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From Provider to Carer:
Identifying Opportunities and Challenges of the New South African Fatherhood

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July, 2016

Master Thesis MSc Social Policy and Social Interventions 2015/ 2016

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Abstract

This study examines the impact of a paternity leave on South African fathers' caring behaviour at home during and after leave days. Furthermore, the challenges and opportunities of implementing a statutory paternity leave in South Africa are accessed through the interdisciplinary lens of the capability approach. By taking into account (1) individual, (2) societal, and (3) institutional factors, this multi –layered analysis focusses on theories about masculinity, fatherhood and organizational culture to shed further light on current gender dynamics. Findings from 15 semi-structured interviews with fathers, employers and trade union representatives, show that partly malleable gender norms and supportive organisational cultures provide sustenance for changes in the Basic Conditions of Employment Act (1997). However, institutional barriers and the lack of a unified movement at the forefront advocating in favour of a statutory paternity leave are delaying the progress.

Keywords: capability approach, fatherhood, gender equality, paternity leave

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The twentieth century has brought significant changes to traditional gender role divisions. The clear division of tasks between a man, being the earner by providing financial means to the family, and the woman, being the carer by taking up all the household responsibilities, has undergone a dramatic change with the rapid entry of women into the labour market (Crompton, 1999; Lewis, 2001). However, men have not experienced a similar shift in the tasks they are expected to perform when it comes to providing unpaid care and household activities (Anderson, Beehofer & Gershuny, 1994). This does not come without a cost. In South Africa, for example, the Department of Health (1999), found that 51,1% of children grow up with absent fathers. This has enormous implications for women, who are left overloaded with the double workload of stepping into the role as lone earner and carer (Blackden & Wodon, 2006), as well as for the children, who are exposed to an economical and psychological deficit (Posel & Devey, 2006). In order to alleviate women from the double burden of work and care responsibilities, welfare states have introduced a wide range of public and private care facilities and tax reductions to support dual earners or single parent families (Morgan, 2012). Strikingly, most policies that are supposed to relief the difficulties of conciliating work and family life, are aimed at promoting mothers' employment and not fathers' participation in the household (Lewis, 1997; Lewis, 2002; Morgan, 2012).

While South Africa has one of the most progressive African leave systems, it serves as a prime example that reflects the constitutional disregard for men as equal caregivers. On one hand, the 'Basic Conditions of Employment Act' (1997) allows pregnant mothers a leave period of four consecutive months with a payment of up to 60% of the salary that can be claimed from the 'Unemployment Insurance Fund' (Unemployment Insurance Act, 2001). On the other hand, working fathers are only entitled to a paid "family responsibility leave" which consist of three days per year (Morrell, 2006; The South African Presidency, 2009) and can be taken in the event of a sick child, child birth or the death of a family member. No other provisions are granted for parents in the case of childbirth. The lack of a paternity leave policy sends a clear message to men that is in line with the strong cultural notion of fatherhood in South Africa being strongly associated with the function of providing for the family, with little to no caring responsibilities (Lesejane, 2006; Morrell, 2006; Mavungo, 2013). Richter, Chikovore and Makusha (2010) have pointed to the importance of policies to strengthen father's involvement with their children by promoting the inclusion of men in

existing services and programs such as (child) healthcare and the social security system as well as the right to an extended paternity leave.

There is vast scientific evidence about the benefits of fathers participating in child rearing, including positive effects on mothers' salary (Johansson, 2010), well-being (Redshaw & Henderson, 2013) and children's developmental level (Waldfogel, 2006). In line with these advantages, paternal leave policies enabling fathers to exercise their responsibility as a caring parent - as opposed to a providing parent - have gained attention (Gornick & Meyers, 2003). In order to promote a more gender equal agenda in South Africa, a number of non-governmental organizations, trade unions and political parties have advocated for men stepping forward to take on more caring responsibilities and experiencing a multifaceted form of fatherhood. One example is the MenCare project (2014) that is endorsed by the non-governmental organisation Sonke Gender Justice. The MenCare leave platform (forthcoming) campaigns for a paternity leave and takes into account several internationally recommended measures such as the right to job protection, high wage replacement rates (Gornick & Meyers, 2008; Lewis, 2009; Javornik, 2014) and non-transferable leave days (Gornick & Meyers, 2003, 2008) that cannot be switched between parents. Another example is the trade union COSATU (2015) currently demanding a non-transferable ten-day paternity leave for fathers, which they would like to extend to a full two months of leave provision.

Even though these requests for paternity leave take into account several criteria that push for gender equality by allowing fathers to be as available at home as mothers on an institutional level, paternity leave take-up rates remain low in most countries that have seen its implementation (Doucet, 2009; Hobson & Fahlén, 2009), leaving it a challenge for policymakers to create the right incentives for fathers to become more involved with childcare. Furthermore, there are also societal challenges specific to South Africa that need to be overcome (Richter & Morrell, 2006). One example, is the culturally ingrained perception of fatherhood being only linked to financial responsibilities within the family (Lesejane, 2006; Morrell, 2006) while having a distant take on caring responsibilities that are seen as unmanly, thereby threatening dominant masculinity traits of being perceived as strong, unemotional and independent (Morrell, 1998; Redpath, Morrell, Jewkes & Peacock, 2008). In order to efficiently tackle the obstacles to an equal work-family balance of both sexes, this research is going to investigate the current challenges that South African men are facing when it comes to their exertion of a caring fatherhood. This is relevant at an institutional, social and individual level.

Theoretical Framework

For an analysis of paternal leave provisions in South Africa a number of context dependent factors need to be taken into account. When it comes to family constellations and fatherhood, it is important to note that a very large number of South African fathers are absent and do not have contact with their children or their children's mother (Morrell & Richter, 2006; Holborn & Eddy, 2011), which makes an analysis that focusses on fathers as individuals instead of being part of a household more valuable. Nevertheless, the context in which fathers are embedded in also plays a crucial role since our actions are never independent from our culture, the environment and the people around us. South Africa's racial diversity poses another challenge by playing a role in the mechanisms behind their societal structures and ultimately influencing the opportunities of its people. A framework that considers the complexities of human interaction, while still acknowledging individual choice and preferences in decision making is needed to shed light on the mechanisms that are enabling and/or hindering fathers to become more involved with their children. One such framework was proposed by Amartya Sen (1992) and his 'Capability Approach' will lay the foundation for this analysis on the possibilities and obstacles of paternity leave in South Africa.

The Capability Approach

The capability approach is a theoretical framework that is commonly used for the evaluation of people's well-being and the social arrangements they live in. It focuses on the beings and doings, which Sen defines as capabilities (opportunity) and functionings (outcome) (Sen, 1992). In other words, the capability approach defines people's reasoning in the opportunities (capabilities) they have and the ultimate choices they make that lead to a certain outcome (functioning). Noteworthy is the fact that even if people do have the same resources one can see substantial variation in their achievements because their freedom enables them to make different choices. The process of choice making is therefore influenced by complex inter- and intragroup interactions (Sen, 1992).

When it comes to gender inequality, Sen (1992) sees its cause in the different freedoms that are specific to gender. Furthermore, he argues that through the capability lens gender inequalities can be better analysed since it goes further than just taking into account means and resources. It takes the intrinsic motivations around opportunities and achievements into account. This is in line with Lewis and Giullari (2005) who claim that the division of unpaid (care) work at home has remained largely unchanged, resulting in a constraint of women's

nature of choice in the pursuit of their capabilities. When men and women hold unequal positions in society, the choices and freedoms of men to decide between (paid) work and (unpaid) care directly influence women's choices, and this influence is usually of a limiting nature. Therefore, Lewis and Giullari (2005) point out the difficulties in reconciling choice with equality, when our actions in the household are dependent on one another. They point to the important role of policies to address the issue of balancing work and care, with a focus on women's empowerment in the labour market, and incentives for men to participate in care work. But in order to examine how such policies can have the desired effect on people's pursuit of functionings, specific capabilities need to be outlined first.

Robeyns (2003) suggested a list of relevant capabilities to examine gender inequalities in western societies (see *figure 1*). By taking on a five-step selection process, she ultimately identified fourteen capabilities that are important for a gendered evaluation of western society. While Robeyns (2003) purposefully specifies her list on gender inequality by giving more concrete criteria by which individuals can be evaluated, Hobson and Fahlén (2011) developed an even more precise list of capabilities for the analysis of work-life balance (WLB) between the sexes (see *figure 1*). Their list focuses on a European context but the researchers' formulation of three capability set categories also makes this list suitable to be used in other contexts. The three categories that originally stem from Sen's initial approach are (1) individual factors, (2) societal factors and (3) environmental factors. Hobson and Fahlén (2009, 2011) modified the environmental factors to institutional factors since they include laws and policies, which are substantial for an achievement of WLB, in a more accurate way. For this paper Hobson and Fahléns (2011) capability sets are used for the specific analysis of an institutional factor, namely a paternity leave provision. Their chosen capabilities are being used in this analysis because paternity leave is one of many policies that can contribute to a better WLB and can therefore be seen as an operationalization of Hobson and Fahlén's institutional policy level (see *figure 1*).

Masculinity

Whereas the useful information on individual factors (demographics) remains largely equal for an analysis across contexts, the differences in societal/ community factors have a strong impact. In order to analyse the effects a paternity leave policy has on men's caring functioning, it is first necessary to identify what it means to be a South African man. Desirable masculine characteristics are commonly understood as being socially constructed (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005; Morrell, 2006). As it is the case in South Africa, men are seen as respectable and dominant if they show strength, independence and control (Morrell,

1998). These traits are linked to being employed and having a stable source of income as well as refraining from showing emotions which are generally linked to femininity and, therefore, seen as a weakness (Redpath et al., 2008). Altogether, notions of masculinity fall in line with a South African society displaying a deeply rooted patriarchal culture (Morrell, Jewkes, & Lindegger, 2012). This sets the baseline for other male identities that emerge later on in life such as a man taking on the role of a father at home, or at the workplace being an employee. Furthermore, gender norms are susceptible to other identities and beliefs such as race, class, and religion (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005) creating a variety of complex interconnections. For the purpose of this research on paternity leave provisions, a closer look will be paid on the link between masculinity and fatherhood and, in a second step, the intersection between being a father and being a paid worker will be reviewed.

Fatherhood. When it comes to family and children, the responsibilities that a man has in an average South African household is to provide (Lesejange, 2006; Mavungu Thomson-de Boor, & Mphaka, 2013; Redpath et al., 2008). Fathers exercise the function of being the earner, while South African mothers are mostly seen as carers, even if they do participate in the labour market (Morrell, 2006). Therefore, being employed and financially independent is a core aspect of South African masculinity, which extends itself to being able to financially care for one's offspring (Barker & Ricardo, 2005; Lwambo, 2013). Guilt is experienced by the fathers who are not able to step up to the earning responsibilities and many withdraw themselves from their families or are excluded by the child's mother and their relatives leading to a high rate of absenteeism (Mavungu, 2013). This highlights the need for fathers to take on caring responsibilities that go beyond their social expectations. Such responsibilities include emotional and moral support, protection and stepping up as a role model and recent research has found that fathers are increasingly attributing more importance to such responsibilities (Chili & Maharaj, 2015; Enderstein & Boonzaier, 2015). Morrell (2006) also highlights that there is a difference between the physical and emotional presence of a father. It is necessary to acknowledge that physically absent fathers (due to economic migration, for example) can still exercise emotional fatherhood (Rabe, 2006). This needs to be realized by fathers as well as by mothers who deny access to fathers if they fail to provide for their children financially. Consequently, Morrell and Jewkes (2011) call for a change in the gendered notion of care work in order to break down stereotypical masculine hesitations of such.

Work-Environment. Shifting the focus from the home to the workplace, further challenges arise. As mentioned, employment and financial independence constitute a strong

component of the dominant South African masculinity. Therefore, a father's workplace (or the absence of it) can influence his involvement at home (Bygren & Duvander, 2006; Russel & Hwang, 2004). Parenting decisions are shaped by the institutional context and, therefore, policies can enhance or change cultural and societal norms (Fagan, 2001). Research has contested the idea of organizational theories proposing that organizations are gender neutral (Acker, 1990; Ely & Meyerson, 2000; Kossek, Lewis, & Hammer, 2009), classifying the worker as free from caring responsibilities (Bailyn, 2003). Structural support by means of a paternity leave policy, acknowledges a worker's identity as a father. However, having the right structures in place is not enough. A safe environment is needed in which workers feel comfortable in making use of the benefits. A supporting organizational culture has a positive impact on the individual 's disposition to enact different identities equally (Kossak et al., 2009). While women face discrimination in the public domain for being considered dependent on household/ childcare responsibilities, men are confronted with institutional barriers that prevent them from taking on a more caring role at home (Sallee, 2012).

This research is aimed at assessing the possibilities of enhancing father's participation in caring for their children through a paternity leave. In order to examine the effects that a paternity leave policy had on fathers who made use of it, this study uses the capability approach with the concepts of resources, capabilities and functionings to see whether fathers convert their entitlements into functionings that enhance gender equality in the household. Furthermore, it also serves to see the opportunities and barriers on an institutional, individual and social level. Since this study focuses on the potential agency of working fathers, it attempts to shed light on how paternal leave policies translate into wanted functionings of a caring father that can be exercised in the household as well as in the workspace. Therefore, the following research question will be central to this paper: *To what extent does a paternal leave policy in South Africa enable fathers' participation in caring for their children?* In order to answer this question, the following sub-questions will guide the research process built on the capability approach, and more specifically, its societal factor that is distinctive to the South African notion of fatherhood: *"What are the challenges that South African fathers overcame by taking paternity leave in terms of their masculinity to share the role of the carer and how did they overcome them?" and "What obstacles can be identified that hinder fathers to provide unpaid care work in regards to their resources and capabilities?"*

Methods

In order to answer the proposed research questions, a qualitative analysis consisting of 15 semi-structured interviews was chosen to gain an in-depth view of the mechanisms that

motivated and de-motivated South African fathers in assuming a more caring role for their children. The interviews give further insight on the impact of paternity leave on a micro level. On a macro level it sheds light onto the difficulties fathers encountered when it comes to the resources that enable or inhibit the functioning of caring for children at home.

Participants

Selected participants had to be at least 18 years old to qualify for an interview. Since the South African households and living arrangements consist of a very diverse set up, no restrictions on marital status or household composition were made (for an overview, see *Appendix A, Table I*).

Fathers/Employees. To evaluate the paternity, leave effects on fathers and the caring responsibilities they took on after childbirth, ten fathers that have made use of a paternity leave period offered by their company/ organization that extends to at least five days were interviewed. In order to assess different experiences from the Capetonian labour market, participants were sampled from different employers, two of which operate in the retail sector (with 5 and 8 days of leave), and one non-governmental organization (4 weeks of leave). Two employers were contacted through their human resource departments while participants from one employer were sampled in a trade union meeting.

Fathers/Managers. In order to better evaluate the structures that enable (and hinder) the provision of paternity leave on a macro level, participants that supervise or make use of staff were also interviewed. Two of the ten sampled fathers at the companies/ organisation hold managerial positions and were therefore, not only able to state their own paternity leave experience but also comment on the organizational challenges of providing extended paternity leave. Additionally, two entrepreneurs and one other staff-managing employee were directly approached with information provided by the Policy, Development and Advocacy Manager from Sonke Gender Justice. While being also fathers themselves they did not enjoy the benefit of a paternity leave at the time their children were born. By being self-employed or in a flexible work environment, they self-managed their working hours allowing them to spend time with their new-borns and therefore, also contributing to the analysis of men's caring responsibilities in this study.

Trade Unions. To get yet another perspective at the intersection between corporate interests and workers rights, one coordinator responsible for the Western Cape region of each trade union COSATU and SACCAWU was also interviewed. Both trade unions are currently advocating for more parental leave benefits. COSATU (2015) is advocating for a minimum of 10 days of paternity leave for employers, discussing an expansion to 2 months

and a campaign for male workers to be given the right of leave days in order to support maternal pre-natal appointments. SACCAWU's model parental rights agreement sees 14 months of paid parental leave for parents free of discrimination based on sex, race and gender (SACCAWU & LACOM, 2013). The interviews with the coordinators are conducted in order to get a top-down perspective from an institutional point of view that will add up to the general understanding of fathers' choices when it comes to Work-Life-Balance.

Research Design

Interviews were predicted to last 40 minutes and they ultimately lasted between 25 and 60 minutes. All participant felt comfortable to hold the interview in English and no translator was needed. The interviews were held individually in closed off rooms in the respective homes or offices apart from the three participants sampled at the trade union meeting, which were interviewed together in a private room. While the interviews with the fathers focused on their capacity to convert capabilities related to fatherhood into different functionings, managers were also enquired about the organizational difficulties of leave periods. The interviews with the trade union representatives focused on their institutional challenges of implementing paternity leave and the necessary resources that need to be provided to empower male employers with the capabilities and freedoms to reach the desired achievement of engaging in unpaid care work.

Topic list. Interview questions for fathers were structured using a three step process: First, the different aspects of the capability approach were highlighted. These are the three categories of the capability sets that were adopted from Hobson and Fahlén (2011), (1) institutional factors, which represent organizational challenges on a policy level (2) societal factors, which correspond to cultural norms regarding fatherhood and masculine traits, and (3) individual factors, such as job satisfaction and household composition that can have an influence on the the daily functioning of the father's caregiving role. Second, these abstract capabilities together with their underlying theories were operationalized into concrete being's and doing's such as concrete household responsibilities (cleaning, cooking, maintenance), caring responsibilities (washing, feeding, changing nappies, playing), and perceptions on fatherhood (caring, providing, home making), for example. Lastly, questions were formulated by taking the operationalization into account. This process ensured that participants were enquired about their freedom, ability, choice and outcome of using the opportunity of a paternity leave and that the given answers could ultimately be linked back to the theoretical concepts used in this study. Since all managers in this study are also fathers that took time to be at home after childbirth, the same topic list was used in their interviews. However, a

stronger focus was put on institutional factors, such as policy procedures and organizational culture. (see *Appendix A, Table II* for the complete topic list). The two expert interviews with trade union representatives were held individually after all interviews with the fathers were completed and focussed on two main topics: (1) the current standpoint from each trade union in terms of policy model and advocacy for paternity leave, and (2) their perception of the most challenging hurdles preventing implementation.

Informed Consent

All participants read and signed an informed consent form given to them at the beginning of the interview. It included information about the reason of the study, the procedures involved, the estimated time length of the interview and confidentiality measures. Furthermore, it was explicitly stated that participation is voluntary and that participants have the right to skip questions, topics or to stop the interview completely at any time if they have the wish to do so. The contact details of the interviewer as well as the contact details from Sonke Gender Justice were included in case participants had any follow-up questions (see *Appendix B* for the informed consent form).

"We need to work, but we also need to be at home, you understand?"

Results

Involvement in Domestic Responsibilities

In this study responsibilities include any form of unpaid work that the fathers engaged in at home while they were on paternity leave and afterwards, when they got back to their work routine. It is important to distinguish two main types of work: domestic chores, which include general household maintenance tasks such as cleaning, cooking, gardening or repair work, and caring tasks that specifically involve attending to household members that are in need, such as a child. Participants explained that they engaged in a variety of domestic chores and caring tasks without any restrictions or hesitations, however, mostly this statement was followed by the catch-phrase "if needed" indicating only partial or secondary responsibility when it comes to carrying them out. Another option mentioned is having a maid employed that helps with the duties at home. This can take the form of a maid helping out once or twice a week, to as much as having a maid permanently living in the household.

"Do I think there should be a difference? I don't think so. But there probably is a difference."

Caring tasks. Participants cite a wide number of caring tasks that they engage in at home. However, in the responses the responsibilities differ between the days when fathers are on paternity leave right after childbirth and other days when the family settled into a normal routine afterwards. Therefore, this section is divided into caring tasks that were mostly performed during the paternity leave days and the caring responsibilities that fathers are performing after the leave period. The after-leave-period ranges from the child's age of about four months (South Africa's minimum statutory maternity leave allowance) to the current age of the child.

On leave days. It is common for the fathers to divide their leave days in two or more parts. The first days are taken off right after the child's mother gives birth and depending on how many days are left, the rest of the leave is taken in the following weeks to come. Participants express appreciation for having the chance to spend more days off work than the statutory three-day family responsibility leave. On one hand participants feel that caring for the new-born and attending to all the household tasks is "hard core", "exhausting" and "a lot of work", on the other hand many also have a wish for more "quality time when they are tiny" or "bonding time" at the early stages of development of the child. Fathers state that they "did everything", "[can be asked] to do anything" and "stabilised the house" during their paternity leave days right after their child was born. Tasks that are mentioned specifically to the care of the new-born are washing the baby, changing or washing the pampers/nappies, giving the baby the bottle (also at night), and more generally "caring for him/her".

Interesting is the choice of words that is often used to describe the activities they engage in. Sentences are formulated with verbs such as "need" or "have". For example, one participant states that he "had to wash the nappies", another one observes: "I needed to bath her, I needed to put her asleep". This is a recurring sentence structure, indicating that these tasks are only performed on a temporary basis. This is in accordance to another notable finding that comes up repeatedly in the interviews. In terms of care work after child birth, many men place their care focus on the mother, frequently, even more often than on the baby. This is especially true for participants who reveal that their partners had a caesarean delivery and as a consequence "could not really care". Other statements such as "she can ask me to do anything until she feels she is fit enough" and "I did everything that she is supposed to do" reveal a support but nonetheless, a temporary and gendered nature of the participant's perception on general caring responsibilities.

Another care responsibility is added when participants mention that they share their household with more than one child. In this case it seems that a father's main caring responsibility after attending to the mother's need is the "distraction" of other children in the household. As one participant puts it, "you have to spend more time with the other children because they get jealous". And yet another comment from a different participant is, "When he sees mommy carrying the baby he gets jealous, […] then I have to assist him and his mother to keep the balance, you see". This information also links to a statement from a third participant, "I am not comfortable with handling babies, up until a certain age I become more comfortable". Taken all statements together, there is a tendency of filling in with care work, whenever there is a gap. They assist with all the caring tasks and are eager to do so, at least temporarily, but do not portray themselves as equal caregiver. Through many statements a notion of an assistant caregiver is presented that is ready to step in and handle any situation if the first caregiver (the mothers) is unavailable, exhausted or attending only to the youngest child. As one participant puts it, "you need realistically the mother to spend time with the baby and the father needs to fill the gaps". A portrayal of a confident, consistent care figure is less common. Nevertheless, "It is like I am in the zone", says a participant that seemed very confident and secure about his role as an equally caring father.

"If I am available, I am able to assist"

***After leave days*.** If right after pregnancy the father's caring focus is on the mother of the child, none of the participants linked caring tasks to the mother after the post-pregnancy period was over. Routinely caring tasks in the house are mostly associated with spending time with the child/children, both for recreational ("drawing", "biking", "playing games") as well as educational ("helping them with the homework", "guiding", "parenting", "teaching values") purposes. In all interviews the struggle for Work-Life-Balance is a topic. Long working hours from the participants, but also a busy schedule from the children seem to pose threats to a deeper involvement from fathers in the care domain: "It is really difficult to spend as much time with them as you want, […] they have all these extra-curricular activities that they do." One participant states that his motivation to engage in more care and housework is high but that "as nice as it sounds in theory, I don't think practically it is viable. I would love to do less work, but I mean it is not practical in terms of what we do, so…". By summarizing father's care tasks after the leave days are over, it appears that the sampled participants have the desire to be more involved in the household/caring dynamics but that

external factors, mostly their work, inhibit them to reach their full potential. Ultimately, the priority goes to the role of the employee instead of the role as a (caring) father. Enquired about the reasoning behind it, one participant states: "There is never enough time for both (referring to work and care) and first you have to make ends meet".

Domestic chores. Participants mention a variety of different chores they performed at home. Some of the tasks that are mentioned include cleaning tasks such as sweeping the floor, washing the dishes, doing the laundry and ironing it afterwards. Another task mentioned is cooking. Even though it becomes clear that cooking does not belong to the tasks that participants are doing on a daily basis, it is by far the one cited most often as favourite household responsibility. General maintenance repair work around the house is rarely mentioned.

Challenging Masculinity

To assess what it means to be a father and an employee in the South African context, this study analyses perceptions of masculinity primarily through the lens of economic empowerment. In a second step, a closer look is paid to the man within the private domain, taking on the new role as a father and accommodating it within his existing understanding of masculinity.

Financial independence. Participants generally disagree with the statement that a successful man is a man that is financially independent. While the importance of having financial means ("If you are not financially independent you would not be able to do the stuff you want to do") is acknowledged, everyone adds their own interpretation to the notion of a successful man. These vary from "finding the right mix between your spiritual and family life" and "caring about the family because providing and caring is different" to "success cannot be measured by material gains because that can disappear". When gender was taken into the equation, the first impression is of men not minding having a lower income than their partners, or even being supported by them. However, this sentence is frequently followed with an objection. For example, "Look it is not a big deal but it doesn't mean that it is a permanent arrangement" or "I mean I love my kids but I am a typical guy" (answering if he would mind being a stay at home father). While on the surface the participants like to portray themselves as progressive thinking individuals when it comes to the evaluation of their financial status, on a closer look many seem uncomfortable with the idea of reversed roles. "I also quite like that you are providing for your family. […] …she could have worked and earned more but I think the reality in my mind is that the mother is the primary caregiver", one participant expresses about stepping into the role of the earner, while establishing a direct

link to his viewpoint on what it means to be a father.

"I am here at work now; my second shift is at home"

Fatherhood identity.

The perceptions of being a father is connoted with a sense of responsibility and proudness. Being a role model is a main reason for taking parental leave as well as "setting a good example to the family". Generally aware of the stereotype that fathers main role in parenting is to provide, there is a wish to be seen as a caring and involved parent and "not only providing money to buy some sweets or go to the movies". For the participants, a good father is a father that "gets involved even before the baby is born", "[is an] involved parent that spends time with their children and the mother", "does leisure things together", "sees to their upbringing" and "transmits a value system", to give a few examples.

Own fathers. The relationship with participants' own fathers is also a recurrent topic that helps shaping their fatherhood perceptions. While participants' experiences differed, such as growing up without any connection to their fathers on one hand, and having a good relationship with them on the other hand, there is a motivation to be a better father: "I have to put in extra effort for my children and I want to give them what I didn't receive", "I want to be different from my father. I want to prove society that I can still do it". Notably, even when the own father serves as a role model, there are always improvements that can be made: "My father has been a role model to me, and that is what I would like to do even more for my children". So it seems that no matter the role of the participant's father, they always see room for improvement and make it one of their goals to become a better parent.

Obstacles to the Resources and Capabilities of a Paternity Leave Policy

This section will focus on the resources and capabilities that are currently in place. Starting on a macro level from the trade union's stance on paternity leave, it follows with the organizational processes that scaffold the current leave provisions. Lastly, a closer look is paid on the micro level, as to how employees and employers negotiate the leave procedure.

"Paternity leave is not about a holiday.

[…] It is a commitment that you have to the child"

Trade union policy and advocacy. Interviewed trade unions negotiate rights and benefits for the worker with corporate management and governing bodies. Paternity leave is a benefit that has an alleviating role in order to reconcile work and family live. However, it oftentimes "does not get enough focus" because "wages are always the first concern". Furthermore, trade unions' concern spans in two directions. Disseminating the importance of fatherhood between the working class and negotiating better conditions for additional parental leave benefits in the 'Basic Conditions of Employment Act' (1997) disperses energy and consequently, impact for change. This is especially the case, since no uniform paternity leave model is commonly endorsed in negotiations. Leave negotiations can occur "on an individual basis with each employer", which contribute to a variety of present parental leave practices. The lack of a strong united forefront advocating for paternity leave in a consistent manner, is a weakness in the institutional system. The longer these disparities continue, the more opportunities are missed to advance the cause.

Organizational policy and application process. The application processes vary between employers: Filing a request at the human resource department, talking to the respective supervisor, or going through an online application system are all mentioned processes. While employees express no difficulties in applying for paternity leave, the one's that had to apply via their supervisor state that the relationship with them is of importance and that they do witness instances in which the employee had to bring evidence such as a birth certificate to prove that he is a father. While employees that make use of an online system, for example, state that sending in a birth certificate is standard procedure, it becomes clear that there is a possibility of employees getting discriminated against when the process runs entirely via the supervisor. Furthermore, one paternity leave policy states that "The employee should have a long-term relationship with the mother and participate in care with a child" without specifying the meaning of "long-term" or "care with a child". This leaves room for interpretation from both the employee's and the employer's side, which fuels misunderstandings and misuse of the policy.

"It is not like I am going on paternity leave tomorrow"

Work-load management. Apart from formally applying for paternity leave, there is common consensus that the most important step is to talk to the supervisor and the colleagues to manage the workload and to have a seamless transition between work and leave days. Good planning is mentioned as crucial in order for colleagues to manage hand-overs.

Interviewees speak of successful cases. It is also identified that the best results for employers occur from a good paternity leave scheduling. With C-Section child births, it is possible to schedule leave sometime in advance, while unexpected deliveries are seen as a risk factor for managers. In these cases, the absence of prior planning means that hand-overs temporarily increased the work strain and that employees who go on unexpected leave might have to "stay until everything is sorted". Nevertheless, in none of the interviews there was a case mentioned in which paternity leave was not granted. Employees in managerial positions and entrepreneurs express generally no difficulties in handling the absence due to paternity leave and as one participant puts it: "people go on annual leave, usually for many days in a row and we have to deal with it anyways". Lastly, it is important to remark that it is not that fathers do not perform any office duties while on leave. Staying in touch with colleagues and remaining available for emergencies is crucial for a leave period without inconveniences for both the employer as well as the employee. This ranges from staying available on the phone, to regularly checking emails and even doing some work from home.

Discussion

Findings

This researched aimed to shed light on the possibility of a statutory paternity leave implementation in South Africa. To begin with, the first sub-question paid attention to the challenges men overcame in terms of their masculinities interfering with taking on the role of a carer. The findings show that overall, fathers have little to no hesitations when it comes to helping out in the household with domestic chores or caring responsibilities. However, the key word is "helping out", which indicates a temporary condition. During paternity leave days, fathers assume the role of a caring helping hand, which withdraws to its initial position once paternity leave is over. This position is the one of the main provider for the family, primarily carrying the financial responsibilities. It suggests the presence of a somewhat malleable masculinity, that sustains temporary deviations from its most dominant character, but is recidivist to the hegemonic norms.

In regards to the available resources and capabilities, it is interesting to note that on a micro level, employers cope well with employees on leave. They are able to capacitate their workers with the much needed capability of a supportive organizational culture. The bigger obstacle seems to occur on the institutional level where the lack of uniformity on a parental leave model creates unnecessary disparities between agents fighting for the same cause. Inconsistent in application and still secondary on the agenda of trade unions, paternity leave has failed to make an impact with legislative policy makers yet. Unfortunately, a lack of

resources, translates into shortages further down the road. Specifically, to this case, it means that without strong and convincing incentives from the legislators, the scarce availability of the policy will remain in limbo.

To conclude, it is blurry to draw a direct line from a paternity leave policy implementation as a resource, to the desired functioning of enabling a more caring fatherhood in a country that is so complex and multifaceted. Many variables such as class, religion, and culture can play a significant role affecting the question as to when a father will assume a more caring role. This research focused on the link between normative masculinities and fatherhood, while also taking organizational and institutional factors into account. Ultimately, a leave policy for men needs to be in place, giving fathers the opportunity to take on caring responsibilities. Without opportunity, there is no room for progress, hence a paternity leave policy represents the first step for more father engagement in unpaid care work.

Theoretical Analysis

Comparing the findings to the previously discussed literature, many similarities can be found. As in discussed Lesejange (2006) and Redpath and colleagues (2008), South African fatherhood is deeply rooted with financially providing for the family. Nevertheless, when fathers do engage in care tasks, the described excitement and the importance of being a good role model for the fathers in this study reflects the recent findings from Chilly and Maharaj (2015) and Enderstein and Voonzaier (2015), who found fathers to be increasingly more engaging in such responsibilities. Rabe's (2006) distinction of physical and emotional fatherhood is also a recurrent topic in participant's narratives, by recognizing the positive impact that an emotional connection between father and child can have on both of them. When it comes to work-life-balance, the interdependency of a couples' choices becomes inevitable, as previously stated by Lewis and Giullari (2005). This becomes especially evident, once fathers retract to the role as supporting, instead of equal, caregiver pushing the mother automatically (purposefully?) into a primary caregiver role. These findings suggest, indeed, calling for a less gendered view of care work, could challenge the scepticism of man to engage in such tasks (Morrell & Jewkes, 2011).

In the workplace, the findings are consistent with previous theoretical assumptions. Kossak and colleagues (2009) identify a harmonious culture as key for seamless communication and workers well being. Participants' reported positive morale with co-workers and supervisors, and no complications with access to rights or benefits within the company/ organization. Nevertheless, the account of a rather negative relationship, could

have proved more meaningful in this regard to better evaluate the impact between different organizational cultures.

The capability approach (Sen, 1992), adapted to capabilities that allow for an analysis of a Work-Life-Balance across context (Hobson & Fahléns, 2011), proved to be a versatile tool allowing for an in-depth analysis on each of the three levels. However, it becomes clear that taking on such a resourceful approach also diminishes the amount of inference one can extract afterwards again. The path from providing a resource, to creating capabilities and experiencing the desired function is long and not necessarily straightforward. Complex top-down and bottom-up interactions leave room for interpretation on whether the functioning of a caring father role is the result of a well laid out paternity leave resource, or maybe the by-product of a well defined capability-set, which can take on the role of a supportive social environment, a motivating organizational culture, or just the right mixture of personal attributes.
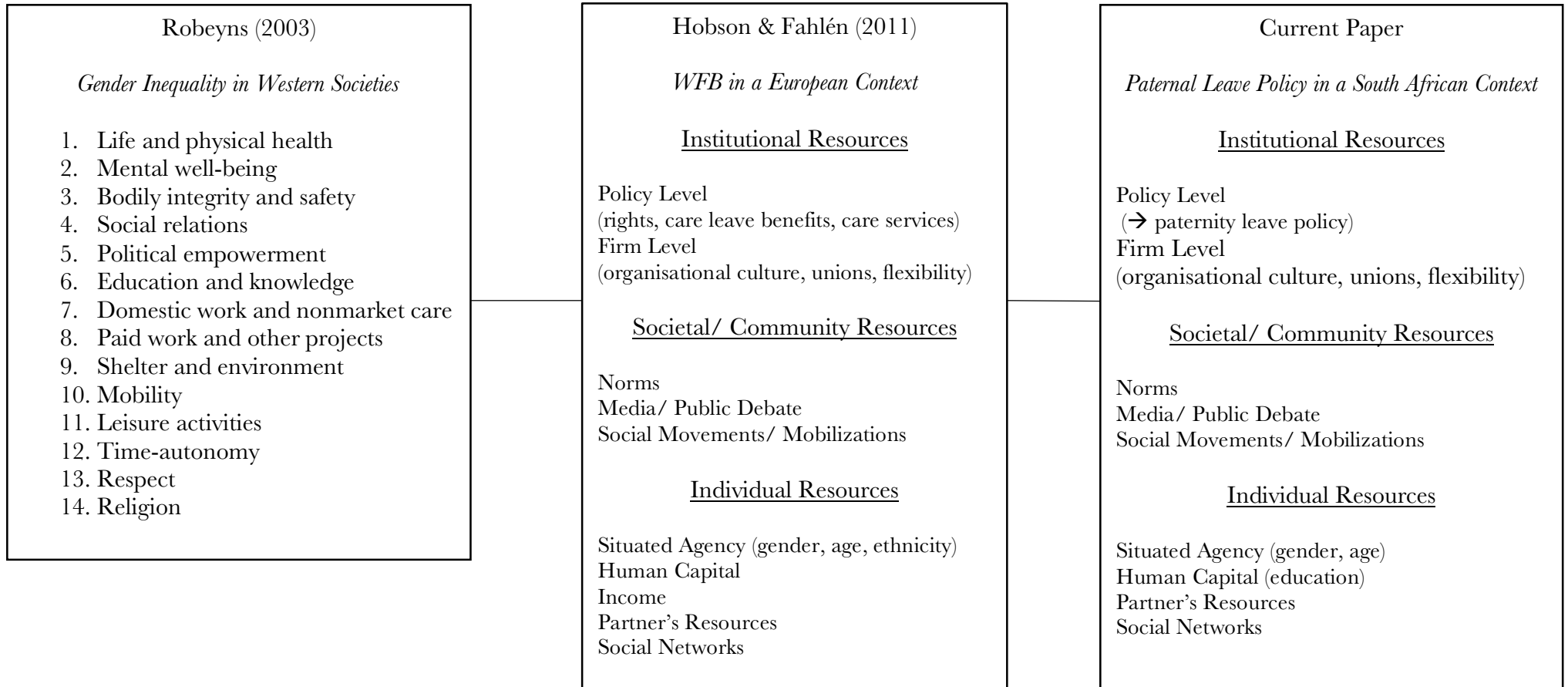
Limitations and Recommendations

The capability approach is characterized by its interdisciplinary nature, systematically analyses human behaviour to infer meaning and change to the advantage of our society and the general well being of humanity. While this study provides an analytical basis for South African advocates of gender equality to further strengthen their arguments for a more equal share between the sexes in the household by providing them with the strengths and weaknesses of current paternity leave provision, it is necessary to mention two important shortcomings of this research that result from such a broad approach.

To begin with, caution is required when it comes to generalizing the findings of this research to the whole South African country. While the research is meant to provide an initial outlook on the challenges and opportunities of a statutory paternity leave in South Africa, only a small sample of fathers situated in the city of Cape Town, province of Western Cape, was interviewed and does not represent the variety of the entire South African Labour market. Another important consideration regards the sampling techniques of this study. Due to their disposition to participate in this study, the fathers are prone to be favourably biased towards the effects and benefits of the paternity leave that they took. Future research is needed to understand the meaning of fatherhood in the different cultures within South Africa. The complex cultural variations constitute a significant variable that shape the notions of different dominant masculinities. While this research focusses solely on male perceptions and possibilities of fatherhood, it is also important to include the perspective from mothers on father involvement, since gender equal parenting is the main advocate's long-time goal of

such a policy.

   In terms of paternity leave policy recommendation, to create more opportunities for fathers to exercise the care giving role, the most pressing issue appears to be the inconsistencies at the institutional level. While concern has been raised at the individual level about the effectiveness towards gender equality of such a policy, it is the bureaucratic incongruity that is mostly undermining progress. From a bottom-up perspective, a strong scaffold is already in place to absorb the impact of a top-down policy implementation, that can serve as a legislative role model for the next generations of South African society.

Figure 1. Selecting relevant capabilities.

Robeyns (2003)	Hobson & Fahlén (2011)	Current Paper
Gender Inequality in Western Societies	*WFB in a European Context*	*Paternal Leave Policy in a South African Context*
1. Life and physical health 2. Mental well-being 3. Bodily integrity and safety 4. Social relations 5. Political empowerment 6. Education and knowledge 7. Domestic work and nonmarket care 8. Paid work and other projects 9. Shelter and environment 10. Mobility 11. Leisure activities 12. Time-autonomy 13. Respect 14. Religion	<u>Institutional Resources</u> Policy Level (rights, care leave benefits, care services) Firm Level (organisational culture, unions, flexibility) <u>Societal/ Community Resources</u> Norms Media/ Public Debate Social Movements/ Mobilizations <u>Individual Resources</u> Situated Agency (gender, age, ethnicity) Human Capital Income Partner's Resources Social Networks	<u>Institutional Resources</u> Policy Level (→ paternity leave policy) Firm Level (organisational culture, unions, flexibility) <u>Societal/ Community Resources</u> Norms Media/ Public Debate Social Movements/ Mobilizations <u>Individual Resources</u> Situated Agency (gender, age) Human Capital (education) Partner's Resources Social Networks

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Appendix I

Table I. Overview of research participants.

Participant	Age	Education	Employment	Marital Status	Partner Occupation	Nr. of children	Household composition
Fathers (Employees and Managers*)							
1	48	Grade 8	Shop-Steward	married	Stay-home mother	2	Wife, 2 children
2	40	Grade 10	Shop-Steward	engaged	Full-time worker	2	Girlfriend, 2 children
3	33	Grade 11	Shop-Steward	married	Stay-home mother	2	Wife, 2 children
4*	38	Post-graduate	HR Department	married	Full-time worker	2	Wife, 2 children
5	44	Honours Degree	HR Department	engaged	Full-time worker	2	Wife, 2 children, helper
6	41	Post-graduate	Program Facilitator	married	Full-time worker	2 (+3 adopted)	Wife, 5 children
7*	41	Phd in process	Unit Manager	married	35 hours self-employed	1	Wife, child, dog
8	35	Graduate	Coordinator	married	Stay-home mother	2	Wife, 2 children
9	37	Almost graduate	Trainer	single	Stay-home mother	1 (+3 nephews)	Mother, sister, 3 nephews
10*	43	Post-graduate	Journalist	divorced	Part-time worker	2	2 children 50% of the time
11*	43	Phd degree	Researcher	married	Full-time worker	1 (+1 adopted)	Wife, 2 children
12	29	Phd in process	Coordinator	married	Full-time student	1	Wife, child
13*	31	Graduate	Coordinator	single	Full-time worker	1	Girlfriend, child
Trade Union Representative							
14	-	-	Regional Administrator and Gender Coordinator (Saccawu)	-	-	-	-
15	58	-	Western Cape Organizer and Educator (Cosatu)	-	-	-	-

Table 2: Topic List.

Interview Guide for the Fathers		
Theoretical Concept/ Topic	**Operationalization**	**Interview Questions**

Demographics **(Individual Resources)**	▪ Name
	
	▪ Age
	
	▪ Education
	
	▪ Employment Information
	
	▪ Marital Status
	
	▪ Number and age of biological and non biological children (living in the household and outside the household)
		▪ What is your…
		  ○ Name?
		  ○ Age?
		  ○ Highest level of education?
		▪ What position do you hold at this company?
		  ○ For how long have you worked there?
		  ○ For how many hours do you work every week?
		  ○ Do you have an additional job? For how many hours per week?
		▪ Do you have a partner?
		  ○ (if yes) What is your official status?
		  ○ Does she have a job? For how many hours per week?
		▪ How many children do you have? (name, gender, age)
		  ○ Do they live with you in your household? Why/ why not?

General Household and Workplace Information **(Individual Resources)**	▪ Household
	    o Composition
	    o Financial Situation
	    o Care/ Responsibilities
	    o Own Experience
		▪ Who lives with you in your house?
		 ▪ How many of them contribute with income?
		 ▪ Could you tell me more about how the responsibilities of are divided in your household?
		    o Do you feel satisfied with this division? (why, or why not?)
		    o What responsibilities do you like most, and why?
		    o What would you like to change and what has kept you from doing so?

	▪ Workplace
	    o Personal Experiences
	    o Relation to Colleagues
		▪ How do you experience your workplace environment?
		 ▪ How is your relationship with your colleagues?
		    o Could you tell me if you disclose things that happen at home with your colleagues?
		    o And the other way around?

Masculinities **(Barker & Ricard, 2005; Lwambo, 2013; Mavungo, 2013)** **(Societal/ Community Resources)**	▪ Perception of Masculinity
	
	 ▪ Financial Independence
	
	    o As a man
	    o As a father/ household member
		▪ You are the man of a household. How do you see your responsibilities and how do they differ in regards to the responsibilities of your wife/ partner?
		 ▪ Do you think you do more tasks at home than other men you know; which ones?
		 ▪ Do you think there are tasks other men do that you do not perform; which ones and why?

- Do you perform some tasks that you consider "un-manly", if so which ones?
  - Do you think you perform tasks that other men consider "un-manly"?
- What importance does your work have in your life?
- What is your opinion on this statement: "A successful man is a man that is financially independent."?
- How do you feel about women being the main earners of the family?
  - What do you think is your friends' opinion on the issue?
  - How about your colleagues' opinion at work?

Fatherhood

(Societal/ Community Resources)

(Barker & Ricardo, 2005; Morrell, 2006; Rabe, 2006; Lwambo, 2013;)

- Perspectives on Fatherhood
  - Provider
  - Carer
  - Emotional vs. physical presence

- What does being a father mean to you?
- In your opinion, what do your children need from you as their father?
  - (ask age specific – baby, toddler, school-age, teenager)
- When you are spending time with your child(ren), what is your favourite thing to do?
  - And what is your least favourite thing? Why?
- Do you think that there are tasks that only the mother should perform when it comes to caring for children?
  - What is the opinion of your family about this?

Paternity Leave

(Fagan, 2001; Hobson &

Fahlén, 2009; Morrell,

2006)

(Institutional Resources)

- Perceived Changes in the Household

- Support
  - o Familial

  - o Colleagues

  - o Organisational

- What were the tasks you performed in the household while you where on your paternity leave?
  - o How did this change after you got back to work?
- How did you apply for paternity leave?
- With whom did you discuss the possibility of taking leave first? (Wife, manager, colleagues…)
- What did your family think about you taking time off to care for your children?
  - o In what way does their opinion influence you?
- How did your colleagues perceive this?
  - o Does their opinion in the workplace influence your attitudes at home?
  - o How did they manage at work while you were on leave? Were there any difficulties?
  - o What was their reaction when you came back?
- How does your company support you in being the father you would like to be?
  - o What would you like to see changing? Why?

For fathers who are also in a managerial position **supervising departments/teams/units:**

Paternity Leave

(Kossek et al., 2009;

Sallee, 2012)

(Institutional Resources)

- Organisational Culture

- Paternity Leave Information

- Can you describe the work environment in your unit?
  - For how long have you been working together?
- How would you describe the relationship with your colleagues?
- How many fathers of your unit took paternity leave in the last years?
- What is the process for employees to apply for paternity leave?
- What is your opinion on providing employees with paternity leave?
  - What are the risks that you have as an operational manager resulting from fathers on leave?
  - What are the benefits?
- How did the department/ co-workers cope with the missing employee?
- Would you like to any changes in the current leave system of your company?

Appendix B

Informed Consent Form

Research on paternity leave experience, fatherhood & masculinities

Thank you for taking the time and effort for being here with me today. In the following, the purpose of the research and your participation is explained in further detail. Please read this information carefully.

This research is focused on the opportunity and challenges of a paternity leave. More specifically, it focusses on the home and work experience of fathers that took paternity leave. Furthermore, the study also investigates paternity leave from the perspective of the employer. The goal of this research is to get a better understanding of the difficulties that arise when implementing such a leave policy. With the findings, we hope to provide more information on how to facilitate paternity leave in South Africa.

Everything that is said in this conversation is confidential. Your name will not be stated in any report or publication about this research. With your permission our conversation will be recorded in order for me to not miss or misquote anything that you will say. The recording and transcript will only be shared with researchers and supervisors at the Utrecht University. Your participation is entirely voluntary and you may choose to end the conversation at any time. In this case, your responses will not be included in the research.

Please fill out the information below, indicating that you have read and understood the information on this informed consent. Do not hesitate to ask any questions should something be unclear to you.

- ○ **I have read this document and I agree to participate in this research project.**
- ○ **My participation is entirely voluntary and I can withdraw at any time.**
- ○ **I consent to being recorded**.

Name: _____

Surname: _____

Contact number: _____

_____   _____
Date & signature from the participant   Date & signature from the researcher

If you have any questions on the research you can contact:
Jessika Ferrari, Child Rights & Positive Parenting Portfolio, Sonke Gender Justice
Office: 021 424 6736   Email: jessika@genderjustice.org.za