of deeper value. I mean [childcare] shakes your career entirely because a lot of women, I mean, I do know a lot of women who just put their kids in crèches and went on with their careers. I don't know how women do that ... Maybe I was too perfectionist or something, but I didn't want [my children] to be exposed to stuff that I don't agree with. Even when my daughter was small, there was no way I could have dropped her with a women down the road who looked after a few children, who doesn't use decent language, and hits the children and [who has] never developed herself at all. I mean I can't ... Why do you have children if you have someone else raise them for you? ... [Because I've worked so hard setting up my business] I always felt so guilty about my daughter [not having full attention] and I think I compensate. I'm not as firm with her as I should have been, because I'm already feeling bad. So if she's wants something, (because she's forever asking for material possessions), I feel more obliged to buy it for her as it seems to be the only thing that I can now give her. I can't afford to do too much of that, but I feel more manipulated by that because I have guilt.

Even though Molly refused to use a child-minder, her daughter did not get her mother's full attention. Molly set up her business from home to be around her children but subsequently spent the majority of the time working, leaving Anna to entertain herself, which has now resulted in a strained relationship between the two.

Bourdieu's (1990) concept of 'habitus' was used by some of the women to describe the changing norms and values of society. It relates to the ways in which we have been constituted by our social histories, and how perceptions of ourselves and others affect our actions and interactions with places and people. Betty and Janet, for example, were fully aware that being a working mother was important to their own personal well-being, but felt guilty for not being available to their children at all times, especially considering their own mothers had been available full-time.

Betty: [It has been] difficult to be a working mom when my own memories of childhood are shaped by memories of my mom being there all the time.

Janet: I never really had that sense of [my mother] being frustrated but she was just a very hands-on mother ... and maybe that's where I get my sense of 'I want to be a hands-on mom' from. She was a very hands-on mom ... She'd always read her thick novels on the side, and when we were older she continued studying. She did her Masters and she did her PhD ... I think she was in her early 40's then – and there was that sense of she came back to academia too late. She never really had an academic career that I think she had always envisioned for herself ... I think it's always been quite an important thing in the back of my mind ... I've got all the opportunities my mom didn't have and I think she often can't understand why I'm so ambivalent about my work because she just feels “Gee, wow, isn't that amazing, you've got a wonderful job”. I think sometimes she can't understand that I've just slowed down a bit ... I think it has been a bit of a thing for me, is realising that it's not a burden but in the back of my mind, the opportunities I've got that my mom didn't have and you can't just squander it by giving it up ... In those days it was really hard to do both. We would have been brought up by an au pair, we wouldn't have had a hands-on mom like we did have, and we wouldn't have grown up with our extended family and our grandparents. So I want to say to my mom, “You know what, you may be regretful that you didn't become a professor but, you know what, we all had a really happy childhood and we're now a very close family, and actually in the long-run what matters more? Now that you're in your 70's? Being a professor or having happy children and a really close family?” And I think, to me, I suppose a family is just so much more meaningful.

4.4 Cosmic Essence of Womanhood²⁵

“As my own recollections demonstrate, the difference between women and men was not just a neutral difference. It is based on the principle of ‘otherness’” (de Beauvoir, 1972).

Many feminists have argued that parenting roles should be shared to allow both women and men to enter the workforce. Adrienne Rich (1976) perceives motherhood as a positive “resource” that had been negatively influenced by patriarchy. She argues that, “the institution of motherhood under patriarchy is indeed limiting and confining for women, but to adopt the view that it is motherhood itself that confines, and that women should therefore be freed as much as possible from it, is to adopt the view of a male-centred society. Rather the experience of motherhood should be seen as a resource and woman’s ability to bear children a source of strength out of which the possibility of change can arise” (Rich, 1976: pp. 38-40, cited in Crowley et al., 1992: 30). In addition, Crowley et al. argues that the limitations imposed by patriarchy were due to the “envy, awe and dread” (ibid: 31) of men that stemmed

²⁵Rich, 1977, cited in Crowley et al., 1992: 35.

from their jealousy of not being able to “create life” (ibid). According to Butler, our “socially constructed institution” (ibid, 1998) suggests that women with children are “real women” (ibid).

Chorodow on the other hand argues that the “sexual division of labour, [encouraged] the prolonged absences of men from family life” (ibid: 152). She argues that if fathers increased their involvement with childcare and women worked then “the psychodynamics of gender would undoubtedly change” (ibid).

Michel Foucault’s discourse analysis identifies that the power relations present in society are influenced through its discourses. Foucault argues that discourses create “experience and knowledge” (Foucault, 1966); feminist discourses then have influenced “what it means to be a woman and in so doing control the behaviour of individual women” (ibid). When discourses are “accepted as true” (ibid), they exercise great power as “people act as if they were true” (ibid). By challenging the structures of power, feminists can attempt to break down the stereotypes of the feminine female and the masculine male.

Five of the mothers I interviewed divulged some of their dislikes about being a parent, particularly their lack of personal space and freedom that seemed to go hand in hand with being a mother. These extracts from the interviews suggest that the stereotypical female and mother are flawed as often a mother’s thoughts and feelings do not portray the typical passive women. On the other hand, although these mothers admitted their discontent with some aspects of motherhood, they did not seek to rectify these areas as they were accepted as the norm; they were rather managed and dealt with (which I will explore further in chapter six).

Laura: When the children were small ... at one time it felt like a ball and chain ... You always love [your children], but very often you just don't like them. You don't like how they are, you don't like what they do ... Kids aren't always just nice and clean and wonderful ... sometimes [they are] horrid and horrible. And that, I think, is eventually what parenting is about, being able to hold that and love the child despite all that. And when he's vomiting all night, I really don't like that. I don't like it when a baby burps and then the whole feed goes down the inside of my pyjamas. I don't like that. There's a lot of stuff. I don't like not being able to go out to just one movie in six months because tonight this child is too clingy or too whatever. That's how it is. And you've got to deal with it and manage it.

Janet: I'm the kind of person that I need my own space ... my husband calls me a space cadet. I need my space. That is the hard part about having children actually. It's very hard to have that quiet time alone, you really have to craft that and carve it out. That's probably the hardest part. And also, I think, realistically, I think being a mother, being a parent; you face up to the parts of yourself that you don't really want to see because it pushes you to the limit. You find yourself being rattier and more

irritable then you would like to be ... especially when the kids are young and you're sleep-deprived. You really see the sides of yourself that had been lying dormant before. So that's really a hard thing to face I suppose, it does push you.

Harriet: I think the big thing for me, was how I had Adam when I was so young and that total lack of personal freedom. It's just that you, ja, if there's anything that you want to do it's always subject to what your kids want. So you can never just go out and ja the sad thing is that I didn't get to go and do and see all the things that people of my age did at that time.

Emma: [Parenting] is very all consuming at times. So although they do add that happy chaos to my life it is all consuming. There isn't that break for your own time which is very, very difficult. And then there's just the stresses with parenting which you don't think about when you don't have kids.

Rachel: [I dislike] the complete and utter transformation of my freedom. The freedom to get into the car, the freedom to sleep late, you know. I tend to suffer from insomnia ...I'm not one of the younger parents, so it feels like I'm constantly exhausted. So the hardest part of parenting is the exhaustion, always someone needing you, and never really ever being absolutely self-contained or just, living life, and being ... So there's a part of me that craves aloneness. And having kids, it's gone, it's just gone. It is so gone.

4.5 Conclusion: Changing Perceptions

Does work really give women independence? Are mothers pressurised to behave in certain ways, both personally and societally? Do mothers have never-ending responsibilities?

Yes, yes and yes in varying degrees. There have been considerable changes with regard to women's role in society, and traditional rigid life patterns have become increasingly flexible. The increasing number of women in the workforce is a global phenomenon, some locations more so than others, and South Africa is no exception in this regard. Women have entered the workplace to fulfil economic needs, to assert their sense of identity and to satisfy their self-esteem needs. This change has meant an increase in the number of roles and their associated expectations for women. The competing roles and expectations are often difficult to fulfil and often result in inter-role conflict.

A major difficulty for working mothers is the perceived incompatibility of their roles as wife, mother and employee. Coping with various roles usually contributes to increased levels of stress for working mothers. On the other hand, it also has some implications for the workplace concerning productivity and effectiveness, as most working mothers are still responsible for traditional domestic and childcare responsibilities.

The societal and personal pressures that women face when they become mothers are problematic and important for future consideration. Is a “good” mother one who stays at home and cares for her child(ren) or one that goes to work to support her child(ren) and provide a “good” role model? Those traditional views on gender roles are filtering out of society and the new generations of mothers are much more inclined to become working mothers. It seems that despite changing perceptions regarding work and mothering, mothers today continue to draw upon their own mothers as a source of comparison on what constitutes a “good” mother.

University of Cape Town

Time Prioritisation: Children, Work and Life

“Work is a core activity in a society and being in paid employment is consistently ranked as one of the most important determinants of a high quality of life” (Clark 2001).

Over the last fifty years (Aronson, 2007) there has been a considerable increase in dual-earner partnerships²⁶. This is due to a number of factors, such that women seldom have the contingency to rely solely on their partner’s income for support (Ward et al., 1996; Jacobs et al., 2001), and the rise in feminism during the 20th Century encouraged the independence of the female workforce (Hartmann, 1979). Carol Hanish a notable feminist, argues that, “women can’t be independent without participating in the public workforce. That also means uniting in a fight for public childcare and for a restructuring of the workplace with women’s equality in mind, while insisting men share the housework and childcare on the homefront” (Hanish, 2006). Many other feminists state that the independence women gain from their careers further increases women’s self-esteem (Elliott, 1996; Reitzes, 1994); however, the movement of women out of the “private” home sphere and into the “public” workplace has resulted in a struggle for time (Mattingly et al., 2003; Nock et al., 1988; Silver, 2000). Subsequently, many women find that childcare is often a difficult and complex balancing act, with both their personal work schedule and that of their partner (or ex-partner). Nonetheless, this balancing act has often resulted in mothers feeling overworked and pressurised to perform satisfactorily both in and out of the home (Mattingly et al., 2003; Gauthier et al., 2004), which is a double burden.

²⁶Dual-earner partnerships are when both individuals in a relationship “pursue an occupational career” (Marshall, 2003).

This chapter looks at how, on a daily basis, mother's struggle with time constraints in all aspects of their lives, with particular focus on childcare, paid employment and free time, and the paradoxes mothers face regarding time allocation for their careers and family life. I argue that mothers adjust their daily schedules around their children, yet struggle to find enough time in the day to complete their plethora of tasks and subsequently have little time for their own personal pursuits. I have divided this chapter into three sections: children and changing work schedules, paid employment and lost time.

The first section on 'children and changing works schedules' explores how my research participants desired to be at home after the birth/adoption of their children. The second section on 'paid employment' focuses on how my research participants placed their careers on hold after having children with regards to promotions, and further modified their workload to accommodate their new responsibilities of being a mother. This section also explores the difficulties of juggling work and childcare. The third section on 'lost time' explores the sacrifice my research participants made regarding their own personal time in order to be both "good" mothers and "good" employees. A recurring theme I noticed during the interviews was that all the women's relationships with their partners had altered in one form or another after having children. The third section subsequently looks at how children changed the dynamics of their parents' relationships, due to the necessity to make time adjustments. Often time dedicated to the parental relationship came third after children and work.

Although having a job is important for the well-being of mothers, work can also have negative consequences for them. For example, dual-earner couples and the increase in working mothers "[has] increased the likelihood that employed men and women have substantial household responsibilities in addition to their work responsibilities" (Drobnič et al., 2011: 233-234). This has led to increased difficulties in juggling paid employment and childcare responsibilities. Time-based work demands, such as, long working hours, overtime, and time expectations, can have a negative impact on work–family outcomes via spillover²⁷ between domains.

5.1 Children and Changing Work Schedules

A paradox between motherhood and time exists, as there are always a multitude of demands

²⁷Spillover refers to the positive or negative effects of an individual's family life (or personal life) on their working life and vice versa.

and various responsibilities. Stay-at-home mothers' time is often reduced by the demands of "unpaid family work and domestic chores" (Bianchi, 2000: 401). Working mothers, however, have to juggle their family time, domestic chores and paid employment with childcare, and are constantly searching for work-life balance.

Three of the women I interviewed, Harriet, Emma, and Molly, changed their source of paid employment after the birth of their children to help mould their job responsibilities around their responsibilities as mothers. Harriet sold her business and took a two-year employment hiatus before returning part-time; Emma left her corporate job and became a partner in the business she set up with her husband, and worked only mornings; whilst Molly decided to work from home, also setting up her own business. Five of the women I interviewed worked as academics, and Twombly's research on academic mothers identifies that "in spite of a good family situation, one has to achieve a balance between family and work [and that] one cannot dedicate much more time to one area or the other" (ibid, 1998: 394). However, it is not as straightforward as attempting to balance time, as it was evident from the interviews I conducted that the women's primary responsibility was to their children, particularly while the children were still young. My research participants therefore suggested that an equal balance in time was not their priority but spending time with their children was.

Molly, for example, employed her two sons and modified their working schedule around their needs. Both of her son's first passion was music and she tried to support that as much as she could, even if it meant compromising on the wellbeing of her business.

Molly: Both of [my sons] are actually musicians too and that means it's not always easy for them to be at their desk at 08:00. Ideally we'd all start at 09:00 but it's not always possible. I want [my sons] to also be happy in their own lives, because that makes for happier workers ... and because they are my children, all the more so.

Two of the mothers, Betty and Harriet, expressed reluctance at returning to work after the birth of their children. Harriet took two years off to look after her daughter, Kirsty. Betty, on the other hand, mentioned that returning to work had both positive and negative points; the flexibility of the job was "great" but she struggled with returning to work as she "found it terrible" being away from her daughter.

Janet and Rachel both expressed distress at not being able to see their children as much as they would have liked, due to their work commitments. Leaving a young child at home often results in guilt and uncertainty, as many mothers feel compelled to spend as much time with

their children as possible. Janet was contemplating adjusting back to work part-time, as she was worried about missing her children's formative years.

Janet: The university has been very supportive ... I enjoy my job but I just really want to have less of it ... I was the only woman academic in the department and I thought it was quite important actually to be up-front about being a mother. At first I just sort of thought, "Well it won't really matter now, I'll just continue as usual" and then I realised actually 'no'. Being a mother is so much of an identity and it was important to be clear and say "I need to spend time with my children". It felt good to be able to do that ... I've just been on sabbatical [for the last month which] has actually made me realise just how rushed my life normally is with the children and realising that I perhaps need to scale down again. I love my job but I feel like there's just too much of it. Their childhood is too fleeting and [I] want to be there while they're young.

In addition, Rachel found that when she was at work she had the desire to be at home with her children, because she only had "increments of time" at home. When she was not working, other tasks such as shopping and homework had to be completed.

Rachel: I think I'm satisfied that I have more time for the kids [than my partner], yet it's uneven, it's really uneven. I have a much shorter working day than I should ... I stay here 'till about 16:00 when I know I should stay 'till 17:00 ... I'm just not capable of sitting at my desk any more, I just need to be with the kids, so I just to go home ...it's like a homing instinct.

The women I interviewed had chosen their career paths and subsequently worked in fields that were of interest to them. This meant that they faced the paradox of limiting the time they dedicated to their careers after having a family, as it is not possible to enter the workplace with children in tow. Consequently, mothers must sacrifice their time in one sphere to accommodate it in another. Having children means that a mother's time is more thinly distributed over an increasing number of areas.

5.2 Paid Employment: Juggling and Promotions

A great deal of the literature concerning working mothers covers the transition from full-time employment to part-time employment after the birth of a child (McRae et al., 1995; Tilly, 1996; Higgins et al., 2000); with the majority of literature focusing on flexible work and the work-life balance being gendered towards women. The current literature on working mothers suggests that many women may turn to part-time work when they become mothers as a "source of personal and professional fulfilment when family demands preclude a full-time work commitment" (Higgins et al., 2000: 18).

After the birth of her first child, Betty decided to go back to work full-time after her maternity leave and joint sabbatical²⁸ had ended. Nevertheless, after a year of working full-time, Betty decided that part-time work would be more suitable as she was unable to devote enough time to her daughter. Her part-time workload was still extensive, but it provided her with flexible work hours.

Betty: I lived quite far away [when I had Melissa] and in order to get here to teach by 09:00 I used to have to leave at 05:45 which was Melissa's natural drinking time and it was just awful. It's the most awful thing leaving a baby. So I managed for a year and then I decided to go part-time for three years and then back full-time this year. If you're here to do your job when you need to be, provided you come to seminars, to teach, then nobody asks too many questions about the rest of your time, as long as what you're doing maps onto your job description. That's how I handle it and look, my position is much more flexible because I live far away because they must understand, I am not driving. It takes me - well on Friday I came to work early, I came in on Friday because I was on a selection committee and I spent two and a half hours in the car on Friday. And that's a long time because then you're just sitting, unavailable, you can't work, you can't be with your children, so you're just sitting in the car, so the Department understands. I come in four days a week if I'm teaching and I do not travel four days a week if I'm not teaching. There's no negotiation around that, I would quit if I were made to come in five days a week ...it [would be] a waste of time for me.

Betty placed a high value on her time and was not prepared to waste time, as it was too precious a resource. Fortunately, she was highly valued as an employee and her employer was prepared to allow her a degree of flexibility that was able to work for both of them. This suited Betty and meant that she was able to use her time more resourcefully in both her employment and with her childcare responsibilities.

The academic mothers I interviewed suggested that their work often spilled into the evenings and weekends, particularly when they had marking to complete or lesson plans to write. Betty, Janet and Rachel designated time in the evening to complete their work after their children had gone to bed. Janet, for example, found that her workload as an academic often required her to work in the evenings if she had deadlines to meet. This meant that she was able to spend the afternoons with her children but her workload negatively affected her social and personal life. In retrospect however, she felt that working in academia allowed her to have work flexibility, which meant she could make the decision to choose her working hours to a certain degree.

Rachel on the other hand tried to be as strict as possible with regard to working in the

²⁸Sabbatical was an entitlement at Betty's workplace; for every year that a member of staff worked they earned two months of sabbatical, which had to be justified with a project.

evenings and over the weekends. The more we discussed her evening routine, however, the more it became apparent that she was not as strict as she originally declared, which indicated her preferences versus the reality of her circumstances.

Rachel: In the evenings I will just check my emails ... and if I've got marking to do I'll definitely finish my marking because I'm never late with students' essays and so on. I'll never let my students down, I put myself out there, I focus on my tuition. I do everything that I have to do with preparing the lectures, writing the lectures, reading for the lectures. That I do at home during the evening when the children have gone to bed ... It's impossible when the children are around my feet usually. Brigit is a bit more self-entertaining but unfortunately if I really need to read something I'll put them both in front of the TV - which I hate doing but that's the only way that I can - then they're quiet and I know I've got an hour. But that's usually in an emergency situation. Usually I don't care. So if I have to write a lecture I will wait 'til they go to bed.

Rachel expressed that even if she had work to complete in the evenings she still found it a struggle, battling with whether to spend her time on her work or relaxing. She mentioned that her children were in bed between 20:00 and 20:30 each evening and by that time, she was already quite tired and chose to watch television programs. In comparison, Betty would get up very early to complete any assignments, and worked from home when possible.

Betty: I don't come in when I'm not teaching, it's a waste of time for me ... I can do a full day's work in a morning at home, [and] then I can still be with [my daughters] in the afternoons and have the whole day ... I can sit down, I'm not distracted, I don't talk to anybody, I don't answer the telephone, I do what's on my to-do list for the day and I do it, and if I don't do it then I wake up really early, some mornings I get up at 03:00 to work. Because I get paid full-time and they need a month's work from me, and the way I do that is I work really early in the morning.

Betty commented that she disliked “juggling” her time and worried that when her children started school that it would be “much, much, much more difficult” to manage her time due to the increase in school activities and homework. Janet also commented on having to juggle her time, but tried to reserve more time for her children.

Betty: I dislike juggling, I hate juggling. So it's not parenting per se but I hate the frenetics of it, I hate navigating. I find it difficult navigating and my mother was the same.

Janet: My whole juggling thing has really been very central in my life actually. Since the children were born I've cobbled together various things at various stages to try and have more time with them.

The paradox of reducing the number of hours of work in paid employment in order to spend time with the children had a negative impact on career development and promotion acquisition. Academics, for example, on top of their lecturing responsibilities, are expected to

carry out research and write subsequent publications on their said research. I interviewed five academic mothers and it was apparent for three of them, their research was less important once they became mothers. This was due to their change in priorities which reduced the time they designated to their careers.

Betty, for example, was aware that having children had spilled into the time she committed to her working role, but that working also influenced her role as a mother. The tasks Betty prioritised were essential i.e. those tasks that had an immediate impact on her colleagues and her students. Betty did acknowledge the fact that her research and publications had “*taken a major back seat, a huge back seat*” due to her other commitments.

Betty: ... I feel that the reason I stayed [at the university] was to do research and that's the thing I've had to cut. Simply because I can't manage teaching and admin and supervision and being the kind of mother I would like to be. Research has just gone, but it's just one of those things, it will come back - although the job's not going to get easier.

Betty was aware that her current position required significant responsibilities, and was not willing to reduce her workload as she had committed to the position.

Betty: Look, realistically I could resign from the committees that I sit on [and] I could cut back on supervision and I said “no” a lot this year, but the fact of the matter is [this is] what is expected of the job and that is what I'm here to do.

Betty had however, reduced the amount of research she had conducted since having children. Research is particularly time consuming and requires data collection, often requiring time spent away from the home²⁹. In addition, research, although important for the reputation of the department, is often considered more of a means to climb up the promotional ladder. Promotions were desirable, but were not a priority, particularly when the mother's children were still young. Rachel experienced a similar conundrum to Betty in her position. She prioritised teaching rather than publishing her work, and felt that being a successful teacher of her subject provided her with satisfaction, but did not allow for a promotion.

Rachel: ...I think I'm really valued in the way I counsel and mentor young students ... I love teaching, it's my absolute passion and I teach it well and get huge, huge work satisfaction out of teaching and so if that's all I'm doing for my career, I mean it feels like enough. It's really good enough to know that my PhD students are going to go out and do their work, it's enough to know they are inspired ... It doesn't look like enough on the promotional scale - I might be disappointing the Dean - but I try to compensate by winning these other awards for the University, so I don't feel like a complete loser.

²⁹Time spent away from the home is not an easy decision to make, as it requires additional help to be organised with regard to childcare, and often mothers do not desire to be away from their children, whilst they are young, for long periods.

The use of the word “loser” suggests that Rachel was susceptible to comparing her achievements against the number of promotions she had earned. During the interview, she further compared her achievements against those of her colleagues, and although she stated that her choices suited her needs, it was evident that she was judging herself against the achievements of her peers.

Rachel: I think [my colleague] does it pretty easily, and that's why she is very senior, [she's] very published and I think we all make different decisions ... I don't know how she does it but she manages to be the perfect mom ... with the perfect kids, fully involved and also achieves enormous success, and I think it's because she works very hard and [she's] very dedicated. I don't want to be her ... she's [just] exceptional. I don't share it. I made different decisions.

Rachel used the term “perfect mom” and “perfect kids” to describe her colleagues position and used it as a benchmark for comparison. In Rachel's opinion she felt that working hard and dedicating more time to her job whilst maintaining a balance with childcare described the attributes of a “good” mother; an unattainable position. She expressed her awe at her colleagues' ability to juggle both their careers and child responsibilities, and questioned her own choices, mentioning the term “lazy” as a possible explanation. The fact that Rachel compared herself often to her colleague's achievements, successes and working routine, displayed her insecurities both as an academic and as a mother.

Rachel: [My colleague] is very young to be an Associate Professor, she'll be a very young Full Professor and she's worked really hard, she's incredible. But I think I'm very, I don't know if I'm lazy or if I just, I don't know what it is, but I seem not to be able to work very, very hard at home when the kids are around. I don't have a char and because we don't have a nanny in the house who can look after them while I go do something else it's very difficult, so I just focus on my teaching, focus on what I can publish, and be the best mom I can.

Danielle took a completely different approach in her academic job segregating her working hours to nine to five, five days a week. This, Danielle admitted, impeded on her career progression, and although she was aware of this, she chose to continue following this strict time schedule as it gave her the opportunity to spend the evenings and weekends with her children.

Danielle: I have almost taken a very corporate model at the university - it doesn't allow me easy promotion; I'm not going to be promoted as quickly as I want, I should be working longer and harder ... There's something about this flexibility, I mean something that allows you to be a mother in this job but something that also makes it quite difficult.

Danielle made similar comments to Rachel about not working enough hours and not being focused enough as an academic. They both felt that this was the reason why neither of them

had been promoted. Before having children, work contributed significantly to these women's identities, but after becoming mothers, both Rachel and Danielle found that their identities now revolved around being a "mom". Danielle did however admit that now her children were getting older and starting school that promotions were "*becoming more important*".

Danielle: Now that the girls are a bit older, I've been able to refocus. But the refocusing is hard because you don't want to take time away. The children take a lot away from you; I mean I could have gone for promotion this year if I had sacrificed last year [with my children]. I started to sacrifice last year and my kids started to act up. I said to Steven "I can't do this, I can't sacrifice a year out of my children's lives for a promotion, the promotion will just have to come next year or the year thereafter". But a year or two years, I mean I'm already in my mid-forties, I will never make Professor. I can realistically aim for Associate Professor. I'm only a lecturer at the moment, but I want to go for Senior Lectureship.

Danielle aimed for a promotion but being a mother meant that she had to juggle her time between her children and time as an employee, which went in hand with being a "good" mother and a "good" employee. Rachel on the other hand was aware that the choices she made impinged on her ability to gain a promotion but was less interested in refocusing and subsequently made suggested that she was not a "good" mother or "good" employee.

The five women working in non-academic careers also had certain expectations that they were expected to fulfil, but did not mention the impact that being a working mother had on gaining promotions. Claire worked in the corporate sector and had a managerial role in finance; she was expected to work six weekends throughout the year when the company's reports were published. Rather than complain about this job expectation, Claire accepted that it was a job requirement. Claire had a similar approach to Betty by accepting her job requirements and ensuring that she filled the duties of her job description. Both Claire and Betty were in their current roles when they fell pregnant, which meant that they both felt obligated to perform to the same standard as they had before having children. The challenge for working mothers then is how to facilitate managing their roles to help reduce the burden of employment and childcare.

5.3 Negotiating Lost Time

Free time, a luxury for many mothers, is considered as time that is not committed to paid employment, childcare or domestic responsibilities. Feminist researchers argue that free time is a particularly "problematic concept for women because the boundaries between unpaid domestic responsibilities (which fall disproportionately to women) and free-time pursuits are

often unclear (Griffiths 1988:49)” (cited in Mattingly, 2003: 1000). The literature on working mothers and free-time suggests that “women's experience and enjoyment of free-time activities may be compromised by their responsibility for ensuring the quality of leisure experiences for others. Because women tend to be the coordinators of family life, it is often difficult for them to have time for themselves independent of household responsibilities (Deem 1987; Henderson et al. 1989; Wimbush & Talbot 1988)” (cited in Mattingly, 2003: 1001). Rachel and Claire listed the multiple tasks they were responsible for when not looking after their children or at work.

Rachel: It's not just work and home, it's things like getting cars serviced and occasionally getting a haircut or doing shopping or paying bills, going to the gym if I have a chance. It's a lot of juggling ... If I just had one week of pure dedication with no kids, no work, nothing else, I think I could [write another book].

Claire: I feel like I spend my whole life rushing, in the mornings, every morning making a rush to school, making a rush to work, and then I rush home from work to be home by five [because my nanny] needs to leave, and then I've only got three hours [with Jessica]. So we rush around going to the park or going for a walk and going to look at horses, and if I have to sit at the grocery store, she's in a trolley and I'm rushing around Pick 'n Pay. I never feel like life is calm ... I mean it's only when Jessica's asleep that I have a bit of silent time.

Molly on the other hand commented that a work-life balance should be rewarded “financially, spiritually and emotionally”, yet did not think a work-life balance was achievable.

Molly: My social life I don't have time for. I'm at this stage in my life and I find my friends of the same age have the same problem. Because they have to work, we don't have time for a social life. If I finish my work and my house and my children, then I'm exhausted, or I might want to read for half an hour. I really don't get to my friends, which is really not ideal at all, but we've kind of said to each other “when we're older we'll have time for tea” (laughs). I don't think I would ever be able to say that I have a perfect balance. I think balance is something one is always striving for. I think if you were ever going to say that you've arrived then the next day you'll be off balance anyway. So for me, it's a goal, it's a path. I don't think it's a destination that you will ever perfectly make. I don't think that's possible ... there isn't really much time for me.

In addition, Janet, Danielle and Harriet mentioned that they also rarely had time to see their friends.

Janet: I've got a few friends with kids - it's actually interesting because one of the things I realised is when I was actually really busy is you don't even have time often to connect with your friends ... I guess when your life is less hurried you've got time to connect with friends and talk about things. There are times when you're parenting that you really just need to talk about things that are bugging you. My friend always says that you are as happy as your unhappiest child. When there's something not

going well with your children it really does throw you and you need to be able to talk it through.

Danielle: I need to slow [my life] down and simplify it. Simplify it means I still want people to come over for dinner, but I'm not cooking a lavish meal, because it's far more important that I put value on our social relationships.

Harriet: I can't socialise during the evenings anymore which was what I used to do when I was young ... with Nick being away so often I don't get to do things.

Not only did the mothers I interviewed suffer from a lack of personal time, they also commented that quality time with their partners had significantly reduced since having children. According to Feldman (2000) women “often experience a sharper decline in marital satisfaction at the transition to parenthood” (ibid, 179) due to the shift in traditional gendered roles after a child is introduced, “even among couples who shared responsibilities prior to childbirth” (ibid). I asked some of the mothers whether they still went on designated quality time with their partners, and all of the women in relationships commented that they did not give as much time to their relationships as they should.

Claire: Billy and I do go on date nights - probably not as much date nights as we need to because unfortunately we usually tend to go out with friends. So our traditional date night, where it was just [the two of us], doesn't happen very often, which we probably should do more of.

Molly: Relationships don't nearly get enough time and that's why relationships are in such a state.

Betty: In our case we don't have babysitters, so if we want to go out at night, one of us goes but we can't both of us go out at night because we have nobody to look after them.

Janet: We don't actually [go out together] enough. We end up where one of us is at home while the other person does something ... We sometimes take the kids to my parents [who] live nearby, and we sort of spend the night there but not enough.

Emma: We try. We both enjoy running [but] we don't get to run together because we don't have that much childcare in our lives, so for us to go for a run together would mean paying for a babysitter. So I'll look after the kids and he'll go for the run, and then he'll look after the kids while I go for a run. Just on our own time. To do things together we need to have the babysitter.

Laura: A very large portion of the thirty-three years [the children] were number one and the relationship sort of went alongside that.

5.4 Conclusion: Time and its Limits

It is evident from the ethnographic data collected that having children limits the time mothers have to devote to their careers, personal time and time to their relationships. However,

although this was the case, none of the mothers I interviewed discussed having children and the sacrifices that accompany them in a negative way. All of the ten women I interviewed believed that a women's first priority was to their children. Those women with adult children had more free time as their children had begun to lead independent lives - although they still had busy work schedules to ensure they were able to continue supporting their children.

Children subsequently became a delimiting factor, with regards to restricting schedules and time, which partly creates anxieties due to extra pressures and extra constraints. Guilt played a role in these women's lives with regard to time allocation, which was often managed by altering expectations. Time spent with the children often involved a multitude of other tasks such as the school run, food shopping, homework, meal times and bedtime. The weekends were when the most quality family time was experienced.

It appeared that many of the women I interviewed had homes that were becoming "*permeable workplaces*" (Jackson, 2002: 136), consequently altering their "*relations to others*" (ibid), such that their relationships between family and friends were both "*disembodied [and] fragmented*" (ibid: 137). Each of the women though had accepted the fact that their time schedules would always be rushed, as that was the sacrifice made when choosing to have children. Each aspired to obtaining a work-life balance, which in reality is an unachievable goal.

Coping Mothers: Help, Priorities, Honesty and Acceptance

‘Yummy Mummy’, a widely used term in the United Kingdom, is often used to describe wealthy, often famous mothers who maintain a certain lifestyle due to their financial security, setting unrealistic expectations and standards to adhere to for many women who are financially constrained and unable to afford nannies to assist them with childcare. According to the journalist Amy Jenkins³⁰, ‘Yummy Mummies’ are privileged with a much desired “commodity” (Jenkins, 2009: Mail Online), that of “time” (ibid). Studies conducted in the United Kingdom (Viitanen, 2005), the Netherlands (Immervoll, et al., 2006), and Australia (Rammohan, et al, 2007) each argue that the high cost of childcare leaves working mothers with little disposable income.

This chapter focuses on how my research participants coped with the challenges of motherhood as outlined in the previous chapters. I explore how these women managed their work and childcare responsibilities and whether they adopted specific coping strategies. I have chosen a selection of coping methods that stood out as significant during my conversations with the ten women: the help, changing priorities and honesty. ‘The Help’ explores how my research participants employed nannies, for example, and how they negotiated sharing motherhood with a ‘surrogate’. These surrogate mothers were mostly black women from poor, working class backgrounds. They often had to sort out their own childcare to allow them to come to work. ‘Changing Priorities’ looks at how my research

³⁰Amy Jenkins wrote an article on ‘*Yummy Mummies*’ for the Mail Online, 2009.

participants' personal priorities shifted upon becoming mothers as they no longer placed importance on career progression. 'Honesty and Acceptance' explores how my research participants dealt with daily struggles of being a mother by maintaining a level of honesty and acceptance that they were not "perfect" mothers.

I argue that women are able to reconstitute their lives after having children as they adopt coping strategies to help in the face of adversity. I argue that those coping processes adopted are paradoxical in the sense that they help these women manage their time, yet are often accompanied by feelings of guilt. These feelings of guilt are brought on by employing outside "help" to assist with childcare, no longer valuing employment with as much importance prior to becoming a mother, and accepting that no mother is perfect.

6.1 Conceptualising Coping

Lazarus and Folkman (1984) define coping as a dynamic process that changes over the course of a stressful transaction between people and their environment; whereas Carver, Scheier and Pozo (1992) define coping as a transactional process between individuals and their environment (cited in Herbst et al., 2007: 58). Subsequently coping styles are seen as processes that enable individuals to maintain satisfactory environments that are both "stable and consistent" (ibid).

Lazarus (1966) define two types of coping processes that individuals adopt: "problem-focused coping and emotion-focused coping" (cited in Herbst et al., 2007: 58); where "problem-focused coping is aimed at solving the problem or doing something to change the source of stress, whereas emotion-focused coping is aimed at reducing or managing the emotional distress associated with a situation" (ibid).

In contrast, Antonovsky coined "salutogenic theory" which states that stressful situations increased "ill-health" (cited in Lindström et al., 2005: 440). In an attempt to analyse the methods individuals adopt to help avoid stressful situations, Antonovsky highlights three strategies: "comprehensibility, meaningfulness, and the manageability" (ibid), which fell under the "Sense of Coherence" (ibid) framework. Carrim (2000) in her research on working women "concluded that there was a relationship between the strength of working women's salutogenic construct scores and their ability to cope with multiple roles" (cited in Herbst, 2007: 58).

Sense of Coherence has been used to identify an individual's internalised "capacity to respond to stressful situations" (Lindström et al., 2005: 440). 'Comprehensibility' is the means by which an individual finds "logic in the sequence of events, a degree of consistency from one experience to another, and belief that unexplainable events do not occur (Sullivan, 1993)" (cited in Herbst, 2007: 58). 'Manageability' is when individuals "perceive that resources are at their disposal and are adequate to meet their demands" (ibid) so that life does not become "unmanageable and overwhelming, but rather endurable (Sullivan, 1993)" (ibid). 'Meaningfulness' refers to the way an individual makes conscious decisions to change the way they live their life to suit their needs (ibid). Antonovsky nevertheless states that not one coping strategy can be adopted, but rather multiple coping strategies should be modified for individual situations.

From the narratives of the ten women I interviewed, each had devised coping strategies, some adopted these subconsciously and others consciously.

6.2 The Help

A common occurrence among my ten research participants was that each of them employed "help" in some form or another and according to the literature (Gaitskell et al., 1983: 86; Ally, 2009); this is a common occurrence for many white, middle class families in South Africa. The "help" came in the form of domestic workers, nannies, child minders, au pairs, babysitters and gardeners. Employing "help", I feel, would come under 'manageability' within the 'Sense of Coherence' framework, which is when individuals "perceive that resources are at their disposal and are adequate to meet their demands" (Herbst, 2007: 58). In this case, resources refer to employees who help the women cope so that their life does not become "unmanageable and overwhelming, but rather endurable (Sullivan, 1993)" (ibid). Betty, for example, found it challenging to write her book whilst being the sole carer of her first daughter and decided to hire help to reduce her workload.

Betty: I started to try to write [my book] in April and it was totally unsuccessful so I hired somebody, Yoliswa, three mornings a week, to look after Melissa ... we live on a farm so I have a little office at the back of the house where I could work and I would work mornings only, for three mornings a week. That continued for all of that year. Then Yoliswa told us she was pregnant ... so I found a little pre-school for Melissa so that she could go there one day a week. I needed somewhere for her to be because Yoliswa was pregnant I had to go back to work full-time. Melissa started going to pre-school just one day a week and then two days a week and then the rest of the time being looked after by Yoliswa while I was here. Then Yoliswa went on maternity leave

for four months and found me a replacement which was [a] lovely girl, Maurine, who came and worked for us for three days a week and then two days a week while Melissa was at school ... She was much younger than I would have liked - I was looking for an older woman because I had no relatives nearby and I had no neighbours and all my friends are in the Southern suburbs so all my friends live a 45 minute drive away, and I wanted an older woman who knew what the hell to do with a baby ... Maurine hadn't had a baby, she was very young, she was 21, very young. But I really liked her and she spoke very good English because my Xhosa is non-existent and she had helped her sister with her baby so she had a bit of experience. So that's how I met Maurine and I had her one or two mornings a week and then we built it up.

Danielle on the other hand hired a nanny to prevent sending her children to crèche.

Danielle: I investigated a couple of crèches and just couldn't bring myself to do a crèche. I think maybe it's a new mother problem - I'm not sure I would have the same problem now. But there's a sense of if my baby cries and there's another baby crying, the caregiver's only got one set of hands, so I really only want just one-on-one care, [and] we went for the nanny option.

Claire also hired a nanny to look after her daughter when she was at work.

Claire: We have a nanny, Zanele, [who] comes every morning at 07:30 and she leaves every afternoon at 16:30. She looks after Jessica during the day. It was more difficult when Jessica was a baby because I had to [pump] all my breast milk - we had a very detailed timetable of when Zanele had to give bottles, feeds and nappies, and she had to keep very, very accurate records for me. But now that Jessica's bigger it's obviously much easier because she's at school in the mornings.

Harriet hired a live-in nanny when Kirsty was young, which allowed her to spend more quality time with her husband.

Harriet: When Kirsty was small, we had a nanny, Yolanda, until about when she was four or five ... we had a full-time live-in nanny. She was lovely. And then I could actually [go out with Nick] and Kirsty would be here with Yolanda.

In nearly all cases, other than a few babysitters and au pairs, the help were black, working class women living in townships³¹ within the Greater Cape Town region. Janet, for example, hired a couple of University students, who acted as au pairs, to help with the childcare; one to assist with the school run, and another to help with the homework.

Janet: The student, Lauren, who picks them up is actually an au pair of one of the children in my eldest son's lift-club. She's free around one o'clock when Tom comes out of school. So I just reached this stage where it was too hectic really and I would rush back from work and leave things undone and take kids here and try do some work in my car. That was just not working. Nicky, my other student, who's here today, is a friend of the other ... she just started about a month ago.

Danielle explained that if she and Steven wanted to go out for the evening that they would pay for a babysitter, normally one of her students.

³¹ "In South Africa, the term township and location usually refers to the (often underdeveloped) urban living areas that, from the late 19th Century until the end of Apartheid, were reserved for non-whites (black Africans, Coloureds and Indians). Townships were usually built on the periphery of towns and cities" (Russell, et al., 2013).

Danielle: We try to keep [date-nights] regular, it's normally students, and we have two or three on speed dial. Tracy and Verity are now old enough where they just love these young women that come and do stuff with them.

The roles the “help” performed were typically gendered, with the gardening often being carried out by men and then women looking after the house and the children. Seven of the women I spoke with had hired a nanny when their children were young (either live-in or live-out) and as the children aged and started attending school the nanny’s domestic responsibilities grew as their childcare responsibilities decreased. Betty’s nanny, for example, carried out both household tasks and provided support to her children.

Betty: Maurine does the cleaning. I don't have to worry about that; the dishes go in the dishwasher, the clothes go in the washing machine, I make my bed, the children are learning to make their beds, and Maurine sorts the rest. Thank God! I like Maurine very much and I like having her in the house. When I get back after the gym I always have a chat with her ... I need someone there in the afternoons because I'm a working mom. So the fact that the house is cleaned is incidental, we decided we don't need somebody all the time. I find it convenient to have somebody once a week ... in an ideal world I would be able to work mornings only and be at home in the afternoons and not need somebody full time but this is not an ideal world ... When I am not [at home] Maurine is a lovely support for [my children] and for us. She and I share morning stories about our times with the children and that creates continuity [with] the children's growing.

Claire and Janet’s nanny also contributed with the household chores, providing additional much needed help.

Claire: When Jessica was a baby it was full childcare, [my nanny], Teniswa, didn't do domestic work for me, but now that Jessica spends so much time out of the home, Teniswa will clean for me while she can.

Janet: ... as the children have gone to school she's [now] our domestic worker as well. So in the morning she does domestic worker stuff and then in the afternoon she's here with the kids ...

The “help” were normally sourced through word of mouth from friends who provided recommendations or previous staff suggested contacts. Nannies were interviewed prior to being hired to ensure they were suitable candidates to take on the role as temporary surrogate mothers. Claire explained that she hired her nanny, Teniswa, through an act of kindness.

Claire: It's actually quite a sad story; a few years ago we had some genocide in Cape Town ... [In] 2008/09 a friend of my sister's took in Teniswa and she sent out an email saying she had this lovely lady, [who] had worked in an old age home, [and] she had worked as a nurse in Zimbabwe. She was wonderful with children and this friend had heard that I was pregnant and asked whether I need her as a possible nanny position ... Teniswa is magnificent [but] she is Zimbabwean ... She herself had a hard time, she now has a home in [the township] and she's set up, but she does find a lot of prejudice, so she has a difficult life. We try and help her wherever we can, but again I think at the time I got caught up in the emotion of it all. And she's a wonderful

addition to our family but it hasn't come without difficulty ... it's quite a long journey for her, and she has her own complications because she realises that she possibly should have a job that's closer to home, to cut down on her travelling time, but she's so madly in love with Jessica now.

Macdonald, a sociologist, drew on the paradoxical situation of hiring a nanny in his paper 'Manufacturing Motherhood: The Shadow Work of Nannies and Au Pairs' arguing that not only do mothers negotiate the tasks of motherhood but they also negotiate sharing mothering with child care providers, actively contributing to "redefining motherhood" (ibid, 1998: 25). Mary, for example, dealt with this negotiation by ensuring that her live-in nannies returned to their quarters when she got home from work.

Mary: My Dad always supplied a lot of help for me with the kids and I always had like two or three [nannies], or sometimes one and then two and then three again ... it was not hard for me with the help of the maids ... [The maids] had their quarters and when we got home then they would go to their room, to their flat.

In addition, Janet explained that even though she hired an au pair to help with her children's homework she was not happy with this decision.

Janet: I don't really want to delegate homework to someone else 'cause I actually really like to see what's happening with the kids. So it's just twice a week that she consolidates stuff.

Many of the "help" employed by the women that I interviewed had children themselves. Family members looked after these children when their mothers went to work. Betty's nanny, Maurine, began bringing her children to work with her, but found that she was unable to perform her working responsibilities as effectively and therefore decided against that arrangement. Janet's nanny also had a young daughter who attended the same school as her sons, and often she received homework help with Janet's sons.

Janet: Bonita's little girl is actually at the same school as the boys [and] because she's a second language speaker, I wanted to make sure that she was getting her homework done as well. So there are really three kids in the house [everyday] who need their homework done. [Bonita has] been with us since Scott was born. I went back [to work] when Scott was five months ... [and] in the morning, we employed Bonita as a child-minder ... She comes in at about 08:00 because she has to drop [her daughter] at school, so [her working hours are] flexible. Five is about the latest she goes and on some afternoons if I'm home earlier then I'll take her home. And then actually we just got into this thing that works quite nicely: once a week she spends a night [with her daughter]. And that has been wonderful. So I've been doing an art class (laughs). So I've had some time to myself. Once a week we've got a babysitter.

Claire's nanny, Teniswa, also had her own children, hence why she was unable to become a live-in nanny.

Claire: Teniswa's got three of her own children and I would love a live-in nanny, I have colleagues who have live-in nannies, it would make my life so much easier.

We've got a beautiful little cottage on the side of the house, it has a separate entrance ... Even though I'd like a live-in it's not convenient for Jessica, and we can't make her quit ... I would love to have a live-in home carer because it means if I had to go to work early or come home late, there would always be somebody here. It would mean Billy and I could have more date nights out.

Often the “help” were seen as an extended part of the family, many having been employed for years. Molly’s domestic worker, Andiswa, was considered as both an extended member of the family, in particular by Molly, and as an employee. Andiswa was normally present in the house five days a week. She was responsible for a similar cleaning regime each day, which included cleaning the home, occasionally making lunch and the clothes washing. Claire has employed Teniswa since her daughter was born and they had a very strong bond.

Claire: ... we've had Teniswa since Jessica was born and she has a very, very important relationship in Jessica's life. She adores Jessica and Jessica absolutely adores her, she's like another mother figure.

Emma’s “maid” had been employed for ten years, and was also considered to be part of the family.

Emma: I do have help, I've got a full-time maid, char, who works Monday to Friday, so she's obviously in the house if I need to rush out, she will be there to look after them. She's been with us for ten years, so she's part of the family...

There is still some contention concerning the employment of “help”, in its various forms, due to racial discrimination implications. Often a white South African employs a black South African to help with household chores and childcare but often with low pay. Nyamnjoh, in his paper ‘*Maids and Madams*’ (2005), looks at the particularly negative side of employing “help”, with particular focus on domestic workers (“maids”) in underpaid and poorly managed positions. Nyamnjoh argues that many women who are employed as “help” would not necessarily speak out about any grievances they had in their positions, as it was not in their benefit to do so. This is often because they come from economically disadvantaged backgrounds and require their jobs in order to provide for their families. Nyamnjoh even went so far as to argue that “many Southern African housewives, like women elsewhere, have resorted to devaluing and dehumanising fellow women to be able to claim equality with men” (ibid, 2005: 221). I am unable to comment on whether my research participants “help” were happy in their role or not, but I was given the impression that nannies in particular had such a strong bond with their ‘adoptive’ children, that they enjoyed coming to work each day.

6.3 Changing Priorities

When talking to my ten research participants I noticed a theme that flowed through the

conversations, on changing personal priorities. On becoming mothers, these women's personal priorities shifted and the needs of their children were valued with most importance. For example, the academic mothers I interviewed initially focused on their careers. After they became mothers, they no longer placed as much importance onto their career progression. This is paradoxical when compared to the feminist arguments mentioned in chapter four.

Changing ones' priorities, I feel, would come under 'meaningfulness' within the 'Sense of Coherence' framework, which is when "an individual makes conscious decisions to change the way they live their life to suit their needs" (Herbst, 2007: 58).

Janet was particularly surprised by her unexpected change in priorities towards her children, especially considering she had never yearned for children, unlike some of her friends.

Janet: I think motherhood did take me a bit by surprise in terms of how it completely altered my priorities. I was a lot more career focused before I had children and then my other ideals kicked in. I realised I am happiest when I'm at home, and there's the neighbourhood children who all come around, and I get that Earth Motherish feeling like "Yes! This feels good!" So it's not "ambitious" and it's wasting my talents as it were, but it actually feels good! So it has changed my priorities quite a bit ... I said once [to my colleagues] "I've got children and I really want to scale back [on work]" and the common response was "Oh, but you're so capable, you'll cope with it all". And my response was "Yes, I might cope but I don't want to cope with it all, I actually just want to be more available for my children".

In contrast, Betty had weighed the various options of being with and without child, but opted for the latter, with an unexpected turn.

Betty: I always wanted children ... I went through a phase of several years [of] loving the freedom of an academic life, a life of the mind and thought that I might not have children. I decided against that and now feel like I was born to be a mother; it is my calling in life. And that might be non-politically correct or non-feminist (or so I'm told) but the fact is that it is the feature of my life that gives me the greatest joy and satisfaction [and] the place I come truly alive.

Danielle had a similar reaction to Janet in the sense of being surprised by her change in priorities. She further mentioned that she understood why women left their careers to care for the children.

Danielle: I do love my job, I actually love it, [but] it asks too much from me, and if I didn't have children to put boundaries around my work, it would bleed into my evenings and it would bleed into my weekends and it would fuck me up and I would probably love it ... motherhood completely changes the importance you place on work. Certainly in the really early years, quite frankly you couldn't give a damn about your job, and you never imagined that you would stop caring about your job, but when this little bundle appears your priorities change completely. I mean I understand now why women give up highly successful careers, like my sister-in-law contemplated it quite a bit, the other one renegotiated, because quite simply the work

doesn't hold the attraction any more. It's not where they see their values; their values have come from an unexpected direction. We never think we will stop caring about our jobs, but there's something quite peculiar about motherhood.

These women's narratives were similar to those narratives of new-time mothers in George's research on *'Lack of Preparedness: Experiences of First-Time Mothers'*. George found that a mother's change in priorities was a "the most frequently identified concern" (ibid, 2005: 253) for the women she spoke with. The mothers found they were reorganising "in response to new responsibility" (ibid) which George states was "consistent with the findings of other studies of new mothers" (ibid), such as "Fishbein & Burggraf (1998) and Paavilainen & Astedt-Kurki (1997)" (cited in ibid).

6.4 Honesty and Acceptance

My research participants divulged their personal methods of coping with motherhood on a day-to-day basis. Honesty played a large role in their methods, as it meant divulging their personal struggles, not necessarily to those around them, but to themselves. These women knew that motherhood was challenging and accepted these challenges. This allowed them to manage the roles of being both an employee and mother, even if it was a struggle at times.

Honesty, I feel, would come under 'comprehensibility' within the 'Sense of Coherence' framework, which is when an individual finds "logic in the sequence of events, a degree of consistency from one experience to another, and belief that unexplainable events do not occur (Sullivan, 1993)" (cited in Herbst, 2007: 58).

Danielle divulged that she struggled with coming to terms of her new status as mother and pined after her life without children for a few years. She worked through these issues with her partner and after seeking help from a counsellor, she made the choice to take anti-depressants for her post-natal depression, despite her reservations on being medicated.

Danielle: My challenges to parenting arise out of my childhood and the dysfunctional family I was raised in. They constantly reappear in the present and need to be worked through. At one point this took the form of counselling and eventually medication. Now parenting is part of the healing process and what keeps me grounded ... It took me a long time to love them and it just gets deeper, and deeper, and deeper. So I see parenting as just getting better and better. I am not grieving for my old life, it was probably two or three years that there was a lot of grief at what was given up, you get so far into parenthood that you can't imagine life any other way. The grief .., it's probably like all grief, it just lessens over time ... I'm only really starting to enjoy the relationship I have with [my children] because they are individual people now, and

the joy that you get from friendship and from loving a person, they are just there now. I mean maybe it's at four and a half that they actually start becoming human beings ... I enjoy what the four of us can do together. I love them.

Claire on the other hand found it quite disconcerting that she had come across some mothers who were not always honest about their experiences of being a mother, in an attempt to appear “perfect” and a “good” mother. Claire found it refreshing to be honest about her difficulties and divulged her troubles to those around her, as both a relief mechanism and as a means of searching for advice.

Claire: I think some women can be guilty of not being entirely honest. I'm the kind of person who will say “I don't know what I'm doing”, I'm like freaking out and so you know I can't get her to stop crying. Whereas other women will say, “My child slept through at three months”, or “My child never cries”, because they want to appear to have everything under control. I don't worry about that, if I'm out of control I'll tell everybody.

Molly found that she coped best through an “internal counselling” method she had adapted over the years, both through experiential learning and through study. Molly hoped that by talking through any problems she had with her children that they would learn to solve their own problems in the future, yet she regretted having been so open during their early stage of life.

Molly: I like to write in my journal. I've developed my own internal counselling pattern through writing because clearly one can't afford to go to a psychologist. It's not affordable because it's become an elitist thing to go for therapy. I do my own writing. I'm also very much a community person so I tend to throw it out there and we would discuss it. We all tend to discuss things together. Number one because I want to teach my children that if you have a problem you talk about it and number two because I want to help them to learn to solve problems. So I tend to put things out on the table and get the family also to figure things out ... I may have got the kids too involved in working out the problems at early stages because of not being able to do it any other way, [due to the divorce] ...

Mary felt that her job had helped to equip her with the transferable abilities needed for motherhood, and she attempted to manage her problems through writing them down and dealing with them one by one.

Mary: [I] group different problems in little compartments by writing them down. [I] deal with them emotionally or physically in order of priority. Quite a few problems sort themselves out or simply go away if left for a while! My previous job equipped me with some great communications skills, more so partnership building skills, which taught me to listen attentively, solve problems creatively and use tact and diplomacy to find common ground and achieve win-win outcomes. I apply this daily. [I] confront the situation [and] write down the problem. Then if, still not clear a glass of wine - everything seems not as serious after a sip of wine ...

6.5 Conclusion: Thoughts on Coping

It is apparent that in order to manage the daily struggles and negotiations of motherhood it is important that women adopt coping strategies to ensure their healthy growth as mothers. That is not to say coping mechanisms do not come with their own set of burdens, however, honesty and acceptance allow women to be at ease with the various pressures placed on them.

White, middle-class South African women are able to, and often do, employ various “help”, as it is considered a form of employment to those in need of a job. It also helps the working mother juggle her childcare and working responsibilities. In post-apartheid South Africa, there are still contentions regarding a white individual employing a black individual in a low-pay job. Nevertheless, until there are adequate well-paid jobs available for the growing South African population I cannot see this form of informal employment declining any time soon.

I touched upon how nannies act as a ‘surrogate’ mother and, subsequently, motherhood is often renegotiated. However, working mothers manage this renegotiation by allocating their time to best usage, meaning that when they are present with their children they are often less stressed and rushed, and are thus able to spend ‘quality’ time with their children.

The conscious or unconscious change in priorities may be associated with the ingrained mothering tendencies that mothers have to protect their young, hence why they may place less value on evolving as a career woman. As children get older and are able to start fending for themselves, mothers are more likely to allocate more time to their careers. These approaches may appear anti-feminist concerning women appearing to succumb to traditional gender roles, however this is often not the case; these are personal choices that women have made based on their personal happiness, rather than having been pressured into making these decisions by the opposite sex. The beauty of it is that many women are now empowered to make these personal decisions and subsequently choose the situation that suits their needs.

In order to make decisions that best suit their needs women have to be honest to themselves about their situation, what they can and cannot deal with, what they need help with and how to get that help. Each woman’s situation is different from the next. Through the acceptance of admitting that one is not a ‘perfect’ mother, whether that is perfection in her own or another’s eye, can one truly grow. This allows women to adapt accordingly to the challenges that accompany motherhood and to deal with them in a way best suited to their own situation.

Conclusion

This is a premature, and brief conclusion to a project which has only began. Hence, I would like to approach this section as a commentary, more than a ‘traditional’ conclusion, especially given the limitations on space for a minor thesis. This thesis set out to explore the ways in which white middle class working women experience life after childbirth and the strategies they develop to bring stability to a period in their life that is fraught with multiple anxieties. Using an ethnographic approach and interviews with ten women, I tried to understand the strategies and strategies of living through the paradox of celebrating and struggling childbirth, especially in a context where women are often represented as stable, accomplished and successful in privileged positions. I have shown in this thesis that even for such women, parenthood and success are filled with fears and numerous challenges. The findings make a good and strong case for researching the lives of such women, who, as the preceding chapters have shown, often suffer in silence.

This thesis contributes to filling a gap in the literature on working women and motherhood by providing narratives of ten white, middle class South African mothers living in the Greater Cape Town area and by discussing how they cope with juggling their childcare and work responsibilities. I have tried not to make assumptions about the experiences of these mothers within the text, as their experiences and opinions are personal and may vary to the rest of the white, middle class population in South Africa. Rather, the information I have presented in this thesis provides a platform for further research.

An interesting aspect to expand this research would be to look at younger women to identify their conceptions of becoming future mothers in South Africa. The views of younger women would provide interesting insight into generational differences and similarities on the topic of mothering. In order to achieve a more complete picture of coping with parenthood in the modern world, it would be of additional value to consider the experiences and challenges that men face when becoming fathers. It would be interesting to observe whether they also feel pressure to behave in a typically gendered way. Although these aspects are beyond the scope of this thesis, I have provided an epilogue out of my own interest, which includes four additional transcripts from interviews with three men and one younger woman, all white, middle-class South Africans.

The main aim of my research has been to uncover those multiple paradoxes that women face when becoming mothers. In particular, I have focused on the way women respond to the demands imposed on them by traditional gendered notions of what it means to be a “good” mother and how the interviewees have interpreted these demands. Each person has their own personal criteria of how to be the best mother. To be a “good” mother in one person’s eyes is subjective due to the mother’s own upbringing and current circumstances. The ten women I interviewed made daily decisions based on what was best for the family as a unit. If one of the women felt that her decision was not beneficial to the growth of her and her family, she would modify her choices, whether that meant working fewer hours, hiring a nanny to help out, or both. It was clear that all of the interviewed women had worked hard to succeed.

Each of the ten women’s personal identities was intrinsically linked to the decisions they made. Regarding time, each of the ten participants adjusted their daily schedules around their children because they desired to spend their time with their children. While they all made sacrifices regarding the number of hours spent for their individual, personal pursuits, they ultimately were willing to make those sacrifices to bond more with their children. This suggests that children play a role in enabling and constraining.

At those times when the women were unable to be with their children they hired external “help”, which reduced stress levels in time management. Hiring a ‘surrogate’ mother allowed mothers to spend quality time with their children; however, it also meant that they had to share their children’s love with another. This was the cost that nine out of the ten mothers were willing to accept; they were fortunate that they were able to afford to pay for help.

Although this thesis takes the perspective of white middle class South African women, the issues discussed are not only confined to this demographic. However, coping strategies would likely be different across cultural contexts. For example, mothers who are unable to afford to hire a child-minder would be more dependent on free help from within the family.

This thesis has considered the dilemmas woman face as they strive to negotiate, be and become “good” mothers as well as successful career women. It has provided insight into the views and problems of working mothers, especially amongst white middle class women often excluded from anthropological research. For a working mother to accept help with childcare from the husband/partner, another family member or external help is a necessity to maintain her wellbeing. A flexible, considerate employer would also be beneficial to keeping stress levels within check.

“Good mother” versus “successful career woman” has been a fundamental question in my research and I have concluded that the roles can be combined effectively as women adapt to their changing circumstances through coping strategies and efficient use of their time. While the terms “good mother” and “successful career woman” are sometimes seen as a paradox, with appropriate support, this does not have to be the case.

Appendix I

Marian Keyes novel *'Sushi for Beginners'* excerpt

“‘Maybe I should get a job,’ she suddenly interrupted. ‘I always *meant* to go back to work after Craig.’

‘That’s right, you did.’ Ashling knew Clodagh was vaguely defensive that she wasn’t one of those super-women who did a full-time job as well as rearing children.

‘But the exhaustion was beyond belief,’ Clodagh insisted. ‘Whatever you hear about the agony of labour, nothing prepares you for the hell of sleepless nights. I was forever shattered and waking up was like coming round from anaesthetic. I *couldn’t* have held a job.’

And luckily Dylan’s computer business was doing well enough that she didn’t have to.

‘Do you have time now for a job?’ Ashling asked.

‘I *am* very busy,’ Clodagh acknowledged. ‘Apart from a couple of hours when I go to the gym, I never have a moment to myself. Mind you, it’s all inconsequential stuff; changing clothes that’ve been puked on or having to watch Barney video after Barney video...Although,’ she said, with a glint in her eye, ‘I’ve put an end to Barney.’

‘How?’

‘I’ve told Molly that he’s dead.’

Ashling roared with laughter.

‘Told her he’d been knocked down by a lorry,’ Clodagh continued grimly.

Ashling’s smile faded.

‘You didn’t...really?’

‘I did, really,’ Clodagh said smartly. ‘I’d had quite enough of that big purple fucker and all those awful irritating brats, delivering morals and telling me how to live my life.’

‘And was Molly upset?’

‘She’ll get over it. Shit happens. Am I right?’

‘But...but...she’s two and a half.’

‘I’m a person too,’ Clodagh said defensively. ‘I have rights too. And I was going mad from it, I swear I was.’

Ashling considered in confusion. But maybe Clodagh was right. Everyone just expects mothers to sublimate all of their own wants and needs for the good of their children. Perhaps that wasn’t very fair.” (Keyes, 2000: 150-151, emphasis in the original)

University of Cape Town

Appendix II

My Mothers Account

“To successfully manage a career and motherhood it is helpful to have a plan with a timescale. As a woman with a ‘biological clock’, sticking to the timescale is as important as the plan. I married relatively young; at 21 and I was still a full-time student with no money, but no regrets.

This was the initial plan: Qualifications > Job > House > Children

Timescale: before 35th birthday

I graduated with a BSc (Hons) in Medical Biochemistry one year after getting married. The priority was then to get a paid job so that we could apply for a mortgage. Two incomes were needed for us to buy a small house and we both agreed that we would not start a family until we were financially secure and could afford a larger family home.

The first 10 years of our marriage was devoted to working hard, gaining more professional qualifications to progress as much as possible in our careers. During this time, I studied for a PhD. This was on a part-time basis so that I could continue earning a full-time salary. Our first child was born 2 months after passing my PhD viva voce.

Progressing from career woman/student to full-time motherhood was an abrupt change and this was coupled with a move overseas for my husband’s job. However, for me to give up work for a period, to be a mother at home had always been our objective. This would not have been possible financially at the start of our marriage.

The years of childhood pass very quickly and I firmly believe that it is best for the child to have that time with a parent, rather than an unrelated childminder, if possible. It is not a hardship but, on the contrary, a wonderful time for the parent to spend time with their child and witness the developmental milestones firsthand. The break did slow down my career progression but more importantly, gave me the opportunity to experience another side of life. I would have regretted not spending the early years with my children. With determination, a career can continue after a break but childhood is transient and cannot be recovered.

For the best chances of me returning to work, we planned to have only two children and for them to be close in age so that my career break would be minimised. Also, with a smaller

family we would be able to offer more help in the future with opportunities requiring financial support.

Having time at home with my daughters enabled me to make good friends with other young mums and children in the area. I was also able to expose the girls to a variety of activities e.g. swimming, ballet, gym classes, brownies, mother & toddler groups etc. Both girls attended playgroup from the age of 3 years, they were used to socialising with other children and soon settled in. When the children were around 9 and 7 years old, we felt that a return to work could be considered.

Initially I worked part-time on a voluntary basis so that I could do the 'school run' at both ends of the day, but also so that I could update my laboratory skills and close the career gap on my CV. Such a long career break did have a detrimental effect on my success in job applications. I was now applying as a post-doctoral scientist so I did not want to lower my expectations. However, I was in my late thirties and during my career, break technology had moved on. I was at a distinct disadvantage competing with my peers as an analytical biochemist with limited ICT skills. I spent 2 years constantly applying for jobs before I found what I was looking for.

Once back in full-time employment and with over an hour's commute each way I was still able to continue taking the children to school in the morning and arranged for a childminder's help after school. Their father was able to help when necessary and other members of the family, such as their grandparents and their aunt were very supportive during the school holidays.

After returning to work, I was able to make up for lost time. Fortunately, I have not encountered any discrimination against women or mothers in my profession and I have now reached my career goal as Consultant Clinical Scientist and laboratory manager in a world-renowned teaching hospital. This is the level I would have hoped to have achieved even if I had not had a family. Children and a long career break have not prevented my ultimate achievement but I believe I would have attained this point sooner.

The compromise was definitely the right choice for me. I am fulfilled in both career and family terms and I hope my daughters do not feel they were 'abandoned' too early. To have a successful work/family balance a woman needs to be organised, have family planning and support at home. To focus on a demanding job it is essential that, as a mother, you are confident that the children are safe and happy [this also applies when the offspring have

reached adulthood] this requires support from the family (primarily the father) and friends as well as paid childminders. I am fortunate to have had this support.” (Worthington, 2012: via email)

University of Cape Town

Appendix III

Definitions of a Mother

The following definitions were obtained from a cross section of people and reflect the varying interpretations they have depending on their individual circumstances. These definitions were provided by individuals who come from white, middle-class, South African families.

An older female figure who guides the daughter figure through her life to the best of her abilities. note guides, not controls. – 13 year old, female

Uhhmm... opposite of father? "Mother" is hard to define in one sentence. I guess the mother is the ultimate symbol of life. She gives a new life, she raises that life, she teaches that life, she nurtures that life, she guides. she even goes so far as to choose a mate who has qualities she would like her own offspring to possess, to give them a better chance of "survival", if you know what I mean. – 19 year old, male

A mother is a woman who has a child and the care of her family is of utmost importance. A mother is someone who puts her family first. – 20 year old, male

As in giver of birth? Person who nurtures and raises you? – 25 year old, male

My mum is very special... Mother: A simple word like love. Yet equally complex, and hopelessly limited as a definition for possibly the most important relationship we are all blessed with being born into and out of (notice in this definition, both love and mother are inter-changeable, and deeply linked) Indeed is it not through our mothers that we come to define the concept of love? Of true, endless love, the kind we spend the remainder of our lives seeking? And yet this is all so simple. It is but one element. And even so, not adequately explored. What of Guardian, Guide, Teacher, Mirror, Friend. Virtually every beautiful element in life, has links and roots in this simple word. – 28 year old, male

Keeper of hearts. – 26 year old, male

Uhm. Someone who might have never thought they could give as much as they end up giving. – 26 year old, female

I guess I would say that my definition of a mother is someone who is cares about the well being of others, is comforting & who I feel will know what to do when someone is ill or in a

crisis. Someone who is willing to listen & who has wisdom. Words I associate with mother: love, soft, caring, warm, respectable, not-judgmental. – 22 year old, female

Oh hell I'm not sure! I think that while there's different ways of being a mother, and that one doesn't have to give birth to the mother to be a mother, ("culture"), it's probably uncontroversial to say it's something that a female is. If you're a male you'd be a father (even if, say, you did "motherly" things). Though I don't think there's actually a universal definition aside from its being "something that a female can be". For instance, in a Western setting, because of notions of biological relatedness, a mother doesn't actually have to DO anything at all after giving birth (and not even that if a surrogate is used!) to be a mother. In other settings you may well have to DO something motherly to be mother. – 23 year old, male

Okay, weird example - I saw this programme on crocodiles once. The mama croc lays her eggs on the banks, then keeps watch from the shallows to make sure they are safe. She literally keeps her head above water until her eyes start burning and all kinds of bugs suck at her blood. Not the most practical situation. So I guess that's a good definition - someone who always looks out for your best interest, regardless of reason or practicality. Unconditional love that defies the cold, calculated way in which we interact with each other. – 22 year old, male

A mother is a woman who has children of her own or adopted or fostered children. She can work within the household or out of it...she is usually defined by roles, eg child care.... – 25 year old, female

Female member of family who teaches you about love compassion friendship and respect through example.– 25 year old, female

For me a mother is someone who loves you unconditionally. She is always there for you, through good times and bad times, and even when you mess up completely! She always put your wants and needs before her own. – 23 year old, female

A woman of strength one who has guided, protected and loved unconditionally, someone to look to when lost or led astray, someone I can tell absolutely anything to, my best friend and guardian. One that nurtures and teaches me how to be the best I can be. Being a child who never lived in one place for very long, my mother is home to me. My safe place. – 20 year old, female

My definition of a mother...well I think a mother is someone that you can always count on. A person that is able to look past all your flaws and mistakes and see you for who you are (and not just because she's your mother actually). Also someone that can give you direction in your life, not telling you WHAT to do, but appreciating that you have your own life and that will have to learn things on your own. The difference is, she will always be there to catch you when you fall. My mother is my parent as well as my friend. She gave birth to me, but I'm not only defined as her child and she's not only defined as being my mother. She respects that we both have our own lives but we have been brought together by the universe to enrich each other's lives. So basically a mother to me is someone who loves you unconditionally, prepares you for hardship, and someone you can always talk to for hours and fight with for hours! – 21 year old, female

My definition of a mother would be someone who brings up a child and cares for him/her throughout life, works to instill certain values, loves unconditionally, eventually has to balance protecting the child with respect for his/her individuality and life decisions. Someone that the child can ideally turn to for guidance throughout life. Also someone that the child should support into old age. – 25 year old, female

I can't give you my definition generically of a mother but to me if I were to define my mother it would mean "a person who gives unconditional love and support, let me be an individual person, since I was able to talk with own choices no matter whether there was agreement with her or not, let me find my own way and make my own mistakes no matter how hard it must have been for her at times, always putting what she thought as best as she could to be my interests first before her. The person who no matter what I did or do, says and will continue to say- "you can always come home" "Anyway, I hope your research goes well- do let me know when you have finished- I'd like to read it! I wonder whether you are looking into the issue of gender in particular? Particularly issues of these kinds of things like expected sacrifice that we might have for our mothers- is it same for fathers etc. I'm always interested in issues about what mothers think that they somehow naturally know what is best for the child-often arguing with fathers "who don't do it right" and how women seem to equate that debate with something inherent about motherhood. – 28 year old, female

In its archetypal form the mother is the embodied representation of the creative, life-giving source of existence. The boundless unconditional Yang or Esse or various spiritual traditions. In its literal embodiment within the manifest world of forms Mother is a literal but partial

lived expression of that source, generating new form i.e. birth or in the wider context reproduction. – 31 year old, male

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Epilogue

Young Women Questionnaires

I have included six questionnaires that I passed onto young women, aged between their early and mid-twenties. Each of these women has been brought up in white, middle class families in South Africa. The questions asked concerned their family background, their hope for the future, the role of mothers and fathers, and whether they were happy with these role allocations. My objective was to gauge whether the younger generation of women still have the same ideals as the older generation or what, and if not, how they had changed.

Questionnaire One

How old are you?

23

Do you have an English/Afrikaans background?

Afrikaans

Where did you grow up?

Cape Town, South Africa

How many siblings do you have?

2 Sisters: 21 and 25

Are you parents married?

Yes. 29 years in September 2012.

Was your mother a working mother?

Yes and no. She worked for a while when my younger sister was three. Other than that she was a stay at home mother.

Before you turned school age how were you cared for?

Mother, at home.

Do you hope to marry one day?

Yes, I think marriage is a great commitment to make to another person you are in love with and whom you care greatly for.

When do you feel would be the best time to marry?

I feel it is best to wait until you are ready. No one else can make that decision for you.

Do you hope to have children?

Yes. I like children and love the idea of being so close to another person to share the love only a mother can.

When do you feel would be the best time to have children?

When you can provide sufficient time and care for the child/children.

Have you studied?

Yes. BSc in Conservation Ecology and busy with my MSc in Zoology

What are your career aspirations?

I want to be a conservation journalist.

If you had children, would you want to be a working mother?

Probably not at first, but eventually I'll want to return back to work.

Do you feel women/men, husbands/wives have different roles in relationships/marriages concerning the home, childcare, work?

I do indeed. But I can't say what. I guess it depends on the family's situation. I would like to work one day, but I also want my husband to be able to care for me and our family.

If you answered yes to above, are you happy with these roles?

I'm sure I will be once I start a family.

If you answered no to above, how would you hope to see these roles change?

N/A

Do you feel that the choices you make regarding marriage, children and roles of parents has been influenced by your upbringing?

Yes, I do. I am fortunate to have grown up in a healthy family and would probably base my decisions on what I've learned from my parents. Also, looking at other families will probably influence my decisions.

Do you have any fears regarding marriage?

Probably the fear of the unknown. Marriages fall apart constantly, and you don't know if it will happen to you.

Do you have any fears regarding having children?

I don't want my children to hate/dislike me.

What do you perceive to be the greatest challenge white, middle-class mothers face in current day SA?

I think going back into the work place. For years it was assumed that the mother stays at home with the children and I believe a lot of people still view it like that.

What do you perceive to be the greatest challenge white, middle-class fathers face in current day SA?

I guess juggling work and time with the family.

Questionnaire Two

How old are you?

25 years old.

Do you have an English/Afrikaans background?

Mom is South African (English speaking, of Austrian parents) and Dad is American.

Where did you grow up?

Moving around a lot – born in SA, moved to China, back to SA, Austria, India and USA.

How many siblings do you have?

I have a brother who is 22 years old.

Are you parents married?

Yes.

Was your mother a working mother?

She worked full and then part time but was not the main family provider. She worked in several positions including secretarial jobs at the American Embassy, community event coordination, teaching English as a second language,

Before you turned school age how were you cared for?

We had a nanny who moved with us and cared for us at home. She retired recently.

Do you hope to marry one day?

I suppose so – not any time soon though. I believe it would depend on my partner and if we had been together for several years, perhaps if we wanted to have children. I would want to marry to reaffirm our commitment to one another, to start a family.

When do you feel would be the best time to marry?

It depends on the person. I have a family friend who just got engaged, she is 22. For me, I never would have wanted to commit to someone at such a young age, but if they are confident in their decision then that it is a personal choice. However, I believe that it is important to have your own independent life and experiences, to explore, get lost and mess up a few times - to know who you are as a person so that you can be the best that you can with your partner and future family. I could imagine myself marrying at age 29-30ish, but it would depend on where I am in my relationship and what type of commitment he were willing to make to me.

Do you hope to have children?

Yes, but not until 30s. I think it would be wonderful to bring life into the world, to develop relationships as a mother, to build a family.

When do you feel would be the best time to have children?

From a very practical point of view – I would say only when it's financially viable. It would also depend on the stage in a couple's relationship – and where their other commitments (e.g. work) lie... OR if they are willing to both make sacrifices towards personal commitments to support each other throughout pregnancy and early days of childhood.

Have you studied?

Yes, pending MA Social Anthropology.

What are your career aspirations?

I would like to either teach or do research consulting. I would like to teach yoga as a hobby and "side" career – either way, career would play a big role in my life.

If you had children, would you want to be a working mother?

I would want to be a working mother, but only to a certain degree and on my terms (which may be hard to negotiate!) I would not want to sacrifice my career and personal development (income is also an issue, especially if the spouse is not a primary provider), but at the same time, I imagine that I would have a hard time justifying going to work an 8 hour day with children at home. Perhaps part time, home based consulting or starting a business would provide for flexibility.

Do you feel women/men, husbands/wives have different roles in relationships/marriages concerning the home, childcare, work?

I think that taking care of the home and family should ideally function in partnership. There should not be different roles, but as it generally seems to play out, I think that yes there are different roles that emerge.

I don't think the man needs to be the core provider (though society and men themselves generally reaffirm this idea). He may be equally so a provider by taking up greater home and childcare responsibilities. If a woman is at home with children, it should be recognised that this is a form of work, of commitment, and it should not be seen as solely "housework". Being an active and involved parent would probably encourage greater personal development of the child – this is important to the future of society.

If you answered yes to above, are you happy with these roles?

We still live in a very patriarchal society where many men – no matter how open minded they may be – still have some expectation of women as caregivers. In general I think there is still a lot of enacted stereotype about these roles, which are reinforced by public culture – e.g. media, movies, our generation following along with that which our parents do in the home. I think education – and encouraging more women in higher education and management roles – will be the only way to create a more equal relationship in terms of roles in home and childcare work.

If you answered no to above, how would you hope to see these roles change?

See above.

Do you feel that the choices you make regarding marriage, children and roles of parents has been influenced by your upbringing? If so how? If not, has anything else had an influence on you?

I think that my parents have provided a really great example of parenthood – especially moving around so much, they really had to work in partnership in order to keep the family together and they have a fantastic mutually respectful and loving relationship. They have influenced my belief in marriage and desire to marry someday.

I also think that through my parents I see the importance of family and in-laws in a marriage. Of what it means to "marry into" a family.

I think that being in a long-term relationship has not only influenced my ideas of marriage, love and the future, but has also reinforced my views – as mentioned above, about the importance of having independence, pursuing your own goals unique of his, of critically examining a relationship.

Do you have any fears regarding marriage?

I'm ok with the possibility of not getting married, which some may see as a fear.

Do you have any fears regarding having children?

The idea of bringing up a child is scary – but seems too far away at this time to really "fear".

What do you perceive to be the greatest challenge white, middle-class mothers face in current day SA?

Single motherhood and/or being a young mother. Young mothers probably wouldn't have the opportunity to study further – or it wouldn't be so easy (especially regarding childcare). This changes her entire future. It must also be a tremendous challenge for single mothers to support a family.

What do you perceive to be the greatest challenge white, middle-class fathers face in current day SA?

I would say maintaining job and financial security. It is a challenge for young white men, in particular, to find and secure jobs in SA. Since men in South Africa seem to typically be the main income providers, these dilemmas create further challenges for the family.

Questionnaire Three

How old are you?

21

Do you have an English/Afrikaans background?

Afrikaans

Where did you grow up?

Pretoria / Somerset West

How many siblings do you have?

Two - 15 year old brother and 9 year old sister.

Are you parents married?

My mom divorced my dad in 1999. My dad remarried in 2007.

Was your mother a working mother?

Yes, she is a musician - she works freelance.

Before you turned school age how were you cared for?

My mom and my nanny, Emily cared for me. When my brother was born in 1998, we got another nanny.

Do you hope to marry one day?

Yes, I like the idea of spending the rest of your life with the one you love, and marriage just makes it concrete.

When do you feel would be the best time to marry?

Probably from 25 upwards.

Do you hope to have children?

I'm not sure yet.

When do you feel would be the best time to have children?

Definitely from 30 upwards.

Have you studied?

Yes, I studied Drama for one year at Stellenbosch University.

What are your career aspirations?

To be a successful actress, director and writer.

If you had children, would you want to be a working mother?

Yes. I don't want to be a stay at home mom - I still have my own life to live, not just my children's.

Do you feel women/men, husbands/wives have different roles in relationships/marriages concerning the home, childcare, work?

A mother is typically more inclined to childcare I suppose, but I believe all roles should be equal between men and women.

If you answered yes to above, are you happy with these roles? Please explain.

N/A

If you answered no to above, how would you hope to see these roles change? Please explain.

I would like to see society encourage men to be equal to their wives, and to stop the dogma of different roles for different sexes.

Do you feel that the choices you make regarding marriage, children and roles of parents has been influenced by your upbringing?

Yes, definitely. My mom has brought me up to know that both sexes are equal, and that it is unfair to discriminate against women or to see them as the "poorer" sex.

Do you have any fears regarding marriage?

Yes, I am scared that it could put unnecessary pressure on a relationship.

Do you have any fears regarding having children?

Yes, I am scared that I won't be a good mother and that my children grow up in a world that is not so good to live in.

What do you perceive to be the greatest challenge white, middle-class mothers face in current day SA?

Definitely discrimination in the work place (i.e. BEE and equal opportunity companies). The fact that it's not easy for them to get a job in South Africa puts immense pressure on them financially and socially.

What do you perceive to be the greatest challenge white, middle-class fathers face in current day SA?

Also discrimination in the work place. It is even harder for white, middle-class fathers to get a job or maintain a steady income than it is for white, middle-class females. The pressure to financially support your family is extreme.

Please add further information that you feel is important that I have not mentioned above.

Twenty years ago, it was much easier for white middle-class families to bring up children in a stable and good environment. Nowadays it is becoming more and more difficult to raise your children the way in which you were raised. If you come from a family with money, it may take away some of the pressure, but if you don't, it is a constant battle you have to fight to keep your head above water.

Questionnaire Four

How old are you?

21, turning 22 in April

Do you have an English/Afrikaans background?

English

Where did you grow up?

I was born in Johannesburg and moved to Somerset West when I was 7 and moved to Cape Town when I was 17.

How many siblings do you have?

I have a 20 year old brother.

Are you parents married?

Yes, they have been married for 22 years.

Was your mother a working mother?

My father is an entrepreneur and my mother has always been involved in his business but she has mostly worked from home. When she needed to go into the office we would often go with her and were happy to do so.

Before you turned school age how were you cared for?

We were at home with my mom mainly. We had full time, live-in nannies also but never really spent too much time with them. We also attended pre-school but for our own development.

Do you hope to marry one day?

Yes. On the realistic side, it's the secured partnership, a bonded relationship that's not easily broken when things get tougher, especially when starting your own family. On the romantic side of it, I think there comes a time when you realise that the person you are with, you want with you always.

When do you feel would be the best time to marry?

When you are at the age that you have figured out exactly what you want from life, which happens at different times for different people. It is definitely not before you are well into your career, know where you are headed and financially independent.

Do you hope to have children?

Yes. I've always loved kids. I've been brought up in a very big extended family and young kids have always been around and very much part of my life. The thought of not having children has never crossed my mind.

When do you feel would be the best time to have children?

For me it would be when I am married, financially secure and able to work mainly from home.

Have you studied?

Yes. Started off with a Bachelor of Science in Property Development but currently finishing my Bachelor of Commerce specialising in Entrepreneurship.

What are your career aspirations?

I have an extreme need to achieve and have a burning desire to be my own boss. I don't see myself being part of a large corporate organisation and having a nine to five but rather creating jobs, and developing and uplifting new industries in a country that I believe has endless opportunity.

If you had children, would you want to be a working mother?

Yes. I wouldn't at all be satisfied with just being a stay at home mom, but I wouldn't want my kids to be brought up by external help. My ideal situation would then being able to be in a position where I can work from home (having achieved my main goals before starting a family), or bring my kids to the office. I'd therefore have to have my company established enough to delegate big tasks to subordinate management.

Do you feel women/men, husbands/wives have different roles in relationships/marriages concerning the home, childcare, work? If so what?

I do believe there are naturally different roles. With regards to home situations, I guess I am a living contradiction where I am extremely ambitious and need to be successful in my own career and achieve my own goals but I see myself as also being quite domestic. It comes with being female I think. I am maternal, and I am a caretaker. I've always strived to make my partner happy, and I in all honesty gain quite a considerable amount of enjoyment from taking care of their needs, probably due to the subconscious femininity that comes with it. Not to sound like a 1950s housewife but I've always really enjoyed cooking, and making my living space comfortable. If I were to live with someone who was rearranging our scatter cushions,

I'd find that confusing. I am also more drawn to more masculine men who wouldn't know where to start with domestic tasks. I wouldn't expect my partner to run circles around me. It would actually make me feel uncomfortable. With regards to childcare, mothers are mothers and there is obviously an extreme bond created when a woman has a baby. Not that the father should be any less involved with their upbringing. It should be 50/50 but each parent in their roles corresponding to their gender. Women are also just more aware of finer details, for instance, getting the kids ready for school. I think most men wouldn't take a second look if their child was wearing their pants the wrong way around. Work wise, I think men and women these days are close on equally ambitious in their personal goals. Overall, I genuinely believe that men are better at some tasks, and women others. It does, however, totally differ from person to person and relationship to relationship; you just have to figure out the most successful comfortable way according to each partner's strengths and weaknesses. I do believe these roles should be defined in the early stages of a family's development though.

If you answered yes to above, are you happy with these roles?

Yes. Please refer to above answer.

If you answered no to above, how would you hope to see these roles change?

N/A

Do you feel that the choices you make regarding marriage, children and roles of parents has been influenced by your upbringing? If so how? If not, has anything else had an influence on you?

Definitely. My parents have had a very successful marriage as well as a business partnership, making the idea and concept appealing. They are partners in everything. They also had vastly different roles with regards to my brother and my upbringing, but always helped each other when the one was unable to perform a task. An example being; my mom always taking us to school but my dad helping out when she was unable to. It shouldn't be a fight, over who is doing what on a certain day. It shouldn't be a tit for tat. "I cooked last night so you cook tonight". It would seem like that philosophy would just lead to confusion and conflict. As children growing up in that type of situation where parents have roles, you completely understand who to go to when you need something. I believe the roles and tasks should be well understood and sorted out at an early stage in the family's development in order to have a successful and happy marriage.

Do you have any fears regarding marriage?

I don't really think about it enough to generate fears surrounding it. If I had to think now though, I guess you never really know if a marriage will be successful or not. The divorce rate is extremely high, but I don't see divorce as being an option for me, going back to my idea of knowing exactly what you want from life before getting married.

Do you have any fears regarding having children?

I may be overly ambitious when it comes to wanting to be 100% there for my kids and still run a company. In reality, there will definitely be a certain degree of compromise on both sides.

What do you perceive to be the greatest challenge white, middle-class mothers face in current day SA?

South African men are still, to this day, somewhat stuck in their chauvinistic beliefs. Being a mother in a high-powered position can definitely create a degree of conflict in any work situation, where you aren't taken seriously enough just for being female. Being a stay at home mom has also become less of an option due to South African family's financial constraints.

What do you perceive to be the greatest challenge white, middle-class fathers face in current day SA?

I think as times are changing, and women are becoming more empowered, men are still trying their best to maintain their masculinity. We are in this strange transitional phase where roles

are definitely still confused. White males in South Africa are also at a huge disadvantage with regards to finding and securing a job with sustainable income.

Questionnaire Five

How old are you?

21

Do you have an English/Afrikaans background?

Afrikaans

Where did you grow up?

Bellville, Cape Town.

How many siblings do you have?

Three siblings: Brother (28), Sister (25), Sister (18)

Are you parents married?

Yes, 31 years (!)

Was your mother a working mother?

Yes. She's a physiotherapist with her own practice, which meant that she only worked 4 days a week, half days (and the occasional weekend). In her off time she mostly drove us around to after school activities.

Before you turned school age how were you cared for?

At home. We had a full-time, live-in housekeeper (my second mom) who is still working for my parents and we were lucky enough to have all four of my grandparents as neighbours (in their two respective houses), where we spent a lot of time.

Do you hope to marry one day?

Yes! I still believe that marriage has a lot of value & have the greatest respect for it. I guess it's a promise of commitment, in a sense.

When do you feel would be the best time to marry?

When you are financially able and emotionally ready.

Do you hope to have children?

Not sure. Not at all at this time of my life or in the foreseeable future; it's a huge responsibility and it's life-changing, so I'll have to be very sure that I (and my partner) want a child before we do.

When do you feel would be the best time to have children?

When you're emotionally ready and financially able to.

Have you studied?

Yes, Graphic Design.

What are your career aspirations?

I want to have a job that I can work hard at, be good at and make a living off, but I never want my career to be the most important thing in my life. I want it to be something I can leave at the office and not bring home with me.

If you had children, would you want to be a working mother?

Yes, I would not know what to do with myself if I didn't work, but if I could only work half day or from home to still be with the children, it would be ideal.

Do you feel women/men, husbands/wives have different roles in relationships/marriages concerning the home, childcare, work?

Yes. I still believe in the traditional roles of the woman being the caregiver and the man taking care of everything (protection, maintaining the house, etc.) but the two roles are definitely not removed from each other and both roles must be supported by one another.

If you answered yes to above, are you happy with these roles?

Yes, to a certain degree. There must be mutual effort put in by both roles and showing appreciation for each other's effort is important.

If you answered no to above, how would you hope to see these roles change?

N/A

Do you feel that the choices you make regarding marriage, children and roles of parents has been influenced by your upbringing?

Yes. Having come from a stable, loving home and having friends that did not have a stable upbringing, I realise how extremely important it is for love and trust to be present; seeing as that is the foundations of which stability is formed.

Do you have any fears regarding marriage?

Not really.

Do you have any fears regarding having children?

Yes. I fear that there won't be enough money or I won't be a good enough parent.

What do you perceive to be the greatest challenge white, middle-class mothers face in current day SA?

Balancing everything on their plates: Work, children, housekeeping & cooking, social gatherings and getting enough sleep. It's almost impossible not to work in these struggling economic times.

What do you perceive to be the greatest challenge white, middle-class fathers face in current day SA?

Having to work hard to provide for their families, finding time to spend with them and getting enough sleep.

Questionnaire Six

How old are you?

23

Do you have an English/Afrikaans background?

Afrikaans

Where did you grow up?

Villiersdorp, Western Cape

How many siblings do you have?

Three sisters - 25,28,30

Are you parents married?

Yes, 32 years

Was your mother a working mother?

No, admin on the farm.

Before you turned school age how were you cared for?

At home

Do you hope to marry one day?

Yes, always wanted to.

When do you feel would be the best time to marry?

Whenever both are settled, and can provide for each other.

Do you hope to have children?

Yes, I love children.

When do you feel would be the best time to have children?

After at least 3 years of marriage.

Have you studied?

Yes, BSc Conservation Ecology , MSc Zoology.

What are your career aspirations?

Carry on with working in nature conservation.

If you had children, would you want to be a working mother?

Yes, would like to share in providing for my family.

Do you feel women/men, husbands/wives have different roles in relationships/marriages concerning the home, childcare, work?

Different roles, but equal in importance.

If you answered yes to above, are you happy with these roles?

Yes, both parties have significant roles the others can't fill, which is necessary for success.

If you answered no to above, how would you hope to see these roles change?

N/A

Do you feel that the choices you make regarding marriage, children and roles of parents has been influenced by your upbringing?

My upbringing in a happy marriage has probably influenced my decision to get married and have children.

Do you have any fears regarding marriage?

Maybe to concentrate not to lose your independence as an individual.

Do you have any fears regarding having children? Please explain.

Yes, letting them go into this world.

What do you perceive to be the greatest challenge white, middle-class mothers face in current day SA?

Juggling work and spending time with family.

What do you perceive to be the greatest challenge white, middle-class fathers face in current day SA?

N/A

University of Cape Town

Father Interviews

I have included three interviews conducted with white, middle class fathers living in Cape Town between their late twenties and mid-thirties. Each of these men were brought up in white, middle class families in South Africa. The questions asked concerned their family background, their hope for the future, the role of mothers and fathers, and whether they were happy with these role allocations. My objective was to gauge whether fathers' experience the same challenges of parenthood as mothers, and if not, how they differed.

Interview: Zachary

- Q: Seeing as you lived in London, did you have children when you were there?
- A: No. I've got two boys, Peter is turning 5 now, end of this week, Friday, and Michael is turning 3 in April.
- Q: And are you married?
- A: No, I just got engaged a week ago.
- Q: Congratulations.
- A: Thank you. It's about 5, 6 years later so...
- Q: And is your fiancé from South Africa?
- A: Yes.
- Q: A Capetonian?
- A: No, she's from Port Elizabeth; she's been here for about 10 years.
- Q: Okay and so when did you go to the UK? How long ago?
- A: I came back in 2006.
- Q: Could you tell me a bit about your employment background? has it changed since being in a relationship or with kids?
- A: From having kids it's changed quite a lot, I mean it's made me a bit more ... look I've always had a drive to do my own thing and kind of pursue my own thing. I've always been an entrepreneur from a very young age and I've always ended up working for someone but always doing something on the side. As soon as we had our first boy, Peter, everything just changed. I resigned immediately and I just went full drive into doing my own thing and I've just been channelling that. But ja, since that happened I went from two, complete opposites. I went from fashion to the tattoo industry. I've now got a supply company for the tattoo industry and a tattoo shop, so it's completely, it's still my own thing but it's two separate industries.
- Q: So you own a tattoo shop?
- A: Yes.
- Q: And have owned it since?
- A: This shop I've owned since last year August, it's been just over a year.
- Q: Okay so you didn't own a business before the tattoo shop?
- A: Yes I did, before this one, we had a brand and a natural chain store was providing me, we had two brands, we did corporate clothes and fashion. But it wasn't my thing, I couldn't ... I couldn't do it and it's pretty strainful because [my partner Sarah and I] worked together and it places a strain on your relationship so ja basically I took myself and my share out of the company, financial share, and I started something that I've always wanted to do, and okay I was in a position financially to do it, because I wanted the freedom ja.
- Q: So was it quite an easy transition to start opening your own business?

- A: No, not at all. No the industry is quite - I mean you do an apprenticeship before you start tattooing. I've been doing tattooing from a fairly young age, I've been interested in tattooing, I've always wanted to tattoo but it wasn't really every like you know, a realistic option to do, the apprenticeship you kind of don't earn any money, but I was in a kind of financial position to pull out and do it. And one thing led to another, I was in another shop with another friend, working there or just hanging out there, and just the way it unfolded we decided to open up a new shop so ja that's just how it happened.
- Q: Is your fiancé still working in fashion?
- A: In fashion, ja.
- Q: And in her own business?
- A: She's still got the business, but she's evolved. She doesn't do YDE any more; she's doing a completely new supply service. She supplies all the main chains. Obviously the business has grown to the point where she wanted - everything we did at that stage was just professional for business. That was the route at that time, that option, so once she started the bigger supply things it was more lucrative so she slowly worked, and cancelled basically everything else to pursue that.
- Q: So because you own your tattoo parlour and your fiancé owns ...
- A: She owns a clothing company yes.
- Q: Does that mean that your work often filters through to the evenings and the weekends as well?
- A: Oh yes every day. We've got quite a good understanding, a schedule how we do it, in the mornings we do a routine together, so in the mornings we get up say 05:00-06:00, so then we get the kids ready, make breakfast, do the lunchboxes. That's our family routine, and then we go to the gym together. We only recently started that because it just felt like we needed it because since I started this shop I mean I haven't been surfing any more, I haven't been skating, so there isn't any actual exercise, so it feels like I'm getting a little unfit. So ja we started gymming together which is quite fun, it's like an hour and a half to see her every morning after the kids get dropped off at school. And then I come to the shop and she does her thing and then she's a little bit more mobile so she's able to pick up the kids from school, drop them at the house, we've got a nanny there that looks after them in the afternoon and then from there she will do a drop off and maybe go back to the office if needed or she will just work from home. I normally get at home between 18:00 and 19:00 at night and do the evening thing. So Sarah watches the boys in that little section, so when I get home I do the boys and do their baths and get them to bed and then she carries on with whatever work she needs to do. And then after that then we both work if we have to or Sarah will chill and I normally sit and draw till the early hours of the morning, maybe 01:00 or 02:00 most mornings.
- Q: Do you have to come into the studio over the weekends?
- A: Yes, I do weekends. Sarah doesn't do weekends, I do the weekends and we rotate though like every second Saturday I'm at the shop. If needed. If I don't have appointments on Saturdays I avoid coming in so if I do have an appointments on Saturdays then I come in and I'm at the shop from about 11:00 until 16:00 or 17:00 in the afternoon. So Sundays is our only real family day so then we go hiking or we do something outdoors.
- Q: Is your nanny a live-in nanny?
- A: No. No, she comes in from about 13:00 or 14:00 until about 17:00 in the afternoon, so it's only a half day, in the afternoon. She cleans the house a bit and stuff like that.
- Q: Okay so your children are old enough now to be at school, what was it like when they

- were younger, was the routine different?
- A: It was a little bit different because we also worked from home at that stage, well because we worked together, our overheads were small, we had a bigger house though, and we used the rooms as a outlet, and we had a full time nanny so if we were working we had a nanny. The kids were around us, we were among them, there was always the nanny to help us out and look after the kids and stuff. So things have definitely changed, but it's also the way the businesses have evolved, both of them, and how more separated we've become in the senses of the family during the day, so the time has also become limited. So but ja, it's quite challenging, to like maintain that routine.
- Q: Do you feel that the dynamics now between you and your fiancé are better now that you're working separately?
- A: Oh ja. Totally, just like day and night. Because working together, having kids together, being together, it's a lot of strain, and you get frustrated with each other and irritated easily, and now it's fine, now I can't wait to get home and spend time with Sarah and with the kids. Previously we didn't get that excitement because you're there the whole time. With the kids it's not so much, I mean the excitement is always there, it's always fun in a sense, but our flame did burn out for a while. Our relationship took a lot of strain. I pulled out and that was one of the big reasons. So ja I think if I didn't pull out of the business we probably wouldn't have been together, that's how far it went at one stage. But now it's a completely different thing, I mean we've finally got engaged so it's revived the whole thing pretty much.
- Q: So when is the wedding?
- A: Next year, hopefully around this time.
- Q: In summer.
- A: Ja well hopefully in summer, I mean I can't get married in winter.
- Q: Are you going to do have a beach wedding?
- A: We're going to have a garden wedding. So ja, we'll do something small, something intimate, we're not very public people in that sense?
- Q: Ja, like a small wedding.
- A: We'll do like maybe fifty people. So a small little intimate wedding. Somewhere outside Cape Town, maybe a couple of hours out, somewhere we can spend the night.
- Q: A romantic party?
- A: Ja exactly, dance the night away.
- Q: Do you have any animals in the home?
- A: Yes, we have a massive St Bernard dog; he is 1 year old now. We adopted him about 4 months ago. Another family had him but they didn't really have the time for him so he's a great dog, he's amazing with the kids, they literally ride him like a pony around the house, and before that we had two Bassett Hounds and the one passed away and the other one we eventually gave to a friend of ours in Oudtshoorn which is in the Eastern Cape and he stays on a big farm and he's got two other Bassets, so it's very nice.
- Q: Do you find that having a pet, I mean adds more stress if you've got something else to care for?
- A: Not so much. I've always been an animal person and we were without a dog for about a year, maybe year and a half and it got to a point where it get pretty hectic for me because I've always had a dog so it's pretty weird for me, and it was weird for me with the kids not having a dog. When I was their age I always had a pet, had a dog and I mean it played a big part in my childhood and also because I love pets I decided to get another dog. I mean we were a little bit hesitant at first because of the sheer size

of him but I went ahead and did it. Against her word but I mean now she loves him, now she's the one that loves him the most. In a sense it's unified us a little bit more, because we do outings for Rover, because he's such a big dog. I mean we go for a hike and things and its outdoors, and he's become part of the family so he's also become a focus. And especially with responsibility for with Peter, the eldest, because Peter feeds him in the morning and feeds him at night. He doesn't do it out of his own, I have to remind him and so on, he's slowly doing it on his own which is quite cool and it's taught him a bit of responsibility. I can see there's a bit of a change there because he's now the one telling me that we have to take Rover for a walk and we have to groom him and that stuff, which is cool. I think there's a lot of pros and cons having a pet. I mean it is like having another child, he demands lots of attention most of the time, especially because he's only just turned a year, he's still a puppy.

Q: And is he full sized yet?

A: Almost full sized but he weighs about 60kg which is massive.

Q: Does he eat a lot of food?

A: Ja, he eats quite a lot of food, a lot of dog food though. In a weird way I think it unified us a bit more, the responsibility we all share, we all love him and enjoy him.

Q: Is this the only pet you have?

A: He's the only one ja.

Q: And do you think you would consider having more children in the future?

A: I would. I would. I mean having kids has probably been the best thing that ever happened to me, it kind of grounded me a lot, and I'm a lot more focussed. And after having Peter and then having Michael, because we hadn't thought of being able to love another child as much as we loved Peter, it just comes naturally so there's just no question about it.

Q: Is there two years difference between them?

A: Two years yes. So now it's also become financially challenging. I mean we work harder to earn more money to spend more time with our kids, but we end up working all the time which you don't really want to do. So from a financial point of view, financially it's possible to have more kids, but at this stage in time we've also just come to a point where the kids are a little bit older, they entertain themselves a little bit, we've got a little bit more free time, so it's hard, it would be a challenge, it will almost be like a bit of a setback. And we are a full house, I mean we're four plus Rover, the St Bernard, so it's a bit hectic. If I could I would, if I didn't have other responsibilities like the shop and Sarah's business, if I had more time I would but ... I would love to but no it would just be a bit too much, I think it would be a bit much for now.

Q: And is your fiancé, is she in a similar position?

A: She's really pushing it because she wants a little girl. So when she was pregnant for the second time she thought it was going to be a little girl. Maybe in a year or two we can consider it again but also if you wait too long the gap's big, and I personally enjoy being a young dad. Sarah got pregnant with Peter when I was only 22, so I was really young, I mean it wasn't planned or anything. Ja I think it's awesome being a young dad, the stuff I do now, I mean the stuff I do with Peter, it's an excuse to be a kid again, doing super things in public and getting away with it, so it's super fun. So the idea now of being an older dad, like with a younger child is also, I think that scares me more than anything else. I don't think I'll be able to give, in about 10 years time the same sort of attention and the interaction I'm giving my kids at the moment, so ...

Q: Okay and was your second son planned though?

A: No. But we were talking about it and we were like ja, if Peter had a brother it's going

to have to be a year, maybe a 2 years gap and it's about the time that we started talking about it that she actually conceived. I think it was planned subconsciously because we were talking about it. But it wasn't full on we should do this, let's try and have another baby.

Q: What were your thoughts and experiences with the first child and how do you think that contrasted to your fiancé's experience?

A: It's weird, we didn't know each other for that long, we were in quite a good relationship, we were dating, we went on this massive road trip for about six weeks together, we were madly in love, and then Sarah was very career driven and so was I, when she fell pregnant at first it was a bit of a scare. I mean she's older than me, she's about 5 years older than me, so for me it was more scary than it was for her, and for the first week or two it was a scary thought and we slowly got into the idea, and because we felt about each other the way we did, it wasn't strange, it wasn't weird to a certain extent, and yes it was amazing, I think about from month 3 it was awesome, we really got into it.

Q: Three months into the pregnancy?

A: Into the pregnancy yes, it was really awesome, we went full out, she did one buying trip I think on month 4, and when she got back she gave up her apartment, moved into my apartment, so we did merge together and everything, it was awesome, it was probably one of the best things that ever happened to me. It was cool, it was weird, it was this complete fantasy dream world thing and then the moment Peter was born it was like just this overwhelming punch of reality in the face but I mean I ended up on the floor with the oxygen so that's the extent of how overwhelmed I was. So it was awesome, it was amazing; it's probably the coolest experience I ever went through.

Q: And where did the actual birth take place?

A: In Cape Town Medi-Clinic. Sarah was in a private room which was awesome; she was alone in a room, a big room, with a big balcony. She was in there for about 3 or 4 days, she had a C section.

Q: So were you working at that time?

A: Oh no, I took paternity leave because that's the time, we were still both actually working for the same company where we met, so Sarah took maternity, and I took, I think I took 2 weeks paternity leave which they granted to me which was pretty cool.

Q: How long did Sarah take maternity leave?

A: It was 3 months, ja 3 months or so, and in that time that's when we said after she got home we decided like this is it, she gave in her resignation, I think she worked about 3 days so then we started our own business, so it was right after the birth that we started our own business.

Q: Right, and do you feel perhaps that you would have like to have had more paternity leave?

A: Oh yes, for me it was cool because I resigned so from there I was on paternity leave until Peter was about 2 years old because we had the business from home and everything. So it was very good, it worked out nice for us, fairly well, I mean it wasn't like we struggled or anything. We were at home all the time which was fun and it's fun being in the city, we get to go out and get around and take Peter and we go to the park or whatever, so it was fun. We had quite a cool three bed-roomed apartment there and everything, but as soon as Michael was born we moved out to where it's a bit cheaper and we had quite a nice yard, for pretty much the same price. It's pretty nice, old Victorian, wooden floors.

Q: Very nice and you get also the garden for the dogs.

A: Ja, but also for the kids.

- Q: Before the actual birth did you go to prenatal classes?
- A: We went to a couple; we found it a little bit weird. I think we were probably the youngest parents there and I think immediately in the society that we are, like I'm a young dude, I'm tattooed. Sarah's parents when they met me, well from the start as soon as they found out Sarah was pregnant they thought I was the guy who was going to pack up and leave, it's a preconceived mindset. The prenatal classes we went to were much older people and it was weird. I didn't get along with any of the dads. Ja it was kind of like they singled me out because I was the youngest with tats and stuff, I don't know if you've noticed, but especially in Cape Town it's very cliquey and also like if you had a party or anything for that matter, there's always like cliques that form in groups and stuff like that. It was the boys; I was just this younger dude. You try and make conversation but it's like you're not on that level, you weren't in the same mindset or same lives or whatever, so it was always a little cliquey. I was very involved in the pregnancy and still very involved with the kids, and I found a lot of the dads were stiff and we decided not to do it. So we actually did pregnancy yoga, it was cool; I mean that worked out a lot better.
- Q: I've heard about that.
- A: Ja that was awesome.
- Q: How long did you do that for?
- A: For Sarah - well Sarah did that from 4 months into her pregnancy until about a couple of weeks before she gave birth. So throughout the whole pregnancy, like twice a week we went ja.
- Q: Do you notice any parenting differences between you and older fathers?
- A: Both my boys are at Montessori here, so a lot of the parents there are more open minded. I think Montessori schools generally cater for more open minded people, and not religious or anything like that which is pretty cool to me. But there are definitely, a lot of people like the older generation who are a little bit more stiff, like I mean they try and stop kids from doing certain things, and kids will be kids, with Peter the more room you give him the less challenging they are at the end. If Peter wants to bang something, he can do what he wants to a certain extent, but if Peter gets out of hand I'll say "Listen don't do that", or whatever. And ja at school it's very strange because I'll drop Peter off in the mornings and give him a kiss and a high five and fist thump, a lot of the other parents don't do that, especially the dads. I get along with all the moms at the school but I don't get along with most of the dads at the school. I don't know why that is, it's just I think I look a little intimidating because I'm tattooed and all that kind of stuff.
- Q: You're responsible for dropping off and Sarah is responsible for picking up?
- A: We both drop them off in the mornings.
- Q: And she picks them up?
- A: She picks them up. We share a car. In the mornings we drop them off and then we go to the gym and then we go to the shop and then she goes and then I normally catch a cab back.
- Q: Do you think that she has perhaps a different kind of relationship with the parents at the school?
- A: Oh yes, very. She communicates a lot easier with people than I do. So she's a lot more open, a lot more bubbly, she's a lot more approachable. I get along with all the kids at the school which is good, I know all the kids' names and I'll high five them and all that kind of stuff, but when it comes to the parents it's just kind of hey, hey, and how are you doing. I don't know, maybe it's just my personality, the way I am. Because I won't say I'm anti social but I don't talk to people easily so that's the way it is. But

- it's weird because I'll get into conversations with the moms I get along with, because they ask me how are you, how you doing, how's Sarah. The dads don't ask me much. I think the thing is with maybe testosterone you know, it's weird.
- Q: It's interesting that you mentioned the different ages between the parents, because a lot of the women I interviewed actually were in their forties and fifties, so it's a completely different age group but I mean a lot of their husbands' parenting technique would be to spend most of their time at work and the women were left with the majority of childcare.
- A: Ja, with the majority of the stuff.
- Q: But speaking to younger people you can see that there's a shift now between men being much more involved in general.
- A: I mean all the other people that I know, the guys that I do get along with at the Montessori are a few years older, and we all get along, it's pretty weird, like those are the couple of guys, it will be like how you doing, how's your boys, that sort of stuff, and the older guys there we don't really talk, we greet each other and you smile and you nod and you like just drop off your kids sort of thing, so it's weird.
- Q: What age children does the Montessori school cater for?
- A: Peter is there, this is his final year at 5, so they start off at 3 years, they just opened a new little toddler class at 2 years, 2 until 3 and then they join a class from 3 to 5, they can stay there for 6 years but Peter is going to Pre-primary. It's a 1 year induction to smooth them into the primary so he's already made friends and stuff like that so it's just easier for them to change to the new school.
- Q: How easy was it to organise a place at the primary school?
- A: It was pretty difficult. Because the primary school is booked up until 2014, and luckily Sarah's dad knows the principal of the school, so he got in there.
- Q: Did you have your heart set on that particular one?
- A: On that particular one yes. There were a couple of schools that we did take a look at. There's another Montessori school that caters for up to 12 year olds, then from there they have to go to a normal school which I think would be harder for them to adapt after being 12, just hitting the teen stage and then having to adapt to this whole new school, which would be difficult. So Peter is going to a public school. It's an Afrikaans school; it's a really good school. I think the weird thing is he's in an English Montessori; he's bilingual, sorry we're Afrikaans, so he's bilingual. I think we've both got a bit of a patriotic thing about him going to an Afrikaans school, but it's a very open minded, more open minded Afrikaans school which is cool, not sort of like old, narrow minded.
- Q: Do they teach in Afrikaans?
- A: Yes, they teach in Afrikaans, ja. But Peter is bilingual, he's fluent in Afrikaans and English and he's got a bit of French going so it's cool.
- Q: And do you think you'll send your younger son there as well?
- A: Yes. Possibly, we'll see when he gets there, because I don't think we'll move out of Cape Town any time soon so then he'll definitely go there.
- Q: I have a question about parenting styles. Do you find that your parenting styles and your fiancés are similar or do they contrast?
- A: They are similar in little things, but they clash at some point because Sarah is a lot more tolerant about stuff and very - what I mean is, she lets the boys get away with manipulation and stuff which I don't tolerate. Peter especially, he's the older one, he knows when he's wrong, so it's not like he does stuff unknowingly, and then I'll just come along and cut him short, and that's where Sarah is a little bit more lenient towards things, which makes life a little bit more difficult for me because he gets

away with stuff with her, and he tries the same with me and he doesn't get away with it. So obviously the more he's going to get away with Sarah the more he's going to try it with me. No matter what it is, in the sense of manipulating as well, so it does clash a little bit but it's pretty much similar.

Q: Okay, and have you spoken to each other about the different styles?

A: Oh yes a lot because I get undermined in a sense by Sarah which gets to me. But I'll do that as well, I am guilty of it too so we sometimes undermine each other with the kids and I think they pick up on that and they use that as more manipulation. So ja I think that's the biggest thing is undermining each other sometimes. Which all parents are guilty of which is the biggest downfall.

Q: Did you speak about during the pregnancy about perhaps the way you were going to bring up your children or did you just let it happen?

A: We did speak about a lot of things, especially when it came to religion and stuff like that, boundaries, what are the boundaries, its kind of hard for me, brought up the way I was because I came from a very strict, religious upbringing, so did Sarah as well, but my parents left me to find my own way with things. Which was good and it wasn't good, because you fell off the road a lot of times, when I was given just little too much gap, so we definitely talked about it quite a lot, especially the religious thing. I think that flows over into a lot of other things, bringing religious boundaries into your personality. I think that is one of the big reasons why our sons are in a Montessori because there they learn about every religion so it's pretty much everything and anything. It gives them a good idea of what religion is, if it comes to a point where he wants to follow a religion I think he's got a good idea of what there is to follow.

Q: Is the Primary School religious?

A: It's a Christian school but they don't do like bible study and stuff like that, but they are more Christian orientated.

Q: So will they teach about - continue the education of the other religions?

A: They won't but we will possibly because I mean we're pretty well educated on religion and Sarah used to be too. Well it's not that she used to be, she came out of quite a religious house, but I think that puts a lot of boundaries on people in a lot of senses so that's a big taboo for me in a sense. I think that's the biggest thing we ever spoke about, was just the fact of religion, how are we going to do it, how are we going to approach it. Especially with Sarah and my parents being more Christians, so if they are at Grandpa and Grandma's house and they come back and they tell the stories, then we're like, mmm, you can't really go to Grandma and Grandpa without them telling them about the Bible and whatever.

Q: Did both of your parents work as you were growing up?

A: Sarah's mom didn't, she never worked, she is an artist so she's always been at home with art, studying art, and my mom always used to work.

Q: Was that part-time or did you have childcare growing up, nannies or ...?

A: We always had a nanny, there was always a nanny at our house looking after me and my sister, like an after school thing. Sarah not so much, I know they had a couple of - I think they had a nanny, but it was just a lady working around the house, keeping the house tidy. But Sarah had her mom there most of the time, because her mom didn't work, I don't think she ever really worked in her life.

Q: Does Sarah's mom help out with childcare?

A: Sarah's mom?

Q: Yes.

A: Yes she does. They're not too far away from us, so if we want to go out on a Saturday we can go drop them there. It's a little bit like weird though as there is a two

and a half hour cut off. My mom, I think the kids would be able to stay with her for a week.

Q: Does she live in Pretoria?

A: Yes my mom still lives out there. I wish sometimes I had my mom down here; it would be a lot easier because my mom loves kids.

Q: If Sarah's mom has a cut off point, do you have to come back early from a night out?

A: Yes. Sarah's dad is more involved, than Sarah's mom in a sense. Sarah's mom isn't, it's not that she's not involved; she's just the way she is. She's very like selfish in a way, she does her own thing, she's a very strange woman but very cool in a sense. I mean when she gives the kids 2 hours attention she gives them 2 hours attention. But after those 2 hours there's no attention. But her dad is super cool. I mean if we need him, he's always there to go fetch them at school, if they need a ride or anything like that. He's got his own business so he's pretty mobile; he's always on the road, so he's really cool. I mean he picks up the boys and takes them to the park and takes them for ice-creams. Ja he's really cool, he's really involved.

Q: And would you ever, or have you ever hired an outsider for babysitting?

A: We have a couple of people, like referrals from friends, to come and babysit for the night and stuff like that. It's kind of weird leaving someone in your house with your kids and we've done it a couple of times but we kind of stick to our regulars now.

Q: Do you feel there's anything that you actively bring in from the way your parents brought you up. Do you want to bring up your children in the same way or is there anything you avoid as a parent?

A: The immediate thought that comes to mind is what I avoid, because there's quite a lot of things that comes up, I think putting up a lot of boundaries in a sense. If a kid wants to bang a pot with a spoon, I mean it's - the reason why they do it is so simple, like everything follows the same routine. If they want to do something they can do it, as long as it doesn't harm anyone or anything, it's fine by us, make a noise, or make a racket, and they can sometimes just play themselves out, just burn their energy out. It gets annoying, but it's something you have to tolerate, so I think tolerance and patience is the big thing that I do apply, I mean it's not easy, it's challenging, but I mean it's something you've got to do.

Q: Do you have any time out, to get out of the house, go for a walk or something?

A: I do, I do that quite a lot. Rover is my escape; I take Rover out for a walk quite often. Sarah will go out for a cup of coffee or something, she'll phone her friends and she'll go for a cup of coffee. I mean we relieve each other. And sometimes, the cool thing is that Sarah's brother also stays quite close to us, his girlfriend is very sweet with the kids, she's one of our regular babysitters, and she also works from home and if we need to get out we'll just phone her and she's there for an hour, an hour and a half, and we go have a drink or have a cup of coffee or something, and get back home. We've got that, I mean we didn't have that until about a year ago.

Q: Is that because of the age of the children?

A: It's the age of the children and the commitment we have, so we didn't really focus that much on us in a sense. I think it's only in the last year and a half we've been focussing more on our relationship, getting a bit of the spark back, because there was always the kids and work, the kids and work. Up until 6 months ago it was us focussing more on ourselves, trying to like get ourselves back, get the personalities going again and then we started focussing on us again.

Q: So was that quite a stressful time?

A: Oh yes, because it's quite hectic because you lose touch with yourself in a sense, and it's very hard to keep a relationship going and keep in touch with someone else if you

can't even keep in touch with yourself. It's challenging, I mean it's probably the most challenging thing I've ever done, but it's the most rewarding thing as well, especially at the point where we are now. So it's like we're falling in love all over again, it's pretty cool, ja it's pretty cool.

Q: Do have more time to do things together, do you kind of set aside an amount of time a week, 1 day a week or so or is it just whenever you can?

A: Ja it's whenever we can, we seize the moment. Tomorrow we both have got the day off, we can do something tomorrow night, we've got nothing planned, work is finished, we'll find a babysitter and just pop out. Maybe we'll just need them for half an hour or 4 hours, we take it as it comes. And previously we didn't really have the finances to. It doesn't cost much just taking off for the beach, but the weather's not always that nice. So I think from a financial point of view we're both more relaxed, we're both a little bit more stable so that we don't have to stress so much, because even if it was financially fine I think in a sense when you've got a business and you're stressing about it, like there's nothing worse than that. You think about it, even when out walking on the beach you think about it, you don't really rest, you don't really relax.

Q: Have you done much travelling with your children?

A: Well we - well not internationally but locally we have, around the country. We go up to Jo'burg and Pretoria or we'll go to Durban, we've got family there, Port Elizabeth, and Sarah's got a lot of family there.

Q: Is this flying?

A: Ja flying, we find it quite a challenge with the kids, I mean there always is, they can be the sweetest kids, but once you're in that confined space and the kids get annoyed or frustrated, you have to contain them as well because they want to get up and they want to walk around and you can't explain to a 2 year old why, and it's hard to explain to a 3 year old "No, you can't go there".

Q: Do you think that if you wanted to do any international travel that you might wait until they are a bit older.

A: Oh it's fine now, now that Michael is going on 3 years it's a little bit easier. It's become a lot easier travelling with them now but previously the younger they were it was a little bit more difficult. When they're up to 6 months old it's pretty easy because they just sleep so that was a bit easier but I think between 6 months and 2 years is the most difficult time to travel with.

Q: Were your children quite good sleepers?

A: Yes, well Michael was not until about a year and a half, he didn't sleep much. Well he was a good sleeper during the day but not at night. So he had that routine, it was hard breaking that routine, but generally they were good, there was a little bit of colic when he was a baby. It's like a stomach cramp, he had stomach cramps a lot and he had that until about, say from about 4 months he had that until about 5 months. Basically they don't sleep, they cry a lot, until we eventually went to a doctor, and they don't know what causes it though so they just gave him colic drops so every time after he had milk he had to get colic drops. It was very hard to burp him so he would get stomach cramps from the winds and stuff, it was quite hectic.

Q: What were the sleeping arrangements when they were babies, did you have them in the room with you or did they have a separate nursery?

A: Until they were about 6 months we had them in our room because we had a cot for them and they would sleep in the room or go to sleep in their cots, because we tried to avoid the them sleeping in our bed, because I think it's habit forming. And slowly they moved over to their own room, from about 6 months. And now we've got them

in a shared room. They've got bunk beds so we let them get in bed and we read them a story and we just let them go to sleep by themselves.

Q: So they get on quite well together?

A: Extremely ja.

A: Oh that's nice.

Q: I mean they're kids, they do pick fights, they do get jealous and stuff like that, and eighty five percent of the time they just love each other. Even at school they play together.

A: So if you ever felt that you needed emotional support in any way then who do you turn to?

Q: My mom.

A: Would that be on the phone?

Q: On the phone ja.

A: And who do you think gives the equivalent to Sarah?

Q: Her mom as well ja, without a doubt. Her mom and her are best friends.

A: And do you have a network of friends who also have young kids?

Q: I don't as much, because I think all my friends at my age are, they're at a very different stage.

A: How old are you?

Q: I am going on 28; I mean they are all at a very different stage than I am. I mean most of them just finished studying; some of them are travelling, so it's a lot different. Sarah's friends definitely, so for her it's a lot different. All her friends were in the same stage as she is, settling down with the whole thing. But I don't mind, I enjoy it because I've got my own thing going, I don't mind at all. I do a lot still which is pretty cool, I mean Sarah does quite a bit as well internationally, so I do tattoos internationally, because I go to conventions, I recently went to Hong Kong, and Sarah does a lot of buying trips, New York, London, which is pretty cool, so we still get to do all the fun stuff.

A: So then the other half will look after ...?

Q: Look after the kids ja, the routine changes a little bit obviously, I'm not at the shop as much because I have to go pick the boys up when they come home and that kind of stuff, so it's pretty cool.

A: So you don't have any friends in a similar situation?

Q: I don't, no. I don't really have that insight, to see other kids dealing with their kids thing, how their way of ... I mean I don't mind it, I think I don't always say my ways are the best, so I have nothing really to compare it with but my kids seem fine, it means I'm doing something right.

A: You'll probably have lots of your friends coming to you at some point.

Q: I have a couple of friends actually, a couple of guys that I knew through other guys that have got kids and are like "Oh dude you've got to give me some advice", it's pretty cool to hear. But it's hard because you've got a situation, you can't really give advice because it's something you deal with in the moment. And of course it's something I think that comes naturally, I mean you've got a sense of how to approach a certain scenario, how it works, what's right, what's wrong. For Sarah it's a very natural thing, Sarah was born to have children, I mean from being pregnant to actually being a mother, she was made for it. She's like a baby making machine so it's pretty insane. But ja it's pretty natural to me, I think because I've got a younger brother as well, there's a 10 year gap between me and him. I was quite involved with him, so I think that helped me a lot, because I used to baby sit him and do stuff like that, so I think up until the point where I had kids it's helped me a lot.

- A: During the pregnancy did you need any advice or you were worried about anything, did you go to your mom? Were you involved in reading those pregnancy books?
- Q: Ja we did, when we were going through the pregnancy there were a lot of books that we did buy, I spent quite a lot of money on literature, and a lot of the stuff was very repetitive, it's all just to reassure you about the things that you think about and that you thought were right, it's just reassuring all of it. There were a lot of things, tips we did pick up, and baby exercises that helped a lot. But actually dealing with stuff emotionally, that comes naturally. I don't really think you could read a book, because that's also just someone's opinion at the end of the day. It's good to cross-reference stuff, I mean it's good to get an idea like that, but once you get into a scenario, what works best for your child and you and that's that.
- A: So then in the second pregnancy did you not read any literature?
- Q: Oh it was a breeze, that felt like a walk in the park, because Michael was more relaxed as a baby than Peter, which has completely turned around now. Because now Peter is a calmer little guy, he's a very sensitive little soul, he just draws and paints, he's active in a bit of sport but he's not so much into it, he likes being indoors and he likes drawing and painting. But Michael is like a rocket; he's jumping off stuff and swinging off lampshades and bunk beds...
- A: Does he have the top bunk?
- Q: No Peter's got the top bunk.
- A: Because he's the oldest?
- Q: Ja.
- A: Is there anything that you dislike about parenting?
- Q: Yes. The one thing I dislike about parenting is worrying about doing something wrong but you're not, you're just trying to discipline your child or something, by giving him time out or whatever or taking something away, sometimes it just feels like you're in the wrong. I mean obviously the kid is going to get upset with you when you do something to discipline them or put them on time out, but it sucks sometimes, it's the way they look at you and you feel bad.
- A: And do you and Sarah ever feel guilty about working?
- A: I do because I work a lot more because I'm not as mobile as Sarah and I mean when I've got appointments at the shop, I'm out there making money and I sometimes do big tattoos and I can only do them from 17:00 in the afternoon. Tattoos are a luxury thing so people can't take the day off work or half day off work to get them. Sometimes I feel guilty but also I've got the ability to sometimes move an appointment, sometimes you can and sometimes you can't. It depends if people have got another time or they're actually from Cape Town, because we do a lot of international people, like a lot of tourists and stuff so that makes a big difference. They're only here for an X-amount of time so you can't move an appointment.
- Q: And do you get any appointments made at the last minute or is it booked in advance?
- A: No, we do take walk-ins so if somebody comes in and they've got something that doesn't take 2 days of drawing and we can do it on the spot we will do it, something simple, but if it's like bigger tattoos, I mean some things take us like weeks to draw, you know, to smooth out and stuff so ...
- Q: And how many people do you have there working?
- A: We're three guys.
- Q: Do you have to do the drawings, or can they do the drawing?
- A: We are all three artists you know, we are tattoo artists pretty much, and it's what we do. If somebody will bring us copies or an idea or a reference we will redraw it into our own preferred style, if they're open. Sometimes we do copy but we won't copy

other artists' work because that's plagiarism, the tattoo industry is very small internationally, so if you copy a tattoo you'll get burned very quickly.

A: Change of topic but do you share the cooking responsibilities with Sarah?

A: Ja we do, I used to cook a lot more than I do now, because Sarah gets home a little bit earlier, she will make food or cook. When I did not get home this late I would normally be the one that cooked, so every now and then when I can, when I do get home earlier I will cook, so I do relieve her but the majority of the time she does the cooking now.

Q: And do you have to cook a meal for you two and a meal with the kids?

A: No.

A: Do they eat with you?

Q: We eat fairly healthily; we try to eat healthily, so they pretty much eat what we eat. We make a lot of vegetarian dishes. We're not vegetarians, we eat meat and fish and everything but I think at least three out of five nights we will eat vegetarian dishes. The kids love it, like I mean when we do get experimental half the time they won't eat, they'll be a little freaked out, but generally they're very good, they're very good with eating. Michael eats whatever you put in front of him. He's the youngest, he's very good.

A: Do you feel that your work has affected your children at all?

Q: Yes it has but not for the worse, I think it's a lot better because I'm not away all the time but I do work a little later and some weeks are a little more hectic than others, it makes the time we spend together a little bit more special, it makes it a little bit more exciting. It also feels cool coming home and the kids are excited to see you, they come running to the gate, daddy, daddy. It's not for the worse; it's definitely better than it used to be because at a time that was completely gone, at one stage, between me and Sarah and the kids because we would be in each other's hair and things like that all the time. Ja so it's for the good I would say.

A: And what are your insecurities as a parent?

Q: Insecurities as a parent? I think I lack a little life experience in a sense because I was such a young dad so I think that's my biggest insecurity because there are certain things that I do think about, well they haven't happened yet. I think that's my biggest insecurity, just a lack of if experience as a young dad.

A: So do you have any anxieties about the future?

Q: The only thing I do have is, I don't see a reason for it now, but the fact that my kids might not like me one day, for any whatsoever reason, that's my biggest anxiety. I don't think there's any reason that they would but I think that's my one anxiety because my life revolves around them.

Interview: Stewart

Q: Can you give me a little information about your background, how long have you been married or how old is your child, what is your employment history?

A: So I studied, after school I had a gap year in 1997, that was in 1996, and then during the gap year I didn't really do much, I just had fun with my mates, travelled around, but then in 1998 I went to University, I did Undergrad and Honours there and then in 2002, 2003 I worked back in Zimbabwe, so that was the first job I did, a firm, NGO working as an Intimation Officer. I studied Anthropology and Geography it was environmental stuff. Then I got a bit tired of doing non-anthropology stuff because I was more of a journalist. So I went back, 2004, 2005 to University - I wasn't going to go back initially to Rhodes but I went anyway because they gave me some funding. I then did my Masters and then in 2005 I finished. In 2006 I moved to Cape Town but in the meantime during my Masters I met Dorothy my wife, I had known her since those early days in 1998. She's 4 years younger than me, I knew her sister, and she was in first year with me. So yes at the time Dorothy was still in school. But I knew her on and off but then only in Masters when I came back was she now also doing Masters. She caught up because I'd taken time off working. We realised we had a lot in common and we started going out. We got married at the beginning of 2006, or in March 2006 and we moved here to Cape Town. So having done that NGO work I thought I might get a job in an NGO but in fact I found it quite difficult for various reasons. I started working as a researcher and I did that job for about 8 months and it didn't gel with me so I then started my own freelance consulting work which was a challenge but I managed to get some work, and from there it gained momentum and I've been doing that for about the last 6 years. Until this year when I started doing my PhD as well, I still do that, I have been doing some work as well as the PhD so it's combined now, a combination of studying and working.

Q: And then you've just had your first child?

A: Yes we suspended having kids, we're not really in a sort of economic state to have kids. But I always knew I wanted to be a father. I think Dorothy was also initially reluctant too and preferred to wait and see, I think she was waiting for me to grow up but somehow we decided last year that yes this might be the right time. Although from an economic point of view my work actually dipped because being freelance and working, well the recession caught up with the funding and so on and that actually meant last year, in terms of earning, I had these sorts of big gaps for about 2 or 3 months, I didn't earn anything. That's one of the reasons why I decided to do the PhD because I thought let me see if I can acquire that and maybe I can get some funding for the PhD. So on top of all this we decided to have the baby and we suspended it for a few months because my sister then announced that she was getting married and then we realised that if we had it straight away then I wouldn't be able to go to the wedding which was in May, but then we, ja, we started trying again and then Dorothy fell pregnant in December and then the baby was born now in September, so ja that's really been the history of that.

Q: Have you noticed since having a child that your finances have been strained at all?

A: Ja. I think our logic was that we weren't, initially when we came to Cape Town we didn't have a house, so we weren't established enough and so we are now established enough, but then it came at the same time as me not having a good year last year so I had to kind of catch up. In that context we've been playing a bit of catch up, because Dorothy also works as a freelancer and she's being doing editing, so she gets quite steady work, and I get projects and then bigger gaps between them, and then she gets

smaller projects which are more ongoing. Between us, both of our incomes are very important, if one of us doesn't earn we can't afford, because when you're a student, a young student and you rent accommodation, the responsibility, your expenses are amazingly less compared to now where we've been building up. So the flipside of being established is that you've got the house now and you've got to pay R8000 per month in mortgage, and then you've got two cars because you need to run around and you've got to pay them off, you've suddenly got to start thinking about your savings and your pension, so actually you establish a bit of a Catch 22 because you've got to fork out about R25000 every month just to keep all of those things going. That's the problem. But to answer your question, the baby came along and I had worked previously this year and as I said a bit of catch up pay at work. But now the baby for us was a bit of a - we'd saved up some reserves, but the problem really lies in the fact that because Dorothy works for herself she didn't have maternity leave, so now she's taken off 3 or 4 months without being able to work, whereas if she was in a fulltime job she would get time off and would have got paid for it. That's one thing, and then I didn't take on anything because I wanted to help Dorothy. I'm not one of those old fashioned fathers who just said right you're now in charge and I'm going to carry on with my stuff. So I have worked a little bit, like the tutoring but you don't get that much, but by and large I have been also taking time off to help Dorothy and the flipside is yes, to answer your question yes the money has been going. Not really that the baby has increased the amount of money, but we still have things that have to go off every month. The medical was expensive, to have the baby and all the different checks and so on.

Q: Do you have medical aid?

A: We've got medical aid ja but ...

Q: It didn't cover everything?

A: It covered most of the hospital stuff right, but all the checks, pre to actual delivery, because we only have a hospital plan, and its very expensive to afford full medical aid, the State system is a lottery. Sometimes you could wait for 8 hours in a queue, so obviously like most middle class people we go for the private health care. But the problem with that is that you have to pay for it. So now all the non hospital stuff like the scans and all that other stuff we had to pay for so that was an added expense we wouldn't have had. Luckily enough nothing went wrong, so that would have been something like if we needed some fertility treatment or IVF, we would have paid out of our own pockets. But most of it was paid; there were some extras which weren't. That was one expense and there would be just day to day expenses, like Dorothy's breastfeeding our son so there are a few things she needs to take in order to breastfeed, certain supplements. And like the ongoing postnatal visits to the clinics and stuff, the vaccines and all that stuff which also costs a bit so each time we go to the paediatrician, for example we went to see her at 6 weeks, so I mean there is that medical side I would say more than any other at this point. The clothes and all that other stuff you get given when you have the baby shower. It's really the medical stuff which is more. There are certain scans that you are highly recommended to have because they can then tell whether your baby is developing correctly. I suspect that people who are pregnant in Khayelitsha or whatever don't do that, obviously the State system has those things too and technically you should be able to go for your scans to check that everything is fine because if something's wrong with the baby its best to know beforehand. But some people go to the extent of having all these 3D scans and so on which is really cosmetic, they pay a lot for it, but that's really unnecessary. So they do all these checks to see whether that's fine and correct and the heart is beating

fine or that, so you don't have to have everything but if you come from a middle class background you tend to want to do those at least to some extent. Tom Cruise actually bought Katie his wife the full 3D scanner machine for herself so that she could see their little baby. Fat lot of good it did them now because now they're getting divorced, but anyway, she developed a relationship with him before having to change his nappy. Nappies that's another thing that costs lots of money. Well use a combination or a compromise between the disposable and washable nappies. I remember my mom had to wash them in the loo and then dry them. Anyway we discovered that there is a in between option where for the first couple of months when the baby is very small we use the disposables which is very difficult. But there's another one which we found which is made out of this material from bamboo I believe and then you buy these liners and then the bamboo material you use over and over and replace the little tissue liner, so it's not the sort of towelling one with the safety pin, it's like a modern one but it's not disposable. So when he's a bit bigger we'll move him on to that one and then he can use that until he's potty trained. That's the compromise there is there and those only cost about R3000 - you buy several of them and they will last you for several years. I think we worked out that to buy nappies, disposable nappies, the whole time he would be needing t around R25 000, that's about what it would cost if you like considered how many nappies would be used and then this particular option of R3000 for the full 2 years.

Q: And on all these medical trips, would you always accompany Dorothy to the hospitals?

A: Yes I did - and I guess some men don't, and I'm not sure how, and it wasn't like "Oh you're not meant to be there", although the hospital staff sometimes act like they're not used to the man being there or they don't consider the man to be an integral part. I wanted to be involved, I was, I feel like I'm more of a modern man or someone who's not really sort of prescriptive so like I'm doing all the cooking and cleaning now. Which I used to do a lot of anyway before but you know I think that some men simply wouldn't. Some men who I've talked to, older men have said "No I've never changed a nappy, I can't do that. That's a woman's job." But I've changed nappies. So basically I was going to all the classes and I was there during the birth as well, so helping out and doing what I could. And then the postnatal visits I've been there for most of them too so I think ja maybe I missed one when I was at a conference.

Q: And from your observations did you see many other men with their wives?

A: Not as many. I mean we went for antenatal classes, right, and all the men were there.

Q: Is that where you sit in a room and you kind of breathing exercises?

A: They do teach you something like that but we didn't do as much. There were lecture series for 6 weeks, once a week series about what to expect and how to prepare and all this stuff. So we didn't do as much of the breathing stuff but a few positions that women find helpful and whatever. We had the antenatal and all the men were there and then my impression is at the postnatal visits not many men are coming should I say men with their wives because most of them have gone back to work after a couple of weeks I think, but I have because I'm a student and I didn't have as much of this work of my own, so definitely I actually turned down a few options which I could have had, I've gone each time so yes it's been interesting.

Q: How did you find the actual birth?

A: Well it was - I mean the anticipation was there to start with, one didn't know how it would be and how you would react and the idea that Dorothy would feel a lot of pain and that I'd have to somehow help, with this whole Hollywood idea that the wife is going to be there swearing at you and all that stuff, and actually I was there through

birth. Dorothy felt contractions at about 24:00 at night when I'd already gone to sleep and she didn't know if it was real or not and then she woke me up at about 05:00 in the morning and I was saying is it for real, and then said well the contractions are coming 2 minutes apart, so we went off to the hospital and because I realised that it was quite something. We arrived there and we went with a midwife, you see there's a huge difference between using a gynaecologist which is a more clinical approach, I mean far more than a lot of people in South Africa are actually going for Caesars, there's about 70% of middle class or let's say white women actually choosing to having Caesars. And the gynaes are actually encouraging that because they make more money. So in some hospitals they say "Oh your baby's too heavy, you'll never give birth to that". Then the women think it will be less painful to have a Caesar. In actual fact this is surgery, these people are actually being duped I think to think that a Caesar is the best choice. In fact I know another gynae or I know the brother of him who said "I don't know, we evolved out of this sort of natural childbirth, we now have the technology to do it so you may as well". He reckons with the technology is there now to remove the baby without this inconvenience of natural birth. It's not natural. Anyway that's what we did, we went with natural, from a nice place with birth options and then by the time we arrived at the hospital Dorothy only had 2 more hours and then the baby was born, so to just answer your question it all quite happened fast and at the time I thought it would be 10 hours or something, but we arrived at 07:00 and the baby was born by 09:00 and Dorothy handled it so well she wouldn't even have a disprin let alone any other pain tablets and I don't know how she managed that. She really did and there were no complications or anything so we were lucky, because some of the other women and couples that are at our class had horrific birth stories. Well horrific, in the sense they were long, ongoing, nobody died or anything but there were complications at times and we had a very easy birth, very straightforward so I guess I would have thought much differently if she'd been in labour for like 24 hours or something. The thing is that nowadays you seem to go home with the child too quickly it's quite a big ordeal, because it's such a different thing. So to be in hospital for a few days is actually quite important, because the nurses can teach you how to latch, breastfeed properly and give you some support and advice that you really need so I'm not a fan going home on the same day because you're then totally on your own. They used to keep women for a week or more in hospital when I was born. I'm sure it's probably the same in Britain.

Nowadays because of medical aid and the expense they only allow you 2 nights that they will pay for. I don't know what it's like in England but 2 nights, on the third day you need support from your nurses and so on, because your milk starts coming in and at first you just produce a different substance to milk but it's got all these antibodies and then only on the third day you start producing milk. And then so you get sent home on the third day and then you suddenly have all this milk on the third day. And then it's difficult to deal with that because suddenly you've got to feed this baby and the baby cries and you don't know what its saying and ja, it's fairly intimidating and nowadays we move away from our families and so on. We don't have family in Cape Town.

Q: Is Dorothy Zimbabwean as well?

A: No she's from Grahamstown so her family lives there. We don't really have any support network - well we've got friends of about 6 years who've been very good, but we didn't grow up around kids. You know in some families you've got sisters and brothers and cousins of that age, you hold them and we didn't grow up like that. Both of us didn't have younger siblings.

- Q: And did you know anyone else with babies?
- A: No we actually also didn't know very many people, the ones with babies we know are the ones in the antenatal classes, but we haven't had any practice of holding babies or knowing how they operate or - so I mean the point is like it's a huge learning curve when you get home with that baby, it's like okay we're on our own now.
- Q: Are you finding that you're more easily able to help with the baby crying now?
- A: Ja now at 8 weeks, I mean we can tell, not just the crying but the kind of warning signs, if he's got wind or something which is disturbing him, or if he's hungry, you can - I think Dorothy is better at it than me because she spends 90% of her time with him. One can talk about equal rights and so on but from a biological point of view the mother must by virtue of the fact that - unless you just don't breastfeed and stuff and you have a regimental kind of system which the man has to do 50%, the woman is doing, is developing this special relationship with her baby, whether you like it or not. I don't know maybe some men are jealous of that but I ... or like feel sort of resentful to the mom or to the child but I don't, I'm quite happy that Dorothy develops a good bond with the baby so ja.
- Q: Have you noticed any other differences like in the way that you parent?
- A: Well because he's so small, it's difficult to - I mean right now his needs are sort of basic. He needs to eat, he needs to poo, he needs to be cleaned and sleep, so we just basically answer those needs. I think later on when it comes to - I mean Dorothy and I are on the same page when it comes to ideas of what we would do when he gets older ... like I know some couples, you might find one is more of a disciplinarian or the other way around, and then the one would be like you shouldn't spank the child or you shouldn't do this. But we agreed on those issues ... I think there are other ways of instilling self respect in a child than using violent force. So we only - I think we have different styles not in terms of the big stuff but Dorothy as the mother as I am saying has formed a different kind of bond to him so she has a very empathetic way and when I hold him I also, like if he starts crying and I know that I can't do anything about it there is a sense in which I say okay you'd better just take him back. So ... If I'm alone, and Dorothy is at gym, she likes swimming at the gym, so she hasn't been very often, so actually the last week she has been going so I've been taking him for an hour, trying to just keep him happy and calm and today I had him in the pouch. And he was okay, at first, the first 15 minutes he looked like he was going to wake up and start crying and I was a bit scared, like it's still 45 minutes to go, but she actually expressed the milk and put it in the freezer, in the fridge, so that I could feed it to him if need be, which I did 2 days ago when she went, because he started crying after half an hour and I had to console him with some food in a syringe you know. Some babies which have got colic or digestive issues, cry for like 3 or 4 hours or even more. Ours is fairly easy ja.
- Q: When you're both sleeping or where does the child sleep, in his cot or in the bed with you?
- A: We were initially not sure about it at first, because we still thought oh, if the baby sleeps with us, what if you roll on it and kill it but actually we found out it's the most natural thing in the world for the baby to sleep with the mother or with us, as long as you make sure that it doesn't fall out and so on. So at first we both slept together in the same bed with the baby but actually it much easier if Dorothy would sleep in the nursery with the baby, because for several reasons. There was a thing in the beginning that we were both in this together and we would both wake up. There was a time he was losing, he wasn't gaining weight quick enough so I had to feed him at night too with a syringe and Dorothy would express some more milk and I would ...

Q: Is he too young to have a bottle?

A: In a way we - ja we didn't want to use a bottle because a bottle has got a different shape to a nipple and it can actually mess up the way young babies feed as they get used to a certain kind of shape on the bottle. You just put your finger in his mouth and just squirt in with the syringe while holding him sort of upright and then it doesn't mess up the latch. Because the first problem we had was that he wasn't latching properly so you get that sort of proper latch, and if he just latches on wrong it can get cracked and all sorts of horrible painful things can happen. So it takes a while to get that right so we didn't use the bottle at first. We'll probably use the bottle later on. So basically we had him in the bed with us and then Dorothy found it easier in terms of waking up and turning on the light, just to feed - because we made a special nursery with a bed in it, so Dorothy for the last 3 weeks has been sleeping with him and I've been sleeping in our room, which means that I don't get woken up at night, there's no need for me, but Dorothy actually says she sleeps better with him there by herself anyway at this point. And she doesn't have to worry about me when he wakes up and she can turn the light on, and also the changing table is there and all the right little things, so I mean it's actually better that way. She doesn't have to go walk all the way there, so at the moment she sleeps with him in the bed and I'm in a different place.

Q: And that suits you?

A: In terms of the sleep and stuff it suits me. I don't like - I mean some people like sleeping sort of hugging somebody at the same time. I personally prefer to sleep without sort of touching anybody. I get too hot so I mean I'm happy with that but obviously it's a very different arrangement. It does feel a bit like I'm in digs with someone with a baby, in a way, I have my own room, but that will change when he gets a bit older. I think when he gets a bit older and sleeps longer then she'll come back to our room and then he can be next door in the sort of crib next to the bed. But you can't predict these things, you know he might not sleep there and then we have to make a Plan B.

Q: Is that something you found quite a lot that before you had the baby you had these expectations about how you're going to do things and has it changed a lot?

A: Yes you can't really know how it's going to be because each baby is different so you can have an idea of what it will be like but you just have to respond to a particular situation.

Q: Did you and Dorothy speak about how to raise your child before she even got pregnant or is it since the pregnancy, since having the child?

A: Well because we had those 6 years or whatever, 5 years of being married without children and I think we had quite a lot of time to establish our ideas, but obviously along the way we talked about these things, but you don't know in advance everything, it's a vague idea of whether or not your ideals are similar or not. It's also an evolution of your thinking. We often read books, got influenced by ideas and then discuss them together and then, as I said with Dorothy and I we are on the same page when it came to these things, which is quite good. So we agree with each other on these things, whether or not you should be more disciplinarian or not. But I think we are evolving and learning as we go along which we both are quite happy to do. We feel that communication is very important. I think that's what quite often happens that people don't really communicate properly then there are some misunderstandings.

Q: Have you had disagreements?

A: We all have some disagreements; it's a case of an ongoing debate. Disagreements, like we tend to disagree about small things and then the bigger things we agree on and then there are small things which are ...

- Q: Can you give me an example?
- A: Okay let me think. I think in any relationship you have disagreements or you have times when you're sort of feeling grumpy or something and then you - I think also it depends on stress, you can be both feeling stressed and then something small can come, and often its like silly things which aren't really related to childcare or anything big but sort of silly things like whether a certain word is pronounced a certain way ... ja.
- Q: I was just going to say, Lucas and I, one of our major disagreements is on the house, with regard to cleanliness; I see dirt much clearer than his eyes do, so he may perhaps do the cleaning, but it won't necessarily be to my standards of clean.
- A: Right. Ja look we've had some of those because Dorothy - actually I do most of the cleaning and I'm more pedantic about it than Dorothy is, so for example she will prepare lunch and then she leaves the mayonnaise, the knife, the tomato, the cheese on the counter and I'm like the flies are walking on them and I'm saying Dorothy what's this, these are out and the flies are walking on them and she says no but I'm not finished, and I say you're not finished but I can tell you they'll be still here at 5 o' clock. So yes we have those things, but it's funny because like at this time it's the other way around. At first in our marriage Dorothy wanted the washing up to be done and I was actually happier to leave it until the next day, on the understanding that I would still do it. I don't know how I came to do the damn washing up but I just do. But then she wanted it done that night, we had a disagreement about that. I was like why do you have to get up and do the washing up straight away, can't you sort of sit back and relax, we were brought up differently, her mom liked to do the dishes straight away. But now she doesn't care about that. These things go in cycles. Ja, it's interesting that.
- Q: Do you have any childcare support, nannies or ...?
- A: No, we can't afford one, we've got a domestic worker who comes in once a week on a Thursday, so it's normally just me doing the housework or Dorothy when she wasn't pregnant would do whatever needed to be done, but then once a week we have somebody just for the day. They just give the house a thorough once-over, like clean the floors, change the sheets, do ironing, clean the windows, it's on an ongoing basis, we're responsible for doing the washing up and whatever but once a week there's someone who does it properly, we've got a clean house for a few days until it gets dirty again by about Tuesday and then Mondays you're trying to get it clean again.
- Q: Are you finding now with the baby as well that the house gets messy quicker?
- A: Ja I think it does, I mean I think there's more stuff around that we never used to have. We've got a pram there and a cloth, and then the baby decides to wee on its clothes while you're changing him then you have to take that away and then ja there is more mess in some ways.
- Q: Is your baby too young to have toys all over the place?
- A: Ja he's still young for toys, so the toys are going to come, definitely. Ja definitely so that's going to be ... we might as time goes on get somebody to come more often to clean, I'm not really that keen on doing the whole childcare thing. This particular woman, is from Khayelitsha, but when the baby was very young and he cried a lot because he was hungry and wasn't feeding properly, she took him off us and then she tried to be a childminder as well, but she shook him around so violently, saying "Oh don't cry", and she shook him and you know small babies, their necks aren't strong, so she was doing a real hardcore different style which we weren't comfortable with, which is probably the way she brought up her kid and I'm sure that kid survived, but the thing is we weren't really that keen to get a fulltime job but she turned it down

because the idea was that she really could when the baby was born, she could actually still do the freelance editing at the same time, whereas if she was in a fulltime job she would have to go back to work and then the baby would need to have a childminder. We weren't really that happy with that idea. We're trying to bring up our baby as much as possibly ourselves. Later on when he's 3 he can go to a morning's only pre-primary school and incorporate it into the school system. But when he is really young our idea was really to try and not have childcare. Because some people just go back to work after 2 months and hand the baby to somebody else and I mean it's okay but I don't know, I just don't like it.

Q: Do you think that you will have any more children or is it too early?

A: We will want another one I think but maybe after 2 years when the little guy is about 3 or something. Not too soon. I think children who are too close in age tend to struggle because of the tension issues and so on, maybe if there's a gap they will fit easier. Plus you can use the older one as free childcare for the younger one.

Q: Who would you say you look to for emotional support if you felt that you need any?

A: Well we have each other I guess to some extent. I mean Dorothy's got a whole lot of women, who she calls, and she calls her mother for example, her mother is very doting, and she's got Skype, Skype is a wonderful thing, they have much more close contact. And as a woman she's got various people who help - there's another lady who we know who is a psychologist who's been very helpful because she's helped Dorothy with dealing with her things and so on. But I must say that I don't have anyone specifically and because I'm not in my hometown, my best friend who's also got a baby who is about 2 now, is in Harare and he would be someone who I would love to meet up with, have a drink and chat and whatever but he's not here, and we don't communicate even when we're not - we're very close friends but we don't call each other every day, I think guys struggle a bit with that as well. So I don't really know, from my point of view I don't have much emotional or moral support from other guys, so I tend to rely on Dorothy a lot for it as well, which can be a bit tricky because sometimes you need that other - so to be honest ja I don't. I realise there's a gender dynamic there where the women often get together just for a chat or for a girls night or, where with men it's like if I get together for a coffee with a guy it means we must be gay or something. So no, no, we can't do that. We need to play rugby together or squash, you know. Guys don't like to engage emotionally and some guys try to run away from engaging emotionally. I personally like engaging emotionally but I don't have any guy friends here that I can engage with easily so.

Q: How were you brought up? I mean in your family, did your mom work or not work, or did your dad help out a lot or ...?

A: My mom was a stay at home housewife, she brought us up and she didn't do any other work. My dad for the last 20 years of his career worked as a freelance journalist so my mom actually helped to run that but when we were growing up, when we were very young. When we were growing up, she was a stay at home mom and he worked very hard so basically that was the model which we grew up in and my dad didn't do a lot of the changing nappies and that sort of stuff.

Q: Was that the same with Dorothy's parents?

A: Ja, Dorothy's mom was a stay home mom who also looked after the kids and Dorothy's dad worked.

Q: It's very interesting, I mean everyone I've interviewed, and their parents were all stay at home mothers.

A: I think that was then, now it is ... well I can tell you right now Dorothy and I can't survive financially unless she works. I mean maybe I'm in the wrong field, I'm sure

there're lawyers and people who do earn enough to keep their families supported on one salary but not me. That's for sure.

Q: But do you think Dorothy would ever want to be a stay-at-home mom?

A: No, Dorothy is not that kind of person, she gets bored quickly with just hanging around doing nothing. She's very creative and she's very - in fact she hates editing, she finds editing boring, she does it but she does other projects on the side which are more creative like making her own books and so on, her own designs and stuff.

Q: Do have any pets?

A: Ja we've got a cat called Tigger. She's adapted well, she's feeling a bit left out now I think, but she hasn't been nasty to Patrick, the young fellow's called Patrick. When he cries she comes up to him and she looks, she goes right up to his face and looks at him curiously, like why is this little thing crying. She doesn't puff up or try and care him or anything but she does feel that less attention I think. She's started to scratch the furniture more, to try and get our attention.

Interview: Timothy

Q: Can I start by asking a bit about your background, your profession, and how long you have been working and so on?

A: Sure I'm a sports journalist and I've been here now for going on 8 years now. And before that I worked for the Rugby Board in West Transvaal so that's pretty much been my career since leaving school, so a good 12 years now I've been working in the media.

Q: Do you have a 2 year old?

A: Yes and a little one on the way.

Q: Are you married?

A: Yes.

Q: What does your wife do?

A: She studied part time, she did her Masters and she finished up last year in December and she took her 4 months maternity obviously. So she worked and studied.

Q: So it's kind of like three different jobs?

A: Ja she's quite busy.

Q: Okay so when the new baby arrives is she going to be working full time?

A: Ja she works full time with her PHD and which keeps her pretty busy and then she'll obviously take maternity leave again.

Q: Are you flexible if you need time off?

A: Ja I'm lucky, because of the nature of my journalism I get a lieu day every couple of weeks on a weekday when I work over a weekend but also my immediate boss understanding. We have a nanny but if she can't come in for whatever reason or Ross's sick then I can usually time get off. I think I'm lucky in that respect because my boss is a very understanding of what actually goes into parenting. She allows me to work from home because it's online that makes it a hell of a lot easier for me.

Q: How many hours do you work?

A: Fixed hours during the week ... but ja I work every second Saturday as well but like I say they're pretty flexible.

Q: Did you have the option of paternity leave?

A: I only got, I think I got 1 day, but I actually took leave when Ross was first born for a few days. I don't know how other companies work but I think it's standard practice that guys don't get a lot of paternity leave.

- Q: Do you have childcare?
- A: I have a nanny who works Mondays to Fridays between 08:00 to 17:00.
- Q: And what is she responsible for?
- A: Well her first priority would be Ross and she does the housekeeping as well, she does the cleaning second and Ross first. Her major priority is Ross, looking after him, feeding, changing him.
- Q: And will you be sending Ross to pre-school?
- A: Ross will probably go to pre-school next year. When I was about 4 which most kids did back then. I don't really know what they consider it now but I suppose pre-school is anything before school I guess.
- Q: When did you decide to have a nanny?
- A: We pretty much - we looked at crèches, when Ross was born and then at the time there were a lot of incidents happening in crèches and a little boy died, and there were really terrible stories coming out, the kids weren't really given attention, things like that. We decided to rather have a nanny in our house than leaving Ross without having any control or understanding of what's going on. We can actually maintain the relationship with Ross. So we decided when he was about 5 or 6 months.
- Q: How did you find out about your nanny?
- A: Well we looked around and we tried a couple of people and the lady we have now came highly recommended, and she just worked out. We had issues, teething problems, but it's all right now.
- Q: Will you continue to use her for the next child?
- A: Ja, we'll use her for the next.
- Q: And so your wife is working part time?
- A: No she is full time, they call it part time but ... but you can say fulltime.
- Q: Do you both get home around the same time in the evenings?
- A: I usually get home at about 16:30, 16:45 and she'll be at home about 17:00.
- Q: And is that when the nanny leaves?
- A: Yes, she goes home.
- Q: How do you manage running of the home between you two, I mean who does the cooking and the shopping?
- A: We've got it down to now Susan will generally cook and then I bath and dress Ross, and then Susan does the shopping on the weekend, so she handles that side of things, it's always been Susan who handles that side of things, it's not been my game at all. So she handles that side of things and I pretty much handle the bigger payments, though financially we split the bills. But the only routine I would say is that she cooks and I clean him and we've both got it down to about an hour, and after that we chill and sit together for the rest of the evening. He goes to bed at about 20:00 or 21:00.
- Q: With regards to your parenting styles, I mean are you quite different or do you have similarities?
- A: We try to keep it as similar as possible, I think that everyone is going to have different ways of handling different phases; I'm a little bit firmer whereas Susan might be a bit softer with him. I think maybe it's a different relationship with him, mine is more like father and son, but we tend to try to do things together, but whenever there's a situation where one person is doing this and the other is doing quite the opposite, we obviously disagree about different things, but its usually we decide beforehand how we're going to deal with a particular situation. As he grows up and he starts going through different stages, he has teething, and you've got to have some similarities.
- Q: Has he started speaking?
- A: He's started to speak a lot more, I mean he can converse, he picked up words

reasonably early I think as far as kids go, but I mean he can form sentences now and he can ask us what he wants usually and he can tell us what he's doing and he can understand things, he knows what's going on. So we can't have a conversation yet but we're getting there.

Q: So did you have many discussions about the way that you were going to parent before your wife got pregnant?

A: We never discussed how we were going to parent. We discussed more about the birthing issues and if but we didn't really consider anything before the kid's actually born; well that's how we did it. So we never really thought about okay well when he does this, because we didn't really know what he would do, so the first 4 months is a bit chaotic. I don't think you can really prepare for something like that because every kid comes out totally different, so we never really know ahead of time.

Q: You mentioned before about during the pregnancy, did you go to like antenatal classes?

A: Yes we did go to classes. Ja, it's not compulsory but we did go, to learn together about things like changing and bathing, the whole care aspect.

Q: And the actual birth itself?

A: Yes it was a natural birth.

Q: Were you able to stay overnight?

A: She did go in overnight and when she started labour I went there in the late morning which was lekker thing...

Q: Did Susan work during her pregnancy?

A: Yes she worked until, I can't remember exactly but she worked pretty much until the baby arrived, she worked for about a month before she took leave.

Q: Did the dynamics change between you and your wife after the birth of your child?

A: Not so much, but Susan got a bit more emotional, she was usually pretty emotional most of the time so that was really the only thing. I suppose you get a little bit nervous with the first one, but I think this one will be a little bit more, you know, ... the initial child you don't know how you're going to handle it but I think towards the end Susan especially, got very tense about it, I viewed it slightly differently, my mindset was almost she can take it, roll with the punches kind of attitude and she was really well what if this happens, what if that happens, so I think she was far more tense about it than I was.

Q: Did you read baby books before you're child was born?

A: She did, I didn't. I mean she does it now even. I think she read a book cover to cover. She wanted me to read it but I'm not pregnant, so I understand it but I didn't really feel the need to go through that like a Bible, but I mean for a woman that's pregnant, she does need to understand that, she needs to know what's going on. I'm pretty much certain it's very different for a guy.

Q: And do you feel there's a relationship difference between a mother and child and a father and child?

A: I mean the way I felt in the beginning was, especially when they're younger and I don't know how it will be with the little girl but with a little boy it's very much mommy, mommy, mommy than daddy. And even to a degree now you will see if we are both there and he falls over he will go to her as opposed to coming to me, but if he wants to, and again this could be with little boys, but if he wants to ride bikes he comes to me so there's definitely a different way. It is very much a case of when there is pain involved and they need comforting children generally go to their mothers. Ja I think he could come to me but you know he's a little kid but there's that kind of nurture as well and there's that comfort. She also, because she was on maternity

leave, she would often go to him at night where I wouldn't, that kind of thing but I think there's a very physical bond as well, so you do pick that up. That's pretty obvious and then they go through stages where their daddy is the greatest thing in the world and then daddy doesn't exist, so it's very strange but you have to take it one day at a time.

Q: Do you feel that then because women have maternity leave and that allows them more bonding time with the child?

A: I think it does but I think it's also because they carry the kid so I mean there's a huge physical bond that they have already so I mean it's difficult to say because even if I was given paternity leave for 4 months I still wouldn't be able to breastfeed, I still wouldn't have that natural instinct that I believe a mother has with her kid that they nurture and they care for them as well so I think it's difficult to really - I mean if you had paternity leave sure you would might spend a bit more time with the kid, but those first 4 months they don't really acknowledge a hell of a lot outside of food, and I'm just talking from experience.

Q: Do you feel the day to day running schedule was affected by the fact that you had a child?

A: Hugely, hugely. The first few months were really, really tough, I mean regardless of whether it was Susan who went to him I would wake up anyway, I might have to go sit with her a bit, there were times when we made a lot of mistakes in the beginning but we accepted them, when he woke up we would sit in this chair for hours at a time, you would be there from 12 to 4, and go to bed and half an hour later you wake up to go to work, and then going to work and going home, you're exhausted. It had a huge effect.

Q: Who would you go to for emotional support if you felt that you needed it?

A: Well I was lucky because I had two of my closest friends, one friend had a son 2 weeks after Ross was born and my other friend had a little girl about a month, 2 months afterwards so we chat a lot about it. You try to chat to your partner but it's difficult because you're both so tired and you both shout at each other so much that you don't really look to that person for emotional support when you spent the last 5 hours screaming at them. I was lucky that my friends were going through the exact same thing, at the same time. That was cool, we had that ready-made for us and we are all very close friends so that made it very much easier, and Susan's got a friend with kids who's just been through it recently, so she was quite lucky, she had someone to talk to. I think the main thing is you always feel shit, I sort of like felt it's not our fault, and that we're not the only ones, our kids is not like this little shit but like this is how it is. And I think that had a hugely positive effect for us so we were lucky.

Q: And before you had the child, did you have any experience with children, had your friends had any?

A: Well my one mate had a little girl, I hadn't really dealt with her as well, I met her in passing a couple of times, I guess at that specific time we didn't see much of each other because he was working in a different area. But in my closest group of friends we were the first three. I was the youngest kid in my family and I'd never been around kids as well. Susan hadn't either but I mean she had friends with kids and so that helped. I think she had dealt with kids before and so she had a bit more of an understanding of them than I did. I had no idea, I had no idea how to handle it and those first four months I'll be honest I didn't handle it well but she was the only person. I'm not joking but I think the first time I saw a newborn baby was about 8 months before Ross was born that I held a newborn kid, it was quite a learning curve.

You've got to hold his head up, I think you get a fright, it's like more shit you don't want to hurt them or you don't want ... which is what those classes are for and especially for a guy like me because I didn't know what the hell to do.

Q: And did you find that your friends had also gone to similar classes?

A: They did go to classes as well, I mean we all did. One of my friends was overseas when Ross was born but my other friend was very close and we did chat to each other about that. We went to this class and he was great support friend, there were a couple of other guys who we've met these past couple of years now and we all keep in touch and we've got a chat group so that's quite nice.

Q: And do you find now that your son is older that you get more time to sleep?

A: Yes, much more, like I said well we made a lot of mistakes early on because we would wake up and stay up and then sitting with him the whole night allowed him to stay awake, so when he was about 11, or about 13 or 14 months we decided no he's getting too big to sit with so we sat in an armchair, we could hold him but then his legs were hanging so we just put him to sleep, so he'd cry, go back, cry, go back to sleep.

Q: And when your new child is born is she going to be in the same room?

A: No, we've prepared another room for her. I don't think, it's going to be difficult with two because then you've got one awake and the other one's awake so. But ja she'll have her own room and Ross will keep his room.

Q: And also with regards to family, do you have family nearby or does your wife have family nearby?

A: No, my wife's family is in East London, my parents are actually just down the road from us now.

Q: And do they provide any childcare support?

A: Ja my mother helps if we want to go out for dinner or if we need to go out, my mother helps out and my father hasn't yet but only because I haven't asked him, I haven't really wanted to, things are a bit haywire in that respect, but my mother will look after him, because Ross, it's quite good in that respect, we haven't had to leave him alone during the day because we have the nanny, but no mother will look after him during the day. If we have to go somewhere where he can't come we will either ask my mother or the nanny to look after him.

Q: Okay and do you have two siblings as well?

A: We do ja, I've got two brothers and Susan has got a brother as well but he's in East London.

Q: And I mean apart from your mother, have you ever hired any other babysitters as well?

A: No, with Ross at this age it's a bit hectic still, it would also be a bit hectic for someone to come from outside, they're not really going to know what to do so we can leave him with my mother or the nanny.

Q: So do you and your wife have free time?

A: Ja I run a lot so that's my leave time, so I often run from work now during the day or after work I'll go for a run, go for a run around the area or maybe run in Tokai forest, but it's a bit tough ... and I try to run in the evenings or early mornings but weekends I'll run for a little longer in the evenings, so that's pretty much my individual time, then I'll meet friends. But Susan does not, I mean she'll meet friends and so on but not really - I mean she spends a lot of time with Ross because she feels her weekends are the time to make up. I do too, to a degree but I still feel that you need some time by yourself. When she needs it I give it to her as well.

Q: Is Ross at the age now where he plays with toys?

- A: Ja he plays with his cars and he's quite, I mean he wants us there, he does want people around him but you can get 30 minutes before he tugs on your pants leg and he wants you to come but I mean he is getting there.
- Q: Do you and your wife ever get the opportunity just to go on dates?
- A: Well we do, we started having a date night on Friday nights, we wait for him to go to bed before we eat, we usually eat together, and we also get time at home, I mean if you don't, I mean you find a lot of guys sort of put the kids to bed, and in my mind why the hell have kids if you don't want to have time where you can spend it together, so we started eating together, like early evening. If we want to go out then know I just call my mom because she's pretty easy with that sort of stuff.
- Q: Were both of your mothers working mothers or stay at home mothers?
- A: No my mother was a stay at home mom, pretty much the whole way through, and Susan's mother I think went back to work. She's a teacher, she's still teaching now, she went back I think when the kids were at school, I think when Susan and her brother, went to school she started working again.
- Q: And have you noticed similarities or differences between the way you were brought up as a child and they way that you're brining up your own child?
- A: No I think you pick up on what your parents would have done. My parents would argue and I started seeing that so there was that sort of thing that you pick up and I can't speak for Susan but I'm sure there are things that she has done that her mother has done, but I handled certain things quite badly in the beginning that I remember my father used to do, how he would handle certain things, I picked that up more so than the positive things. I've picked up very quickly on the negative aspects of parenting which is good in a way, to reflect on the mistakes I suppose.
- Q: And do you have any pets in your house?
- A: We've got two dogs, two little Dachshunds so they're quite jealous little dogs but two very noisy little dogs, and they cause quite a chaotic scenario because you pick the kid up and the dogs get jealous. That can be quite hectic so I think you have to be careful with having kids and then you start to understand why older parents don't want to ... it's such a bloody mission, you've got the responsibility of the kids and now you've got the dogs running around, it's quite hectic.
- Q: Did the dogs have quite a bit of jealousy when he was born?
- A: The male did. The female was around him, I mean they're small dogs and she's small for a Dachshund even so I think she was a bit nervous but she got to grips, I mean she was very quick to start licking him and touching him and jumping him but the male snapped a couple of times. Nothing serious, he never actually bit him and he never went for him but you've got to be careful because of their height as well.
- Q: So are you responsible for the walking? I mean do you take them on your runs?
- A: We don't actually, no they wouldn't last on the runs, they're two small, but they actually are hardcore, but no we've got a reasonable sized property so we just let them run around. We should walk them more but they're also so noisy they'll bark the whole way. So we're not proud of it, we don't walk them, but they get plenty of exercise charging up and down the yard.
- Q: Who takes the responsibility of feeding them?
- A: We share it, I mean that kind of thing is really not a big chore, you know we've even got to that point where Ross will help to feed them, you know I'll get home and Ross will bring the bowls and he'll fill them, so it's quite cool. We have a routine with him now and he knows where to put the bowls and he knows where everything is and he wants to pack it away, so that's really simple.
- Q: Could you just give me an example of what you enjoy about parenting?

- A: It's difficult to sum up I guess but I mean for me the early days were shocking, I mean I won't lie to you, there were a couple of times I would panic. But I think for me there was really a lot of negative aspects, it's as if you have your life robbed from you for a while, you feel a little bit disenchanted with it but as they get older there's definitely this idea of that you've got this amazing little guy that's so perfect that you become quite jaded as you get older, but your kids are quite open to everything, everything is amazing, so it's like with Ross when they start noticing everything it's like amazing to watch this little kid, he looks around and his eyes are wide and he like really soaks everything up. It's amazing to be a father and it's quite nice to know that you are involved in this little kid and you are like moral comfort and you get home and you have this little person who's so happy to see you, it's like you are his world, because now that he's becoming a little boy he sees a ball and he wants to kick it and he wants to throw the ball, dad is his favourite because I love sports so for me to have the ability to go outside and kick the ball around, and here's this guy and he's screaming with laughter, it's awesome. So I mean that's probably for the moment is the main thing for me is to have those moments that are like knowing that this is your kid, so it's really special.
- Q: And then the things that you didn't like about parenting?
- A: I think it's the time, I mean I need my alone time, so you almost like you say you feel wrong sometimes in that you almost feel you are a selfish person, which I will admit I am a bit selfish. Honestly can feel a little bit disturbed about it, you almost have to let go of that, well it's not about you any more, you need to put that part of yourself and pack it away and try to play on that. I mean it's quite a responsibility, it can be quite hectic knowing that you can't go out, you can't go out for a drink after work and go home three hours later than usual, because I've got to be there for the nanny to go home so there is that responsibility for the young parents that can be quite hectic. I've got few friends with kids and none of the others have this, I mean the one says that he will ask to go to the beach and then go to the bar afterwards whereas I'm waking up in the morning and then my day is taken up with Ross and everything revolves around how we can fit him in. So I suppose that's been the most part of what I don't like about parenting.
- Q: Do you think then you would perhaps have found it harder if your friends hadn't had kids at the same time?
- A: I think I would, because you don't have that understanding with your friends, and I think you need it because very few people understand what it's like, even previous parents because they're not there anymore, because they've got kids and they've been through it and you can't take that away from them. Susan was already forgetting about it about a year after Ross was born and I don't know if it's true but apparently females have something that they do together, and they forget. I don't know whether that's true but that's what I've been told whereas I made a point of holding onto the really bad part and I remember that and I would go through that part, and think oh shit that happened. But you need people your own age and you need your peers around you as well.
- Q: So do you and your friends who've had children get together often?
- A: Ja we do, we're actually going out later this month, to stay at a lodge, so we'll stay there for a week with the kids and everything, and often we have braai days and we'll go out and everything, it's easier and you don't have to worry about the other guys getting bored and all that.
- Q: And so if you're going there for a week is that holiday time that you both have to take off?

- A: Ja.
- Q: Have you been on travelling overseas since Ross was born?
- A: No, not overseas, we have been to East London, I've driven up to East London but flying is a lot easier, you don't have to spend 8 hours in a car. A lot of Susan's family live upcountry so you end up sleeping in the same room as the kid.
- Q: So was your child fine on the plane then?
- A: Ja he just fell asleep. I've only been with him twice on the plane and both times he fell asleep. It would be interesting now because he's into planes, but Susan is going to Jo'burg with him at the end of the year so it looks like she'll find out then.
- Q: When did you decide to have a second child? Did you always know that you wanted another?
- A: Ja I mean I would have been happy with one personally, but I compromised by making it very clear that that's it then. I think it was always the case that I didn't mind having two whereas Susan really wants two so I think it would be fairly selfish of me to go no, you know I'd rather not, and I think also I've seen how kids who've grown up alone and how they can battle with loneliness. I knew, having brothers, it was cool having brothers, it's nice to have another kid in the house and also if you're going to be brutally honest they can also look after one another, so that also had an impact on my thinking anyway that they get a bit of company which is quite nice. But it was more because Susan wanted another kid for whatever reason; I couldn't tell you why she's so desperate to have another one but her instincts maybe. So ja we also decided we didn't want the gap to be too big so just under a 3 year gap which isn't bad so that is the reason why we decided to do this.
- Q: So what was the reason you didn't want it to be too big a gap?
- A: For the children yes because you know a 5 year gap, as an age gap is very big because they won't be doing a hell of a lot together as they get older, whereas 3 years, they can still spend a lot of time together growing up and it will only be when they start going to school that they will open up and have other friends any way and that won't really matter so much, so whether its right or not we will find out then.
- Q: And how long have you been married?
- A: I don't actually know, what are we now, 2012, Ross is going on 3 next year, I think it's 6 years next year.
- Q: And when did you decide to have a baby, was it after you got married?
- A: Ja, after we got married. When we were going out I didn't want kids at all, but it was more because I was going through a little phase and then we decided, we always knew we were going to have kids when we got married, so we went into marriage with the idea of kids.
- Q: Okay and did you plan the pregnancies, were they planned?
- A: Yes they were very much planned, I held off from a financial point of view, I wanted to make sure we could afford it, there's nothing worse than having a kid and you can't actually bring it up the way you want to so I think we held off, we started trying about a year and a half into the marriage.
- Q: Do you find now you struggle more financially with a child?
- A: It had an impact, you need to be a bit more careful about what you spend money on, we haven't had a situation where "Oh my God how are we going to get through the month", we've been lucky that our company started to take off somewhat so we had additional money coming in. I've got a bit of additional work coming in as well and the salaries that we do have are good so we can get by quite happily with that. I mean it obviously had an impact, I mean I would be lying if I said no it's not expensive having kids but it hasn't been unmanageable.

Q: Would you want your child to be at the same school that you went to?

A: To be honest I don't have any desire that he has to go to Sacs School, I mean if I feel Sacs is the best school at that point in time I will send him there but no I've got no ties with Sacs that I feel he's got to go there. I couldn't care less where he goes as long as he gets a good education and what's right for him. I mean Sacs is a very sports orientated school and he might not like sports.

Q: Do you own your house as well?

A: Well we're paying it off. It's a bond. We got lucky in the respect that Susan's parents paid off their bond on their house and then they took out an extra bond on their house so we are still paying off the bond that they took out and so they pay half and they pay the other half so then we'll take the house when they pass on.

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