THE DETERMINANTS AND INFLUENCE OF NON-RESIDENT FATHERS' RELATIONSHIPS WITH THEIR ADOLESCENT CHILDREN

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DECLARATION

I, Estelle de Wit, declare that this thesis, **The Determinants and Influence of non-resident Fathers' Relationships with their Adolescent Children**, hereby submitted by me for the Philosophiae Doctor (Psychology) degree at the University of the Free State is my own independent work and has not previously been submitted by me at another university/faculty. I further cede copyright of this thesis in favour of the University of the Free State.

ESTELLE DE WIT DATE

SIGNED

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- I dedicate this work to the memory of all my teachers who gave me the gift and the discipline of reading.

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NOTE TO EXTERNAL EXAMINERS

This thesis comprises a component of the requirements of the Ph.D. in Child Psychology at the University of the Free State. The other component, which has been successfully completed, comprises of three years of course work.

The Ph.D. in Child Psychology is structured as follows:

- Psychology 901 Constitutes one-year course work, specifically regarding advanced theoretical foundations, research methodology and planning and executing a research proposal.
- Psychology 902 constitutes one year of course work specifically regarding professional development within the current fields of child psychology.
- Psychology 903 constitutes one year of course work regarding advanced child practice.
- Psychology 993 constitutes a thesis in the field of child psychology in the format of three research articles.

According the regulations of the University of the Free State, a doctoral thesis for Psychology 993 may be presented in the form of three 'publishable' articles rather than in the traditional presentation of a thesis in the form of several chapters constituting a 'book'. With the approval of his promoters, this candidate has elected to submit the thesis in the form of three articles. Because not all external examiners are familiar with this concept and how it is prescribed by the University of the Free State, several aspects are highlighted below:

1) Each article should be viewed as an independent entity, but there should also be a close relationship between it and the other two articles so that together they form a logical entity (i.e. the thesis).

2) The nature and scope of the literature review should conform to the general requirements of the journals in the specific field of study (with the concession that instructions to authors differ between different journals). The scope of the literature review of each article is consequently not as extensive as in a traditional thesis written in book format. It should be considered that the option of writing a thesis in the form of articles involves three separate literature reviews (which are certainly related to each other, but which may also overlap and even be repetitious).

3) Because a thesis written in the form of articles is part of one project (forming a unit) and entails separate yet related articles, it is inevitable that they will overlap to a certain extent and that there might even be duplication. For example, overlap and repetition might occur in the following areas: the definition of key concepts, the exposition of theoretical models, the description of methodology and methods, the lists of the sources that were consulted, deficiencies in the investigation, conclusions and recommendations.

4) It is important to note that the examiner should deem and accept each of the three articles as WORTHY OF PUBLICATION in accredited journals in the particular field of study. In other words, they are not necessarily articles that HAVE BEEN PUBLISHED but they should

be of a suitable standard and quality and written in such a way that they are ready for publication, according to the examiner's judgment.

The advantages of choosing to write a thesis in the form of articles are described below. For a more complete discussion, cf. Louw, D.A., & Fouché, J.B. (2002). Writing a thesis in article format: A way to promote a publishing culture? *South African Journal of Higher Education, 16*(3), 65-72.

- It focuses on practice which requires the student to write articles – as opposed to a bulky thesis. It is true to say that most students are not trained to write articles. This is academically and didactically indefensible.
- There is the advantage of being able to publish: because of factors such as the extra work involved, there are relatively few traditional theses that are ever rewritten and published as articles.
- This form has been accepted and even encouraged by several foreign and South African universities.

This we know
all things are connected;
like the blood which unites one family

Whatever befalls the earth
befalls the sons and daughters of the earth

Man did not weave the web of life;
he is merely a strand in it.

Whatever he does to the web,
he does to himself

-

Ted Perry – The Web of Life

ARTICLE 1

Patterns of Contact and Involvement between Adolescents and their Non-resident Fathers

This study examined the patterns of contact and involvement between adolescents and their non-resident fathers after divorce in an ethnically diverse sample. The data was analysed to determine the role of Lamb, Pleck and Levine's (1986) three constructs in the involvement of non-resident fathers, i.e. interaction, availability and responsibility. The results indicated that the majority of male and female adolescents reported continued direct and indirect contact with their fathers, regardless of paternal remarriage and the lapse of time since the divorce. In measuring father involvement, the adolescents reported on four aspects of father involvement i.e. financial contributions, shared activities, communication and feelings of emotional closeness. The results on father involvement indicate that most fathers make contributions financially in terms of the payment of maintenance, school fees and pocket money. Adolescents further reported that they spent most of their time with their non-resident fathers engaging in leisure activities such as shopping and frequenting restaurants. Boys reported higher levels of communication and feelings of emotional closeness than girls. Overall, the study postulates that non-resident fathers play a less significant role in providing parental guidance to their children. The most important limitation of the research was indicated as the lack of empirical investigation of mother-child involvement.

Keywords: contact and involvement of fathers after divorce, non-resident fathers, adolescents, interaction, availability and responsibility

In hierdie studie is die patrone van kontak en betrokkenheid tussen adolessente en hul nie-residensiële vaders ná egskeiding in 'n etnies diverse steekproef ondersoek. Die data is gebruik om Lamb, Pleck en Levin (1986) se drie konstrukte van betrokkenheid van nie-residensiële vaders (interaksie, beskikbaarheid en verantwoordelikheid) te ondersoek. Die resultate toon dat die meerderheid van manlike en vroulike adolessente direkte en indirekte kontak met hulle vaders rapporteer het, nieteenstaande faktore soos hul vaders se hertroue en die verloop van tyd sedert hul ouers se egskeiding. Ten einde vaderbetrokkenheid te evalueer, het adolessente ten opsigte van vier konstrukte van vaderbetrokkenheid rapporteer: finansiële bydraes, deelname aan verskillende aktiwiteite, kommunikasie en gevoelens van verbondenheid. Dit blyk dat die meerderheid vaders finansieel ten opsigte van onderhoud, skoolfooie en sakgeld bydra. Die adolessente spandeer meestal tyd met hul vaders deur winkelsentrums en restaurante te besoek. Seuns het hoër vlakke van kommunikasie en emosionele geborgenheid met hul vaders as meisies gerapporteer. In die geheel gesien, blyk dit dat nie-residensiële vaders te kort skiet in die wyse waarop hulle ouerleiding aan hulle kinders bied. Die belangrikste tekortkoming van die studie is uitgewys as die gebrek aan 'n empiriese ondersoek met betrekking tot die moeder se betrokkenheid.

Sleutelwoorde: kontak en betrokkenheid van vaders ná egskeiding, nie-residensiële vaders, adolessente, interaksie, beskikbaarheid en verantwoordelikheid

Divorce has become increasingly prevalent worldwide, and in 2012 it was estimated that nearly 50% of first marriages in the United States (USA) ended in divorce (American Psychological Association, 2012). In South Africa (Statistics South Africa, 2010), 30 763 divorces were granted in 2009. Mostly women filed for divorce, with 55,8% of divorce

applications emanating from the white population group, while African women comprised 41,3% of the group filing for divorce. The statistics also indicate that, in 2009, the number of children under the age of 18 years who were affected by divorce amounted to 28 295. International trends indicate that mothers continue to seek sole physical custody[1] and are successful 80-85% of the time, whereas only 10-15% of fathers have sole physical custody (Cheadle, Amato, & King, 2010; Emery, 1994; Kelly, 2007). Regardless of whether fathers have played an active parental role prior to divorce, it is generally accepted that parents and courts alike after divorce commonly adopt an access arrangement in terms of which children reside primarily with their mothers and spend some weekends and school holidays with their fathers (Kelly, 2007; Louw, 2010). Implicit in these residential arrangements is the potential to relegate the role of the father to that of a "visiting parent" (Kelly, 2007, p. 38) and maintenance provider, and to marginalise the father-child relationship (Fabricius & Braver, 2003; Finley, 2006).

Fathering after divorce represents relatively "uncharted territory" (Palkovitz & Palm, 2009, p. 3), and there is growing concern that the practice of post-divorce fathering has not kept up with the rhetoric surrounding it, resulting in "extensive ambiguity and confusion" (Hawthorne & Lennings, 2008, p. 191). Evidently, policymakers and practitioners across the world have implemented numerous initiatives, such as the Responsible Fatherhood Initiative in the United States, the Fragile Families Project in the United Kingdom and the Dads for Life programme in Australia (Hofferth, Forry, & Peters, 2010), intended to foster family unions that are more stable among divorcing parents to promote father involvement with children after divorce (Castillo, Welch & Sarver, 2010). This is also evident in South Africa where legislation came into effect in 2008 to provide fathers with a legal remedy to protect

[1] As indicated by the APA (2010), despite changes in terminology in the common law concepts of custody and access to "care" and "contact" to better reflect the rights of children, the substantial majority of legal authorities and scientific treatises still refer to the term "custody" and "access" when addressing the resolution of decision making in care and contact disputes. In this paper, the concepts "custody" and "access" are retained to provide continuity with regard to past research and international literature. Consequently, both the old and new terms are used for the sake of clarity with "custody" also referring to "care" and "access" to "contact" and vice versa.

their relationships with their children after divorce. The Children's Act 38 of 2005 (2006)[2] had far-reaching implications in imposing mechanisms for continued family relations after divorce. In essence, the Act promotes the ideological concept that a child is entitled to an ongoing relationship with both parents, even after the dissolution of the marital bonds. The underlying premise of the Act is that both divorcing parents should play a crucial and active role in bringing up their children and that ongoing contact with a non-residential parent is an essential part of parenting practices after divorce. However, legislators and practitioners alike cannot optimally address the role of fathers after divorce without adequate empirical information about the prevailing state of affairs their interventions are meant to address. Therefore, this study was conceived to examine the present reality in respect of the patterns of contact and the extent of involvement of fathers after divorce. An investigation into these aspects is useful not only at a practical level for parents and professionals alike in providing assistance in relation to the structuring of visitation arrangements after separation, but also to address gaps in existing knowledge regarding the way in which fathering may be changing and evolving after divorce. Also, the many complex issues regarding the restructuring of one family unit into two stable functioning units deserve adequate exploration to address the structural and psychological processes at work in families affected by divorce (Dyer, Jini, Mupedziswa, & Day, 2011; Goncy & Van Dulmen, 2010; Kelly, 2007).

The frequency of contact between non-resident fathers[3] and their children continues to be a subject of much scholarly debate (Holmes & Huston, 2010; Juby, Billette, Laplance & Le Bourdais, 2007; Sobolewski & King, 2005), as research regarding the actual amount of time that children spend with their fathers is very limited and difficult to obtain (Kelly, 2007). Furthermore, no reliable measures to accurately record the numerous complexities and

[2] The Act states that biological fathers post-divorce have the parental responsibility and right to (i) care for the child; (ii) maintain contact with the child; (iii) act as guardian of the child; and (iv) contribute towards the maintenance of the child.

[3] In this paper, the term "non-resident" father refers to fathers who do not reside with their biological children by virtue of divorce.

variation in contact patterns are currently in use (Holmes & Huston, 2010). Post-divorce contact between non-resident fathers and their children are defined mostly along dimensions such as frequency, regularity, continuity and direct (face-to-face) or indirect (communication by telephone/e-mail/letter) contact (Dunn, Cheng, O'Connor & Bridges, 2004).

An examination of the literature suggests that a gradual decline in the frequency of contact is the typical trajectory after divorce (Clarke-Steward & Brentano, 2006; Hofferth et al., 2010), although there is some mounting evidence in literature to suggest otherwise (Amato, Booth, Johnson & Rogers, 2006; Amato & Gilbreth, 1999; Bailey, 2003; Dunn, 2004; Jenkins, 2006). A number of factors appear to determine contact of fathers with their children after divorce. This includes the child's age at the time of separation, with evidence suggesting that the longer fathers and children live together, the more fathers tend to remain in the lives of their children (Aquilino, 2006). Marital versus non-marital birth (Cheadle et al., 2010) also influences father-child contact, with research suggesting that fathers who were married to their children's mothers tend to have stronger commitments to their children than other fathers do (Aquilino, 2006). Parents' education (Amato et al., 2006) is associated positively with fathers' frequency of contact after divorce, and many studies show that education is associated positively with contact among non-resident fathers in that, compared to poorly educated parents, they may be more likely to accept new social norms about the importance of father involvement (Arditti & Keith, 1993; Cooksey & Craig, 1998). Parents' age (Barber & Evans, 2006) is also associated with more contact, with younger fathers tending to have less involvement with their children than older fathers do. The payment of child support (Juby et al., 2007) is also consistently shown to correlate positively with contact (Amato et al., 2006; Nepomnyaschy, 2007; Seltzer, 2000). Research on children's gender suggests that non-resident fathers tend to have more contact with their sons than with their daughters (Stamps Mitchell, Booth, & King, 2009). Evidence indicates that this trend

grows stronger as children get older (Parke, 2000), given shared interests and the ability of fathers to provide male role models for their sons. Other research on contact between non-resident fathers and their children suggests that maternal repartnering also has a significant effect on contact, with non-resident fathers tending to have less frequent contact with their children after their mothers have remarried or when their mothers live with new partners (Juby et al., 2007). Geographical distance from children is consistently associated negatively with frequency of contact (Cooksey & Craig, 1998). Furthermore, high levels of post-divorce conflict appear to have a negative effect on contact and paternal disengagement after divorce (Wilson, 2006). Given the ambiguity surrounding causal links between these variables, researchers increasingly emphasise the importance of differentiating between contact and father involvement (Castillo et al., 2010). Contact is important, but not tantamount to fathering. Fathering, in essence, requires father involvement. What then can be considered as expressions of father involvement?

Father involvement is regarded as a multidimensional construct that includes affective, cognitive and ethical components, inclusive of indirect forms of involvement (Castillo et al., 2010; A. J. Hawkins et al., 2002; Kelly, 2007). Father involvement specifically refers to the quality of the father-child relationship and is conceptualised to include positive involvement in the child's activities (e.g. homework and school), the strength of the emotional tie between parent and child (e.g. feelings of closeness and positive relationships), authoritative parenting (e.g. effective discipline and parental guidance) and positive affective relationships (Kruk, 2010). The most influential definition of the concept remains the one offered by Lamb and his colleagues (1986), who propose three components: interaction, availability and responsibility. *Interaction* refers to the father's direct contact with his child through care giving and shared activities. *Availability* is a related concept concerning the father's potential availability for interaction, by being present or accessible to the child, whether or not direct

interaction is occurring. *Responsibility* refers to the role the father takes in ensuring that the child is taken care of and arranging for resources to be available to the child.

The limitations of this definition have been the focus of much debate, and various alternatives have been proposed (Pleck & Masciadrelli, 2004). Pleck (2007) went as far as describing the search for a definition of father involvement as the "father involvement wars of the 1990s" (p. 197). Current research on father involvement is increasingly focusing on a complex set of variables to determine father involvement by including aspects such as feelings of closeness, shared activities, continued communication between fathers and children and the more authoritative and guidance aspects of fathering (Dunn, 2004; Parke, 2000; Pleck, 2007; Smyth, 2005). Irrespective of their differences, scholars now increasingly agree that father involvement influences child outcomes in multiple pathways (Castillo et al., 2010). Hence, the authoritative original definition of Lamb, Pleck and Levine (1986) of father involvement that incorporates the three components of interaction, availability, and responsibility still remains the benchmark when embarking on research on father contact and involvement.

Method

Purpose and Aim of Research

This study had two primary research aims. The first aim was to conduct an examination of the amount of *direct and indirect contact* between adolescents and their non-resident fathers. Contact is a necessary (but not sufficient) condition for non-resident fathers to contribute to their children's lives. Frequent contact also appears necessary for non-resident fathers to maintain high-quality relationships with their children and to engage in responsive parenting (King & Sobolewski, 2006). As such, it is important to include information on contact in studies of involvement of non-resident fathers. Second, this study also focused on four

distinctive categories of *father involvement* i.e. economic contributions, shared activities, communication and feelings of emotional closeness. The exploration of father contact in this study was distinctive because, in addition to determining the actual amount of direct and indirect contact, the quality of contact and father involvement was also investigated. Furthermore, possible gender differences in non-residential fathers' investment of time and resources were also scrutinised – an issue with conflicting results in current research (Stamps Mitchell et al., 2009).

It was deemed necessary to obtain information from the adolescents themselves because very little research on divorce is based on the views of children themselves (Kaltenborn, 2004) and a considerable body of research is now arguing for children's participation in research (Campbell, 2008; Sinclair, 2004; Stafford, Latbourn, Hill & Walker, 2003). Furthermore, international research demonstrates that information obtained on parent-child relationships after divorce vary by source. For example, custodial mothers may underestimate fathers' contact and contributions to the well-being of their children (Cheadle et al., 2010), while fathers often tend to overestimate their involvement (Sarkadi, Kristiansson, Oberklaid & Bremberg, 2008). Thus, adolescents should be in a better position than mothers and fathers to report on their experiences of their fathers' involvement in their lives.

Data Gathering

The data used to answer the question came from participants at five secondary schools within the area of the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan Municipality. Written permission was obtained from the principals of all the schools prior to the commencement of the research. The children were presented with consent forms to provide to their parents to obtain permission to take part in the study. The schools were selected randomly to provide a representative sample of all the population groups i.e. white, coloured, black, Indian or Asian. One of the schools

represented children from an above-average socio-economic demographic population (private Jewish schooling), while the remaining four schools represented children from middle to lower socio-economic demographic areas. The percentages of responses from the five different schools were respectively 20,5% (middle/lower socio-economic inner-city school), 28,7% (middle socio-economic suburban school), 17,3% (upper socio-economic suburban school) 19,3% (private school) and 14,2% (middle/lower class inner-city school).

Participants

The participants of this study were school-attending adolescents between the ages of 13 and 19 years (N=352[4]). The median age of the participants was 16 years. The median age of the group instead of the mean age is reported because the ages of the respondents did not follow a normal distribution and 24 of the respondents did not indicate their ages. The participants included male (N=164) and female (N=183) adolescents with English as their language of scholastic instruction. The adolescents who indicated that their parents were divorced, constituted 86 participants (24,4%) of the total sample. Forty-three percent (N=37) of the adolescents from divorced families were boys, and 57% (N=49) were girls. Thirty-three (89,2%) of the boys from divorced families were from the white population group, two (5,4%) from the black population group and two (5,4%) from the coloured population group. Of the 49 girls from the divorced group, four (8,1%) were black, 39 (80%) were white and five (10,2%) were coloured. There were no Indian or Asian participants for both gender groups, and one girl (2,0%) did not indicate her race. Twenty-eight (76%) of the boys from

[4] N does not always equal 352 because responses were included in the sample only when the data collected was an aspect that could be assessed.

divorced families and 29 (60%) of the girls from divorced families indicated that their parents had been divorced for a period of four years and longer.

Of the 86 participants from the divorced group, 61 (70, 9%) indicated that they were in the primary residential care of their mothers, 19 (22,1 %) indicated that they primarily resided with their fathers, and four (4,7%) participants indicated that they lived with their extended families. Of the two remaining participants, one (1,2%) indicated a living arrangement with both mother and father, and one (1,2%) did not indicate the primary residence. The 61 participants who indicated that they primarily resided with their mothers constituted 26 (43%) boys and 35 (57%) girls. Table 1 gives an overview of the current marital status of the parents of the adolescents from divorced families by gender for the total number of participants from divorced families (N=86).

Table 1

Current marital status of divorced parents

Marital status : Mother	**Total (N[5]=84)**	**Boys (N=36)**	**Girls (N=48)**
p=0.3574		**% (n)**	**% (n)**
Married again	26	38.9 (14)	25.0 (12)
Mother Single	39	38.9 (14)	52.1 (25)
Living with a partner	19	22.2 (8)	22.9 (11)
Marital status: Father	**Total (N=82)**	**Boys (N=35)**	**Girls (N=47)**
p=0.4179		**%**	**%**
Married again	43	54.3 (19)	51.1 (24)
Father Single	22	31.4 (11)	23.4 (11)
Living with a partner	17	14.3 (5)	25.5 (12)

The results presented in Table 1 indicate that the majority of the male and female participants' fathers married again. Fewer male and female participants reported that their

[5] N does not always equal 86 as responses were only included in the sample when the data collected was an aspect which could be assessed. For example, some of the adolescents did not respond to all of the items.

mothers married again, with 14 (38,8%) of the boys and 12 (25,0%) of the girls reporting that their mothers married again. As mentioned before, mothers marrying again or repartnering often poses potential difficulties in continued contact and involvement between fathers and their children after divorce (Smyth, 2005) because after forming new unions, some mothers may view contact of non-resident fathers as less necessary and hence they may no longer encourage or facilitate such contact (Cheadle et al., 2010; Hofferth et al., 2010). Non-resident fathers may also feel either that their role has been usurped by stepfathers or that their involvement is less necessary, given a new paternal role model in the household. Similarly, Dyer et al. (2011) indicate that, when fathers marry again, it may have potential negative consequences for contact and may even sever father-child relationships, since non-resident children often have to compete with new partners and/or new siblings. When fathers marry again, particularly when a child is born within the new union, paternal commitment to the children of a former marriage may diminish, seemingly because of the inability to maintain or deal with multiple commitments, conflicting loyalties and time demands (Hetherington & Kelly, 2002). Non-resident children may also choose to have less contact with their fathers when they marry again, possibly due to feelings of loyalty towards a displaced or emotionally fragile custodial parent (De Graaf & Fokkema, 2007). The findings in Table 1 seem to support international trends that indicate that three quarters of men eventually marry again, with 70% forming new unions (either by marrying again or cohabitation) within five years of divorce (Manning, Stewart, & Smock, 2003).

Measuring Instrument

The research participants were requested to complete a self-compiled questionnaire based on the research of Cheadle, Amato and King (2010) on non-resident father contact and involvement. The first goal of the investigation was largely exploratory, i.e. to determine the

number, nature and frequency of contact between adolescents and their non-resident fathers. The second goal of the investigation was to describe the characteristics of the involvement of non-resident fathers to provide a profile of aspects relating to father involvement as identified by Lamb and his colleagues (1986). Information was obtained regarding the following:

Biographical information: The adolescents recorded their age, gender, position in the family and ethnic group on a self-compiled biographical questionnaire. They also reported whether their parents were married, divorced or separated. If they indicated that their parents were divorced, they were asked to state how long their parents had been divorced (from a period of 1 year to 4 years and more) and whether their respective parents married again, and whether they were living with a partner or single.

Contact: The construct of (direct/indirect) contact was measured by asking how often the respondents had had direct contact with their fathers over the past month according to a set of contact schedules ranging from very frequent to infrequent and never. Adolescents also reported how often they had indirect contact with their non-resident fathers via telephone, SMS, e-mail or Facebook.

Father Involvement: To enable the researcher to measure father involvement, the participants had to report on the four different categories of father involvement i.e. financial contributions, activities, communication and emotional closeness. Financial contributions of fathers were measured, ranging from the payment of maintenance and school fees to pocket money and gifts to friends and family. Participants also had to report whether they had engaged in various leisure activities with their non-resident fathers in the previous month. This included shopping, attending a church service, attending a cultural event, playing a sport, seeing a movie, or going to a restaurant. Communication with their non-resident fathers was measured by asking whether they had engaged with their fathers in a variety of subjects ranging from their grades, school-related topics, social activities, personal problems, friends

or their mother/siblings in the past month. Feelings of closeness were measured by a rating scale from 1, "not very close", to 5, "extremely close".

Statistical Analysis

Data was analysed statistically using SAS Version 9.2. Descriptive statistics, specifically frequencies and percentages, were utilised for the categorical data. To compare the frequencies for the two adolescent gender groups, p-values (analytical statistics) were calculated to indicate significant gender differences. The Chi-square or Fisher's exact test was used to calculate the appropriate p-values. A significance level of 0.05 was used.

Results and Discussion

The results for the frequency of direct contact between adolescents (N=65) and their non-resident fathers are shown in Table 2. Overall, no significant gender differences were observed in the frequency of direct (face-to-face) contact.

Table 2

Frequency of direct contact with non-resident fathers (N=59)[6]

Frequency of direct contact	**Total (N=59)**	**Boys (N=26)**	**Girls (N=33)**
		%*(n)	**%(n)**
Every day	9	3.9 (1)	24.2 (8)
Twice a week	8	19.2 (5)	9.1 (3)
Once a week	3	3.9 (1)	6.1 (2)
Once a week and every second weekend – overnight visitation	5	7.7 (2)	9.1 (3)
Every second weekend – overnight visitation	10	23.0 (6)	12.1 (4)
Every holiday – overnight visitation	10	15.4 (4)	18.2 (6)
Never	7	7.7 (2)	15.2 (5)
Other	7	19.2 (5)	6.1 (2)

p=0.2354

*The percentages for boys and girls add up to more than 100% because more than one response was allowed.

[6] N does not always equal 65 because not all the adolescents with non-resident fathers answered all the questions.

The results for direct contact as indicated in Table 2 suggest that the majority of the participants primarily residing with their mothers reported regular contact with their non-resident fathers, ranging from daily contact to bi-weekly, weekly, once a week and every weekend, every second weekend and every holiday with no significant differences in the reported contact between boys and girls and their non-resident fathers. Girls reported higher levels of direct contact with their non-resident fathers on a daily basis when compared to boys, while boys reported higher levels of overnight visitation every second weekend than girls did. The reported results in this sample make it apparent that regular direct contact between non-resident fathers and their adolescent children is taking place. There were no statistically significant differences between boys and girls with regard to reported direct contact, and the present analysis provides very little support for the notion that fathers tend to have contact with their sons more frequently than with their daughters. However, because of the small size of the sample, these results should not be over interpreted. The results seem to support the notion that direct overnight visitation seem to decrease during adolescence. For example, Cashmore, Parkinson and Tyler (2008) found that many adolescents do not stay overnight, with only 40% of 12- to 18-year-olds reporting that they had stayed overnight with their non-resident fathers during the past 12 months. Earlier studies by Mnookin and Maccoby (2002) indicate that many adolescents did not stay overnight because of competing social activities and possible changes in the father-child relationship during adolescence (Kelly, 2007; Youniss & Smollar, 1985). Stewart (2003) reported similar findings of 18% overnight stays for both male and female adolescents during school holidays and 23,5% for overnight visitation every second weekend. Jenkins and Lyons (2006) reported that 30% of Australian children did not stay overnight, and for older children, contact only during daytime might be the type of contact they preferred. In the UK, research on a cohort of children in Bristol found that, where contact took place, for a third of children it was at least

weekly and for 90% monthly (Dunn, 2004). Survey reports also show that 17% of fathers had some form of contact every day, with 8% seeing their children daily, 49% at least weekly, and 69% monthly. Between half and two thirds of children had overnight stays at least once a month. Similar results on contact were also found in a sample of well-educated fathers in California where the average amount of "dad time" was 30%, typically every second weekend plus a midweek overnight each week (Kelly, 2007). Overall, the results support international trends that older children seem to have less overnight visitations with their non-resident fathers, but continue to maintain contact in most cases.

Table 3

Frequency of indirect contact with non-resident fathers (N=65)

Frequency of indirect contact	**Boys (N=27)**	**Girls (N=38)**	**p-value**
	%	**%**	
Telephone – weekly	81.5	68.4	0.2681
Text messages (SMS) – weekly	18.5	23.7	0.6176
E-mail – past month*	0.0	7.9	0.2601
Facebook – past month*	0.0	7.9	0.2601
Not by any of these means	7.4	18.4	0.1090

*Note: Internet services were available at school if not at home.

The results for indirect contact presented in Table 3 indicate that, of the 65 adolescents who reported on indirect contact with their non-resident fathers, most maintained contact by means of telephonic conversations, with more than 80% of the boys and almost 70% of the girls reporting this as their primary mode of indirect contact with their fathers. The majority of children reported far less frequent indirect contact by means of text messages. This may be because they did not have their own mobile telephones and/or access to mobile phones to initiate this type of contact, given the particular socio-demographic variables of the sample. It may also be because their fathers did not initiate this type of contact. With the increasing

availability of access to mobile phones and the rapid changes in this type of communication, it may be postulated that, in all likelihood, this type of contact may increase when measured in future research in this area. Boys and girls alike reported very low levels of electronic contact with their fathers by means of e-mail or Facebook. The girls reported higher levels of indirect electronic contact with their non-resident fathers than boys did. Overall, there were no significant differences in the reported indirect contact of boys and girls with their non-resident fathers.

Bailey (2003) indicate in her research on frequency of indirect contact that telephone calls were among the primary means employed by parents to remain in contact with their children. Even though the exact frequency of telephonic contact or whether the contact was initiated by the parent or the child was not measured in this study, the results support research findings of continued indirect paternal contact after divorce (Kaltenborn, 2004). Bailey (2003) further notes that e-mail communication may become an increasingly popular means of contact between children and non-resident parents. With social networking media such as Facebook increasingly more available on mobile phones, there may be an increase in this type of contact as well in future, even though no literature is available currently to support this contention. It is encouraging to note that most of the children reported that, although their parents had been divorced for a period of four years or longer, they still had regular non-direct telephonic contact with their fathers. This supports findings in literature that indirect contact with non-resident fathers does not necessarily decrease over time (Amato, Meyers & Emery, 2009; Castillo, 2010; Stamps Mitchell et al., 2009). The results further affirm Kelly's (2007) assertion that fathers in general have increased their levels of contact, and that between 35% and 60% of children now have at least weekly contact (direct or indirect) with their non-resident fathers.

Table 4

Financial contributions by non-resident fathers (N=65)

Financial Contributions	Boys (N=27)	Girls (N=38)	p-value
	%	%	
School fees	40.7	52.6	0.4510
Pocket money	40.7	36.8	0.7997
Gifts to family and friends	11.1	13.2	1.0000
Maintenance	33.3	47.4	0.3125
Nothing	7.4	13.2	0.6899
Do not know	22.2	10.5	0.2968

The results for financial contributions by fathers presented in Table 4 indicate that, in this sample, both boys and girls reported the payment of maintenance by their fathers. Furthermore, 40% of the boys and more than 50% of the girls reported that their fathers not only contributed towards maintenance, but also towards school fees. Very few children indicated no financial contributions by their fathers, with only 7% of boys and 13,2% of girls indicating this aspect, while 22,2% of the boys and 10,5% of the girls reported that they were not aware of the financial contributions of their fathers. There are no significant differences in the reported results of boys and girls. In-kind support (Kane, Nepomnyaschy, Garfinkel & Edin, 2011), i.e. indirect financial contributions in the form of gifts and pocket money, were also reported by both boys and girls, albeit to a lesser extent. The results from this sample indicate that fathers do contribute towards in-kind support in the form of pocket money, with 40,7% of the boys and 36,8% of the girls reporting this type of support. Less support is indicated in terms of gifts to family and friends. The results suggest the transfer of financial capital (Castillo, 2010) to offspring not only in terms of paying court-ordered maintenance but also in terms of alleviating some of the economic disadvantages faced by single mothers and a commitment by fathers to the educational future of their children. Literature consistently shows a positive association between the payment of child support and contact (Seltzer, 2000; Stewart, 2003). The inability to establish a causal order between the payment

of maintenance and contact is endemic to most research that examines contact and the payment of child support (Seltzer, 2000). A study by Carlson, McLanahan and Brooks-Gunn (2008) indicated that a causal direction is running from financial contributions to positive parental relationships and father involvement during adolescence in particular, with financial contributions of fathers playing a particularly important role to maintain a sense of closeness to a non-resident father (Nepomnyaschy, 2007). Similarly, Cheadle, Amato and King (2010) indicated that fathers who have regular direct and indirect contact with their children may become acutely aware of their children's economic needs and, hence, increase their financial contributions to their children.

Table 5

Activities with non-resident fathers (N=65)

Activities	**Boys (N=27)**	**Girls (N=38)**	**p-value**
	%	**%**	
Shopping mall	22.2	29.0	0.5815
Religious event	14.8	10.5	0.7091
Cultural event	11.1	0.0	0.0670
Sports event	14.8	0.0	0.0259
Movies	18.5	5.3	0.1171
Restaurants	29.6	47.4	0.2011

The results for participation in shared activity presented in Table 5 indicate that the quality of time fathers tend to spend with their children varies in content and quality. On average, both boys and girls indicated the most frequent leisure activities were going to malls and eating at restaurants. Fathers engaged their adolescent boys more in activities such as playing sport and going to movies. Similar findings by King and Sobolewski (2006) suggest that fathers may engage their adolescent daughters more in terms of activities such as cooking, reading or art and less in terms of activities such as sport. Interestingly, the majority

of the children indicated low levels of religious involvement by fathers as well as low levels of involvement in cultural activities of adolescents. The results in the current study indicate that fathers spend relatively little time in engaging their children in aspects other than shopping and restaurants i.e. leisure activities. However, as Jenkins and Lyons (2006) indicate, non-resident fatherhood may well be the family context in which leisure features most prominently, as it is often shaped by legislation and a range of other moderating variables such as contact. The results may thus be a reflection of the reported contact schedules in place i.e. that fathers have relatively limited uninterrupted long periods to engage in aspects of parenting that are more authoritative, such as involvement in school activities, cultural events, and the religious upbringing of their children.

D.H. Hawkins, Amato and King (2007) demonstrated that "fathers who engage in a balanced mix of social and instrumental activities demonstrate that their children are important to them" (p. 992). Furthermore, Stamps Mitchell, Booth and King (2009) indicate that participation in activities with non-resident children is of utmost importance, since fathers who engage with their children in leisure provide social capital (Castillo, 2010) for children through involvement in school, churches and athletic organisations.

Table 6

Communication with non-resident fathers (N=65)

Communication	**Boys (N=27)**	**Girls (N=38)**	**p-value**
	%	**%**	
Grades	14.8	21.1	0.7471
School-related topics	40.7	39.5	1.0000
Social events	44.4	23.7	0.1076
Personal problems	11.1	10.5	1.000
Friends	11.1	31.6	0.0745

Mother/Siblings	11.1	18.4	0.5030

The results in Table 6 suggest that boys typically engaged their fathers more in communication regarding social events and school-related issues, while girls mostly engaged their fathers regarding school-related topics and friends. The results obtained on the disclosure of personal problems after divorce mirror results by Stewart (2003), which indicated that only 18% of children engaged their fathers in personal problems after divorce, while 41% engaged their fathers about schoolwork or grades and 33% about other topics. More than 80% of the children who reported monthly contact in Stewart's (2003) study reported talking to their fathers about at least one of the topics listed above, suggesting that these items represent the kinds of things children and fathers discuss together. Thus, the results in this study appear consistent with previous research results that suggest that adolescent children, especially girls, are more comfortable with discussing non-emotional and school-related activities with their fathers than with discussing personal issues (Smyth, Caruana, & Ferro, 2004). The results may also indicate a tendency of adolescents to share more of their personal problems with their friends than with their parents, regardless of the marital status of their parents (Videon, 2005).

Table 7

Feelings of emotional closeness to non-resident fathers (n=65)

Feelings of emotional closeness	**Total (N=63)**	**Boys (N=26)**	**Girls (N=37)**
		% (n)	**% (n)**
Not at all	20	26.9 (7)	35.1 (13)
Fairly close	15	23.1 (6)	24.3 (9)
Close	11	26.9 (7)	10.8 (4)
Very close	9	7.7 (2)	18.9 (7)
Extremely close	8	15.4 (4)	10.8 (4)

p=0.3951

Table 7 compares boys' and girls' reports on their feelings of emotional closeness to their fathers. On average, boys and girls reported similar levels of emotional closeness to their fathers, with almost 70% of the boys and 65% of the girls reporting emotional closeness varying from close to extremely close. This is an encouraging finding. Scott, Booth, King and Johnson (2007) state that the age of children may be a particularly important variable in determining levels of closeness, with older adolescents often reporting higher levels of closeness towards their non-resident parents. This may be related to their ability to differentiate between the mother-child and father-child bond, higher levels of individuation and separation from maternal figures, and the increasing development of autonomy.

According to Thomas, Krampe and Newton (2008), feelings of closeness to fathers, regardless of residence, often predict better outcomes for children. Emotionally close relationships between non-resident fathers and their children are particularly important, as fathers who have close relationships with their children can be more effective in monitoring, teaching and communicating with their children (King, Harris, & Heard 2004). Furthermore, emotional closeness is likely to facilitate the transfer of fathers' financial resources to their children (Nord & Zill, 1996). Maintaining emotional closeness to non-resident fathers poses many obstacles for children with factors such as conflict between parents, lack of economic resources, and visitation hindering these relationships. Despite this, children who reported being close to their fathers reported greater happiness and satisfaction with life, had lower levels of psychological distress and even reported higher levels of commitment to their future career choices (Mason, 2011).

Conclusions

Following the threefold conceptualisation of father involvement in terms of interaction, availability and responsibility, as suggested by Lamb, Levine and Pleck (1986), the results of this study indicate that non-resident fathers remain in contact and involved with their non-resident adolescents in a number of aspects considered critical for adolescent well-being and healthy developmental outcomes. In terms of the results obtained for direct contact, it is evident that most non-resident fathers are available to their adolescent children by means of direct interaction through various contact schedules and indirectly through telephone calls. Even though this study did not find many differences in contact of fathers with their sons and daughters respectively, it showed consistent contact between fathers and their children over an extended period, regardless of whether the fathers married again. The most encouraging finding in this study is that, even though fathers may be absent from their children's households, fathers are not necessarily absent from their lives and continue to play an important part in terms of the engagement and accessibility dynamics of father involvement.

This study did not focus on children's satisfaction with the rates of contact, but there is ample evidence that most children want more contact with their non-resident parents and that an increase in contact with a non-resident parent often results in better relationships with both parents (Cashmore et al., 2008), an aspect that is of particular importance during adolescence. Overall, the interpretation of the results obtained from the questionnaire suggests that, in this cohort of adolescents, non-resident fathers remained in contact with the lives of their male and female adolescents over long periods, which is consistent with Dunn's (2004) findings that fathers are increasingly more engaged in relationships with their children after divorce. However, even though contact is taking place, it is evident from the results of this study that non-resident fathers' involvement in the daily lives of their children, including routine and special moments, may be limited to predominantly leisure activities by virtue of the particular

type of contact schedule in place. It leaves concerns regarding the more authoritative and guidance-providing aspects of parenting, such as involvement in school, cultural and religious activities, since the results indicate limited involvement in this regard. It may also suggest that, even though fathers contribute financially towards maintenance and school fees, they express less direct involvement in aspects such as the supervision of homework and engage less in communication regarding aspects such as discipline and instilling a value system. This may be particularly problematic during adolescence and further sever the relationship between parents after divorce. Mothers may feel increasingly overburdened, not only in terms of making financial contributions towards their adolescent children, but also by providing most of the authoritative aspects of parenting for their children. In essence, this only promotes the derogatory perception that non-resident fathers only contribute towards leisure activities with their children while being absent otherwise.

International studies on non-resident father involvement during adolescence reflect similar results. Phares, Fields, and Kamboukos (2009) reported in their study that mothers had the bulk of responsibility in terms of authoritative parenting and responsibility for adolescents' school work. Their results also indicate that, for discipline, daily care and recreational activities, mothers have significantly more responsibility than fathers have. Numerous studies have investigated whether the amount of contact and the quality of relationships with fathers after divorce are predictive of their children's adjustment and well-being. Although mixed results have been found, the majority of studies indicate that the father-child relationship after divorce, in particular with regard to authoritative parenting and emotional closeness, is associated with more positive outcomes for children (Dunn, 2004; Flouri, 2006). During adolescence, in particular, these qualities are linked to higher social

competence, lower externalising behaviour and better long-term well-being (Hofferth et al., 2010). Therefore, the importance of fathers should not be underestimated.

In conclusion, there are three broad limitations in this research. First, the study was limited to a few variables in self-administered questionnaires for children. Since adolescents reported on both the contact and the involvement of their non-resident fathers, the findings may reflect reporting bias (De Los Reyes & Kazdin, 2005). The methods for assessing paternal involvement may also be problematic. Other studies in this field of research have used time-sampling (such as a pager that alerts the participant to report contact) or time diaries to assess parent-child contact and involvement as it occurs (Phares et al., 2009). Although the use of questionnaires is well established in assessing paternal involvement and the measures used showed adequate reliability, a more direct assessment of time involvement and parental responsibility may have improved the information collected about contact and involvement. In addition, comparing adolescents', mothers' and fathers' perspectives about contact and involvement may also have been worthwhile.

Second, the study did not involve control measures for mother involvement, and the type of questions did not give adolescents the opportunity to comment on their relationships with their mothers or the prescribed schedules of contact with their non-resident fathers and whether their mothers were rigidly adhering to contact schedules ordered by court. This is important, as positive mother-child relations are deemed important in fostering contact and continued involvement between non-resident fathers and their children (Flouri, 2007). As such, the specific dimensions of the coparental relationship were not considered, and aspects such as high conflict in relationships between parents after divorce and the possible effect of the conflict on father-child contact were not considered. The quality of the mother-child relationship has been found to relate to the quality of the father-child relationship (King & Sobolewski, 2006). Future research should also focus on determining mothers' perspectives

on the quality of the relationship between adolescents and their non-resident fathers. Mothers should also comment on the type of contact schedules and whether they initiate the contact between children and their fathers. A further important aspect regarding mother involvement would have been to assess mothers' perspectives of the financial contributions of fathers and whether this had an effect on contact with the father. Mothers' perspectives on the leisure and communication between children and their non-resident fathers would also have been a valuable contribution in this study.

Third, given the small size of the sample, the degree of variance in the children's accounts of contact with and involvement of non-resident fathers was generally modest, although the findings are in line with a number of international studies in the same area of research (Hofferth, 2006). However, it may be valuable to determine whether the same trends would have been evident in lower socio-economic groups, where fathers may show less dedication in maintaining regular contact and involvement. Thus, given the fact that most of the adolescents reported regular direct and indirect contact and high levels of involvement, the findings of this study cannot be generalised to families in which the fathers have limited and/or no contact with their adolescent children. Despite these limitations, it is hoped that this study will stimulate interest in the study of non-resident fathering to ensure better outcomes for children affected by divorce.

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ARTICLE 2

The Influence of Non-resident Father Involvement on Adolescent Well-being

This study investigated the influence of non-resident fathers' involvement in the well-being of their adolescent children after divorce. Guided by a systemic ecological framework on father involvement and utilising data from a representative sample of adolescents from intact and divorced families, father involvement was measured by means of the Hawkins Inventory of Father Involvement (IFI). Adolescents' sense of well-being was measured by means of the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ). The results obtained on the IFI indicate that adolescents from divorced families perceived their fathers as lacking in support for their mothers and in salient aspects of all three components of Lamb, Pleck and Levine's (1986) concept of father involvement, i.e. interaction, availability and responsibility. Consequently, the adolescents from divorced families obtained lower scores on reported well-being on the SDQ in terms of externalising behaviours (hyperactivity) and internalising behaviours (emotional symptoms and pro-social behaviour). Recommendations to promote increased father involvement were made.

Keywords: involvement of non-resident father, adolescent well-being, externalising behaviour difficulties, internalising behaviour difficulties, Hawkins Inventory of Father Involvement, Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire

In hierdie studie is die invloed van nie-residensiële vaders se ouerskapsbetrokkenheid op die welstand van hul adolessente kinders ondersoek. 'n Sistemies-ekologiese model van vaderbetrokkenheid is gebruik om die navorsing te rig. 'n Steekproef van adolessente uit intakte en geskeide gesinne is gebruik om vaderbetrokkenheid deur middel van die Hawkins Inventory of Father Involvement (IFI) te meet. Die adolessente se welstand is bepaal deur die Strengths and Difficulties Quesionnaire (SDQ). Die resultate van die IFI toon aan dat die adolessente uit geskeide gesinne hul vaders se betrokkenheid in terme van ondersteuning vir hulle moeders as problematies ervaar, asook wat betref kernaspekte van Lamb, Pleck en Levine (1986) se drie konstrukte van betrokkenheid van nie-residensiële vaders, naamlik interaksie, beskikbaarheid en verantwoordelikheid. Die adolessente uit geskeide gesinne het laer tellings van gerapporteerde welstand in die SDQ behaal ten opsigte van eksternaliserende gedrag (hiperaktiwiteit) en internaliserende gedrag (emosionele simptome en pro-sosiale gedrag). Aanbevelings is gemaak om verhoogte vaderbetrokkenheid aan te moedig.

Sleutelwoorde: betrokkenheid van nie-residensiële vader, adolessente welstand, eksternaliserende probleemgedrag, internaliserende probleemgedrag, Hawkins Inventory of Father Involvement, Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire

Relative to a prodigious body of literature on the parenting role of mothers after divorce, the importance of fathering after divorce became the focus of sustained scholarly attention only during the past two decades (Amato, Meyers & Emery, 2009; Castillo, 2010; Dunn, 2004; Kruk, 2010; Mason, 2011; Wilson, 2006). This spate of interest seemed to coincide with important reformulations of the multifaceted concept of fathering. Over time, the dominant or defining motif has evolved from conceptualising fathers as all-powerful patriarchs wielding enormous power over families (Lamb, 2000), moral teachers (Videon, 2005) and economic providers (Pleck, 2007) to newer formulations of fathers as nurturing and involved parents (Goldberg, Tan & Thorsen, 2009). As a result, substantial advances have been made in efforts to understand the particular effect of the involvement of non-resident fathers[7] on the well-being[8] of children, and current research increasingly emphasises that non-resident fathers can mitigate some of the negative outcomes for children affected by divorce by maintaining close and supportive relationships (Cheadle, Amato & King, 2010; Dunn, 2004; Lamb, 2000; Pleck, 2007; Wilson, 2006).

Even so, most research on the role of fathers after divorce still primarily focuses on aspects such as the payment of child support, frequency of contact, and to a lesser extent the quality of the father-child relationship (Hawthorne & Lennings, 2008; Stewart, 2003). This limited focus on the role of fathers after divorce is unfortunate, given that "there are several reasons why one should expect fathers to be particularly significant in influencing children's outcomes and psychological well-being" (Flouri, 2007, p. 152). Among these reasons, Flouri (2007) indicates that fathers not only shoulder their responsibilities as parents differently from mothers in that they encourage their children to be more competitive and independent,

[7] In this paper, the term "non-resident father" refers to fathers who do not live with their children by virtue of divorce but remain involved in their children's lives.

[8] In this paper, "well-being" refers to psychological, emotional and subjective well-being (Videon, 2005) and the term is used interchangeably to define the subjective self-reports of a group of adolescents exposed to parental divorce. Amato and Keith (1991) coded the variables related to well-being during adolescence into several categories that include academic achievement, conduct problems, psychological adjustment, social adjustment, mother-child relations and father-child relations. These aspects of adolescent well-being will be explicated in this study.

but also spend more time than mothers do in playful and physically stimulating activities with their children. Furthermore, involvement of fathers after divorce is positively associated with not only children's peer relationships (Parke, 2000), but also their psychosocial adjustment (Flouri & Buchanan, 2004) and emotional and cognitive development (Allen & Daly, 2007; Pleck, 2007). In support of this argument, Sarkadi, Kristiansson, Oberklaid and Bremberg (2008) found in a systematic review of 24 longitudinal studies involving 22,300 children that nearly all studies reported the positive effect of paternal influence on children's adjustment after divorce.

In an attempt to build empirically informed conceptual models to explicate the role of fathers after divorce and elucidate *why* involvement of fathers may be expected to have positive effects on development and well-being of children, various theoretical models have been proposed (Pleck, 2007). Doherty, Kouneski and Erikson (1998) and Lamb, Pleck and Levine (1986) provide some of the most influential conceptual frameworks to illuminate the complexity of measuring fathers' influence on the well-being of children. Based on a systemic ecological perspective, which combines family systems theory with sensitivity to ecological and temporal influences, Doherty and his colleagues propose that no group of characteristics in isolation can adequately predict father involvement and argue for a more thoughtful approach to the complex multivariate implications of divorce. They argue that fathering after divorce is influenced by the complex interaction of *contextual factors.* These contextual factors include (i) the nature of the relationship between the father and the child (influenced by factors such as the father's own developmental history, the father's willingness to assume the identity of father, and the temperament of the child) (Kenyon & Silverberg Koerner, 2008); (ii) the nature of the relationship between parents (with evidence suggesting that conflict between parents after divorce has a particularly devastating effect on

children's well-being) (Mason, 2011); and (iii) cultural practices that influence fathering style (Holmes & Huston, 2010).

Lamb et al. (1986) offer less guidance in explaining contextual factors of father involvement and instead focus on the *fathering behaviours* that promote the well-being of children after divorce. This model described father involvement as comprised of interaction (i.e. engagement with children), availability (i.e. responsiveness to gestures of the child and availability of the father) and responsibility (i.e. providing care for children). These constructs have been particularly influential in research on the potentially damaging effects of relegating fathers to the role of "visitors" in the lives of their children (D. H. Hawkins, Amato & King, 2006, p. 125) and continue to dominate research on the involvement of fathers after divorce. Despite making important contributions in addressing specific aspects of fathering after divorce, neither of the above-mentioned theories specifically focuses on *how* fathering, relative to mothering, affects children. In an attempt to address this important aspect, Pleck (2007) proposes a *developmental perspective* for understanding the unique contributions that fathers make in the lives of their children from infancy to young adulthood. In essence, Pleck (2007) proposes that the father involvement construct can be understood adequately only through a number of theoretical vantage points ranging from Bowlby's (1969) attachment theory (particularly salient during infancy), Coleman's (1988) social capital theory (most dominant during adolescence), Bronfenbrenner's (1986) ecological theory of human development (focusing on the overarching role of fathers across the developmental lifespan of the child), and Silverstein and Auerbach's (1999) essential father theory (important during young childhood and the latency phase). Pleck (2007) argues that all the aforementioned theories make important contributions to provide the best available foundation for developing future theory about exactly *how* fathering promotes well-being. In this view, fathers not only contribute to children's well-being from the inception of their lives through processes of

bonding and attachment, but also through fostering a complex kinship of networks and parental capital, regardless of marital status. As such, Pleck (2007) proposes that fathering begins at the onset of the child's life. He states that Bowlby's (1969) attachment theory, although initially focusing primarily on mother-child relationships, provides an important foundation for understanding the importance of fathering, not only in terms of defining fathers as potential attachment figures, but also in understanding *how* attachment orientates the child towards *relating* to the father in different ways than to the mother. In support of this argument, Palkovitz and Palm (2009) indicate that it has long been recognised that infants form attachment relationships with their fathers as well, while Flouri (2007) indicates that positive social and cognitive outcomes in children are nearly as strongly related to secure infant-father attachment as to secure infant-mother relationships. Additional support for this vantage point indicates that paternal behaviour predicting secure attachment are similar to maternal behaviour (Goncy & Van Dulmen, 2010), that infants have a sense of "father presence" (Krampe, 2009, p. 877) from the onset of life. From early infancy of their children, fathers also provide "internal working models" (Main, Hesse & Hesse, 2011, p. 427) that essentially providing infants with a "secure base" from which to explore the world to ultimately foster cognitive development, skills acquisition, and social and emotional development.

The second theory proposed by Pleck (2007) concerns Coleman's (1988) *social capital theory*. This theory is utilised increasingly to describe how fathers can facilitate optimal development in children, especially during young childhood and adolescence. Coleman identifies two types of capital provided by parents, i.e. financial/bonding capital (i.e. providing material resources, schooling, food and housing), and social/bridging capital (i.e. social networks). This second type of capital is differentiated into social capital in the family, i.e. parents' socialisation of their children by promoting the child's cognitive-social

development) and social capital in the community (i.e. the linkages to the larger world that parents provide to children in the form of serving as advocates for children in school and other settings, as well as sharing their own social networks with their children, or sharing knowledge of how to negotiate entry into the adult world). The social capital inherent in father-child relationships is more likely to be realised when relationships are close and consist of continued involvement and care. Coleman (1988) links social capital to the parents' level of education and socioeconomic status and proposes that at different points of development, different aspects of parents' socioeconomic status are especially relevant to parental influence in outcomes of their children. Applied to the study of families affected by divorce, social capital theory emphasises the need to examine the influence of non-resident fathers in the context of their larger familial, social and cultural environments.

The third theory deemed important by Pleck (2007) for understanding father involvement concerns Bronfenbrenner's (1986) *ecological perspective* on human development. This model has become highly influential since the 1990s and is perhaps best known for distinguishing between different ecological "levels" or "systems" involved in the child's development. Starting from the innermost level, these ecological systems are: *microsystems* (face-to-face relationships the child has with parents, peers, teachers and other adults); *mesosystems* (links between microsystems i.e. the relationship between parents and teachers, or between mother and father); *exosystems* (relationships in which the patterns of the child's microsystem are embedded, but in which the child does not participate directly, i.e. a parent's relationships with co-workers); *macrosystems* (social policies and broader cultural scripts influencing the broader systems); and *chronosystems* (historical change in prior systems as well as developmental change during the life course of the child in these systems). The enduring patterns of reciprocal and increasingly complex interactions with significant others ultimately drive development from childhood into adulthood. In this view,

development is an inherently relational event, rather than an event that takes place within the individual. According to Bronfenbrenner's ecological theory, the dynamics of fathers' specific influence as parents may be formulated in two ways. First, fathers function as microsystem partners with whom children can experience good "proximal processes" that will foster healthy psychological development. The second view is that fathers are unique in their facilitation as microsystem providers. Because their parents' personalities usually differ, children's proximal process interactions with their fathers differ from those with their mothers in ways that are potentially important for development.

Finally, Pleck (2007) proposes the *essential father theory* (Silverstein & Auerbach, 1999) for understanding the unique contributions of fathers to the well-being of their children. This theory has particular relevance in studying the potential effects of the involvement of fathers after divorce in terms of the expected developmental outcomes for boys or girls. Some proponents of evolutionary psychology and psychoanalytic theories state that fathers' primary role in child development is to promote appropriate gender identity, especially among sons in whom its acquisition is viewed as inherently risky and failure-prone after divorce (Mason, 2011). The essential father theory departs somewhat from the proposition that sons are especially in need of fathering, that the primary mechanism of paternal influence is identification or modelling, and that the primary consequences of inadequate fathering are hypermasculinity or effeminate behaviour and possible homosexuality (Pleck, 2007). In contrast, essential father theory gives more equal attention to daughters as beneficiaries of fathering and promotes the notion that fathers make a unique and essential contribution to child development, regardless of gender. Essential father theory further argues that fathering makes important contributions to adult outcomes such as completing high school, economic self-sufficiency, and self-actualisation independent of mothering.

Method

Purpose and Aim of Research

The aim of this paper was to examine the effect of the involvement of non-residential fathers on the well-being of adolescent children by means of a quantitative analysis. The study has two primary aims: first, to provide an overview of aspects of father involvement deemed important to provide children with a sense of being fathered and, secondly, to determine whether children's perceptions of their fathers' involvement affect their emotional and psychological adjustment and well-being. This paper aims to provide a unique contribution to the field of study concerning fathering after divorce in South Africa by comparing results obtained from adolescents from intact and divorced families respectively. Furthermore, the study focuses on the perspectives of male and female participants from families affected by divorce to determine whether father involvement affects male and female adolescent children differently with regard to their reported feelings of well-being.

Data Gathering

Data were obtained from five secondary schools within the area of the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan Municipality. Schools were selected randomly to provide a representative sample of all the population groups, i.e. white, Coloured, black and Asian. The percentages of responses from the five different schools were respectively 20,5% (middle/lower socio-economic inner-city school), 28,7% (middle socio-economic suburban school), 17,3% (upper socio-economic suburban school) 19,3% (private school) and 14,2% (middle/lower class inner city school).Written permission was obtained from the principals of all the schools prior to the commencement of the research. The participants received consent forms to obtain permission from their parents to participate in the study.

Participants

The participants of this study were school-attending adolescents between the ages of 13 and 19 years (N=344[9]). The median age of the participants was 16 years. The median age of the group instead of the mean age is reported because the ages of the respondents did not follow a normal distribution, and 24 of the respondents did not indicate their ages. In this sample, 236 research participants indicated that they were from intact families, while 22 participants reported that their parents were separated. The participants from families affected by divorce constituted 86 participants of the total sample. Of these, 61 participants indicated that they were in the primary residential care of their mothers, and a further four participants indicated that they resided with their extended families. One participant did not indicate a particular living arrangement after divorce, and another participant indicated an arrangement of residing with both mother and father despite parental divorce. Nineteen of the participants from divorced families indicated that they primarily resided with their fathers. Contact was measured to ascertain whether participants from families affected by divorce who did not reside with their fathers had direct and/or indirect contact with their fathers, as this was deemed a prerequisite in attempting to examine father involvement. The participants from families affected by divorce who did not reside with their fathers reported regular direct (face-to-face) and indirect contact with their non-resident fathers, ranging from daily contact to bi-weekly, weekly, once a week and every second weekend, every second weekend and every holiday with no significant differences in the contact reported by boys and girls respectively. The participants also reported regular indirect contact with their non-resident fathers via mobile phones.

Measuring Instruments

The research participants completed the following questionnaires during this investigation:

[9] N does not always equal 344 because responses were included in the sample only when the data collected related to an aspect that could be assessed.

Biographical information: The adolescents recorded their age, gender, position in the family and ethnic group on a self-compiled biographical questionnaire. They also reported whether their parents were married, divorced or separated. If they indicated that their parents were divorced, they were asked to comment on how long their parents had been divorced (from a period of 1 year to 4 years and more) and whether their respective parents married again, were living with a partner or single.

The Inventory of Father Involvement (IFI): The involvement of fathers was measured with Hawkins et al.'s (2002) Inventory of Father Involvement (IFI), which was modified to be suitable for use with South African participants. Permission to do so was obtained from the author. The IFI is composed of nine subscales and measures the following aspects of father involvement: (i) discipline and teaching responsibility; (ii) school encouragement; (iii) other parent support; (iv) providing care and encouragement; (v) time and talking; (vi) praise and affection; (vii) developing talents and future concerns; (viii) reading and homework support; and (ix) paternal attentiveness. The IFI measures behavioural, cognitive, affective and moral/ethical dimensions of father involvement and allows for direct as well as indirect involvement. The adolescents were requested to think about their experiences with their father over the past year and to rate on 26 items how good a job (ranging from 1 "very poor" to 5 "excellent") they thought their fathers were doing in raising them. Hawkins et al. (2002) established the face and construct validity of all nine scales of the IFI through confirmatory factor analysis and established overall validity. Cronbach's alpha for the respective nine subscales are as follows: discipline and teaching responsibility (0,85); school encouragement (0,82); mother support (0,87); providing (0,69); time and talking together (0,80); praise and affection (0,79); developing talents and future concerns (0,75); reading and homework support (0,83) and attentiveness (0,69). Finely and Schwartz (2004) also found the

psychometric properties of the IFI were satisfactory. No data on the use of the IFI in South Africa could be found.

The Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ): The Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (Goodman, 1997) was used to assess the emotional and behavioural well-being of the research participants. The SDQ is a comparatively new but widely used instrument (Liabo & Richardson, 2008). It was developed as a short screening tool for problem behaviour in 4- to 16-year-olds and designed for self-reporting by children and adolescents, parents and teachers. In this article, the self-reporting version was used. The SDQ consists of five scales, each of which has five sub-questions. The 25 items assess five problematic behavioural traits that, from a developmental perspective, can be grouped into internalising and externalising behaviours. Internalising behavioural problems are manifested through withdrawal, low self-confidence, emotional distress, depression, somatic concerns and poor social interactions (Zionts, Zionts & Simpson, 2002). Externalising behaviours consist of the more disruptive maladaptive behaviours and have a direct impact on others by violating the norms of the environment through conduct such as fighting, non-compliance, poor performance in school, and delinquent behaviour (Zionts et al., 2002).

The five subscales of the SDQ involve emotional symptoms, conduct problems, hyperactivity, peer problems, which relate to problem behaviour, and pro-social behaviour, which relates to strengths. The five factors of the SDQ have been demonstrated in principal component analysis (Goodman, 2001; Muris, Meesters & Van den Berg, 2003). It has also been used widely in studies evaluating treatment (Patterson, Barlow, Mockford, Limes & Steward-Brown, 2002; Scott, Spender, Doolan, Jacobs & Aspland, 2001; Tischler, Vostanis, Bellerby & Cumella, 2002) and clinical practice (Glazebrook, Hollis, Heussler, Goodman & Coates, 2003). A total score for difficulties can be calculated by adding together the scores for emotional symptoms, conduct problems, hyperactivity and peer problems. The SDQ has

been recognised as a tool for providing an evidentiary base to inform decision-making on the well-being of children (McCrystal & McAloney, 2010).

The psychometric properties of the self-report version of the SDQ were assessed using exploratory factor analysis in a number of studies, and it was found that self-report SDQ scores compared favourably with cross-informant correlations (Goodman, Meltzer & Bailey, 1998; Shevlin et al., 2012). Muris et al. (2003) found that the internal consistency coefficients for the SDQ subscales were generally satisfactory and reported that the mean Cronbach's alpha for the self-report version was 0,64. The self-report version of the SDQ has also been used in South Africa (Cluver & Gardner, 2006) and Zambia (Menon, Glazebrook, Campain & Ngoma, 2007).

Statistical Analysis

Data were analysed statistically using SAS Version 9.2. Descriptive statistics, namely medians and percentiles percentages, were calculated for the numerical data. Analytical statistics were used to compare the median values in different groups by calculated p-values to indicate significant median differences. The Kruskal-Wallis test was used to calculate the appropriate p-values. A significance level of 0.05 was used.

Results and Discussion

Table 1 provides the results of reported father involvement as measured by means of the Inventory of Father Involvement (IFI). The results provide a comparison of the median values of the participants from homes in which marriages were intact and families affected by divorce.

Table 1

Median scores (inter-quartile range) for each IFI scale for the reported father involvement.

Inventory of Father Involvement	**Married**	**Divorced**	**p-value**
Scales			
Discipline and teaching responsibility	4.8 (3.8-5.3)	4.3 (2.5-5.2)	<0.0007*
	N=223	N=59	
School encouragement	5.0 (4.0-5.7)	4.7 (3.0-5.7)	<0.0377*
	N=221	N=61	
Mother support	5.3 (4.3-6.0)	4.0 (1.7-5.5)	<0.0001*
	N=225	N=53	
Time and talking together	6.0 (5.5-6.0)	5.0 (3.5-6.0)	<0.0001*
	N=225	N=62	
Providing	4.6 (3.3-5.3)	4.1 (2.8-5.0)	<0.0140*
	N=226	N=59	
Praise and affection	4.8 (3.5-5.5)	4.5 (3.0-5.3)	0.1405
	N=225	N=60	
Developing talents and future concerns	5.3 (4.7-6.0)	4.7 (3.3-5.7)	< 0.0001*
	N=224	N=60	
Reading and homework support	3.7 (2.3-4.7)	3.3 (1.4-4.4)	0.0618
	N=222	N=53	
Attentiveness	4.7 (3.7-5.7)	3.7 (2.0-5.0)	<0.0001*
	N=226	N=52	

*If $p < 0.05$, there is a significant difference between the two groups.

The results of Table 1 indicate significant statistical differences between participants from homes affected by divorce and intact families respectively on seven of the subscales of the IFI, with participants from families affected by divorce consistently reporting lower levels of father involvement than those from intact families do. A breakdown of the scores indicates that non-residential fathers are similarly involved than residential fathers on only two of the subscales: praise and affection (Scale 6) and reading and homework support (Scale 8),

although the margin of significance is very small in the latter instance. This is a perturbing finding, and in an attempt to elaborate on these results, it was deemed necessary to provide a more elaborate overview of the IFI scales.

In essence, the IFI provides information that can be conceptualised in terms of the threefold definition of father involvement proposed by Lamb et al. (1986), i.e. interaction, availability and responsibility. The *interaction dimension* is covered in particular by aspects such as time and talking together, praise and affection, reading and homework support. The second dimension of *availability* is covered by aspects such attentiveness as well as the scale measuring time and talking together. The *responsibility dimension* is covered by discipline and teaching responsibility, school encouragement, providing, and developing talents and future concerns. The results indicate that adolescents from families affected by divorce reported statistically significant differences in terms of perceived involvement of non-resident fathers in all three these dimensions. Three of these scales concern the *responsibility aspect* of fathering i.e. discipline and teaching responsibility (Scale 1), providing (Scale 5), and developing future talents and concerns (Scale 7). Attentiveness (Scale 9) and school encouragement (Scale 2) concern the *availability* dimension of father involvement, while time and talking together (Scale 4) imply the *interaction* dimension. From the results, it is evident that for children, divorce alters the sense of being fathered in almost all aspects of fathering. In particular, it is evident that the participants in this study experienced their non-resident fathers as lacking in aspects such as discipline, attentiveness, developing their future talents and careers, and spending quality time with them. The results of this study seem to support Flouri's (2006) findings that adolescents still hold a fairly traditional view of the role of their fathers as being responsible for providing for the family, planning and guiding (Flouri, 2006).

These results also support Bailey's (2003) findings that divorce alters the authoritative aspects of fathering (i.e. Lamb et al.'s (1986) notion of *responsibility*) because of the lack of control over child rearing and discipline and the inability to provide consistent guidance. Providing for children is also an important protective factor in children's well-being, as it fosters closer father-child interactions (Holmes & Huston, 2010). However, the results obtained on providing (Scale 5) may have been underreported in this study, as 77,7% of the boys and 91,3% of the girls from families affected by divorce indicated in their biographical information that they were not aware of the financial contributions of their fathers. In terms of aspects such as fathers' *availability* and *interaction* through shared activities and attentiveness, Goncy and Van Dulmen (2010) indicated that shared communication, participation in shared activity and feelings of emotional closeness between adolescents and their non-resident fathers serve as salient protective factors in the reported well-being of adolescent children. Even though mother support (Scale 3) does not measure father involvement directly, the results indicate poor support of mother by non-resident fathers after divorce. The results are also consistent with findings from a study by Flouri et al. (2004), which indicated that, after divorce, these results might be expected to be lower for children with non-resident fathers. This aspect is of particular importance as literature consistently indicates that the extent of cooperation, support and communication between non-resident fathers and their former partners are consistently found to be associated positively with the patterns of contact between child and father, and the quality of the relationship between child and father (Bailey, 2003; Dunn, 2004; Shek, 1997). Furthermore, in their study on alcohol abuse during adolescence, Goncy et al. (2010) point out that mother involvement may be the most salient aspect when drawing conclusions regarding adolescent well-being and paternal influence. This supports the assertion by Doherty et al.(1998) that the complexity of family relationships, such as the relationships between father and ex-partner, between child and

mother, and between child and stepfather, should be considered when attempting to determine factors associated with the quality of the relationship between children and their non-resident fathers.

Table 2

Median scores (inter-quartile range) for each IFI scale by the gender of the adolescents

Inventory of Father Involvement	**Boys (N=27)**	**Girls (N=34)**	**p-value**
Scales			
Discipline and teaching responsibility	4.5 (2.5-5.2)	4.2 (2.5-5.1)	0.6826
	N=25	N=33	
School encouragement	4.7 (3.2-5.7)	4.3 (3.0-5.7)	0.9880
	N=26	N=34	
Mother support	4.3 (3.7-5.3)	2.7 (1.0-5.5)	0.3373
	N=21	N=34	
Time and talking together	5.0 (3.8-6.0)	5.0 (3.5-6.0)	0.5079
	N=27	N=34	
Providing	4.2 (3.0-5.0)	3.9 (2.1-4.9)	0.8449
	N=26	N=32	
Praise and affection	4.5 (3.0-5.3)	4.6 (3.5-5.3)	0.3140
	N=27	N=32	
Developing talents and future concerns	5.0 (4.0-5.7)	4.3 (3.3-5.7)	0.9512
	N=27	N=32	
Reading and homework support	3.5 (2.0-4.7)	3.0 (1.3-4.3)	0.3929
	N=23	N=29	
Attentiveness	3.7 (1.8-5.0)	3.7 (2.0-5.0)	0.5795
	N=22	N=29	

The results of Table 2 indicate no statistically significant differences in the perceived involvement of non-resident fathers of male and female adolescents from families affected by divorce. This finding is particularly noteworthy, given that previous literature indicated that non-resident fathers were more involved with their sons than with their daughters (Lamb,

2000) and that sons tended to report closer relationships with their fathers and enjoyed longer and more frequent visits than daughters did (Stamps Mitchell, Booth, & King, 2009). The results of this study further support findings by Stamps Mitchell, Booth and King (2009) that fathers tend to be equally involved with their daughters and sons, even though their involvement may be expressed in different ways.

Table 3

Median scores (inter-quartile range) for each SDQ scale by marital status

SDQ Scales	**Married (N=236)**	**Divorced (N=65)**	**p-value**
Total Difficulties Score	10.5 (8-14)	11 (8-15)	0.5084
Emotional Symptoms Score	3 (2-5)	3 (1-5)	0.5481
Conduct Problems Score	2 (1-3)	2 (1-3)	0.5760
Hyperactivity Score	3.5 (2-5)	4 (3-6)	<0.0114*
Peer Problems Score	2 (1-3)	2 (1-3)	0.3393
Pro-social Score	8 (6-9)	8 (7-9)	0.5711

*If $p < 0.05$, there is a significant difference between the two groups.

The results in Table 3 indicate that, regardless of parental divorce, most children in this sample reported high levels of subjective well-being. Only on Scale 4 (measuring hyperactivity), results obtained indicate differences in levels of well-being between the adolescents from homes affected by divorce and intact families. Flouri (2006) reports similar results on hyperactivity when comparing adolescents from homes affected by divorce and intact families and suggests that this may be a reflection of externalising problems such as non-compliance and poor school performance rather than hyperactivity in the clinical sense. Because of these findings, it was deemed necessary to compare the results for well-being of male and female participants from families affected by divorce to obtain a more sensitive analysis of possible differences in well-being.

Table 4

Median scores (inter-quartile range) for each SDQ scale by gender (N=65)

SDQ Scales	Boys (N=27)	Girls (N=38)	p-value
Total Difficulties Score	11 (8-12)	12 (8-15)	0.1470
Emotional Symptoms Score	2 (1-3)	3.5 (2-6)	<0.0030*
Conduct Problems Score	2 (1-3)	2 (1-3)	0.2330
Hyperactivity Score	5 (3-5)	4 (2-6)	0.9892
Peer Problems Score	2 (1-3)	2 (1-3)	0.6241
Prosocial Score	7 (6-8)	9 (7-9)	<0.0025*

* If $p < 0.05$, there is a significant difference between the two groups.

The results obtained indicate that significant differences in well-being were obtained on Scale 2 and Scale 6. Scale 2 (emotional symptoms) comprises 5 items measuring emotional symptoms such as anxiety, depression and downheartedness, fearfulness in new situations, and psychosomatic symptoms. Scale 6 (pro-social behaviour) also comprises 5 items measuring aspects such as kindness, volunteering to help others, helpfulness, sharing with others and being nice to people. Even though male and female adolescents from families affected by divorce reported no significant differences in non-residential father involvement on the IFI, the overall results of this study indicate that reported levels of father involvement in terms of lack of engagement, interaction and availability maybe contributed to variances in well-being and adjustment for boys and girls in terms of their emotional symptoms and pro-social behaviour. These results are consistent with Flouri's (2007) findings that low frequency of contact between children and their non-resident fathers was positively related to conduct problems and emotional symptoms. The results obtained on Scale 4 (hyperactivity) and Scale 6 (pro-social behaviour) suggest the possibility of the development of externalising behaviour problems in boys after divorce and internalising behaviour problems, i.e. depression and anxiety, for girls. The results support Flouri's (2007) findings that in

adolescence, father-child relationships change, particularly for girls who consistently rate their affect towards their fathers as lower and perceive their fathers as less available.

Conclusions

The results of this study have important implications for practitioners and policy makers in that it is important that fathers should continue to play an active role in the lives of their children in a variety of contexts. It is also apparent that the dimensions of father involvement in the developmental stages of their children are unique, and that greater content-orientated involvement (i.e. talking about relationships and the future), communication (i.e. sharing of ideas, thoughts and feelings), and time (i.e. participating in activities) during adolescence may need to be included in policies regarding parenting after divorce, particularly during adolescence. Given the current care and contact schedules that are in place in most settlement agreements after divorce, it the question may be asked whether more contact between a non-resident father and his child will prove more beneficial in addressing some of the above, especially with regard to authoritative parenting. The Children's Act No. 38 of 2005 (2006) advocates the concept of parental rights and responsibilities for both parents and emphasises the importance of shared parenting and shared responsibility. If fathers are allowed more uninterrupted contact time with their children, they will inevitably play a more prominent role in all aspects of parenting. This will not only alleviate some of the emotional burden on single mothers, but also facilitate more meaningful parenting relationships with potential benefits for both children and their parents. Closer relationships with and more authoritative parenting by non-resident parents have been found to be associated with better medium- and long-term outcomes for children (Dunn, 2004; King & Sobolewski, 2006). In essence, this study affirms the importance of the vision of the Children's Act No. 38 of 2005 (2006) by emphasising the importance of promoting ongoing relationships between parents and their children after divorce. In terms of practice implications, the present study emphasises the

importance of not only more contact, but also more involvement and the potential benefits of this for children. This leaves important areas of intervention for clinicians working with families and children affected by divorce. DeGarmo (2010) states that greater involvement of non-resident fathers can be facilitated if non-resident fathers take greater responsibility in assuming their paternal identity. This affects not only fathering behaviours, but also parenting experiences. The more the role of non-resident fathers is clarified, the greater the potential for successfully addressing aspects such as continued conflict and eventual disengagement from children after divorce. Hofferth, Forry and Peters (2010) indicate that greater father-child contact is associated with lower levels of maternal involvement, thus giving non-resident fathers more opportunities to play an active role in the lives of their children. It is postulated that the more time fathers spend with their children, the more time mothers may spend in developing new relationships with benefits for mothers, fathers and children. Intervention programmes for non-resident fathers to encourage parenting that is more collaborative should thus focus on assisting fathers to understand the importance of the fathering role, but should also aim to provide cognitive behavioural skill training interventions that provide positive reinforcement and feedback for strengthening definitions of self and family. Although fathers are becoming more involved in the lives of their children, research indicates that fathers still consistently identify with the "breadwinning" role (Mauer & Pleck, 2006, p. 109), while "caregiving" is primarily defined as the mother's work. These stereotypes need to be redefined to encourage greater co-operation between parents. Presently, there are few evidence-based programmes for divorced fathers (DeGarmo, 2010). Based on the results of this study and international research in this regard, intervention programmes for non-resident fathering to facilitate more contact with and involvement of non-resident fathers should focus on

1. assisting non-resident fathers to take more responsibility in terms of authoritative aspects of parenting, which may be facilitated by more regular contact schedules;

2. addressing issues of continued conflict between parents, which may in turn facilitate more regular and uninterrupted time between non-resident fathers and their children; and

3. assisting non-resident fathers to have a greater sense of fathering identity, which will facilitate a growing sense of affirmed paternal identity. This in turn may have the potential of fathers taking more responsibility for their role as custodial parents. Given the fact that biological fathers are currently legally viewed as primary custodial parents in term of the regulations of the Children's Act No. 38 of 2005 (2006), it also serves to protect fathers from having to face the potentially painful consequences of severed relationships with their children. This may stimulate greater father involvement and promote the psychological presence of fathers even in their physical absence.

The findings of this study should be considered in the light of its limitations. First, this study investigated the link between fathers' involvement and adolescents' psychological well-being; hence, the findings may not be applicable to children of other age groups, different dimensions of fathering, or different child adjustment domains. Second, mothers' involvement was not controlled for, and the measures used in this study were all based on reports by adolescents with regard to father involvement, so that these findings may be influenced by reporting bias. Third, the degree of variance in adolescents' emotional and behavioural well-being was generally modest. Parents' reports may have added to the reflections on well-being, and this aspect should be included in future studies on adolescent well-being after divorce. Finally, it must be noted that other unmeasured variables could be

responsible for these findings. Among these various factors could be economic support by fathers (Amato et al., 2009), pre-existing personality and temperament of fathers and adolescents (Belsky, 1984), parenting behaviour of mothers (Papp, Cummings & Goeke-Morey, 2005), and/or psychological health of mothers and the role of mothers as potential gatekeepers in fostering continued relationships between the child and the father after divorce (Cummings, Keller & Davies, 2005). Regardless of these limitations, it is evident from the reported results that fathers make important contributions, and that fathers should take cognisance of their important role in the lives of their children.

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ARTICLE 3

The Effect of Divorce on Adolescents' Attachment to their Non-resident Fathers

The purpose of this study was to examine the post-divorce attachment security of adolescents to their mothers and non-resident fathers. The Inventory of Parent and Peer Attachment (IPPA) was used to compare the attachment security of adolescents from intact homes to those from divorced homes. The data gathered indicate that adolescents from divorced homes reported statistically significant differences in attachment security with their fathers overall and specifically in the areas of trust and communication measured by the IPPA. Therefore, the findings indicate that divorce affects attachment security negatively. No statistically significant gender differences concerning the attachment security of male and female adolescents from divorced homes for either mother or father were found. Two theoretical models (the theory of mattering and the reflective functioning of parents) are discussed as guidelines to assist policy makers in addressing problems in attachment security for children from divorced homes.

Keywords: attachment security, divorce, adolescents, non-resident fathers, Inventory of Parent and Peer Attachment, theory of mattering, reflective functioning of parents.

Die doel van hierdie studie was om adolessente se geborgenheid aan hul moeders en nie-residensiële vaders ná egskeiding te ondersoek. Die Inventory of Parent and Peer Attachment (IPPA) is as 'n meetinstrument gebruik om die geborge sekuriteit van adolessente uit intakte en geskeide huisgesinne te vergelyk. Die data toon dat adolessente uit geskeide gesinne statisties beduidende verskille in geborgenheid teenoor hul vaders in die algemeen gerapporteer het en spesifiek in die areas van vertroue en kommunikasie soos gemeet deur die IPPA. Die resultate toon derhalwe dat egskeiding 'n negatiewe impak het op geborge sekuriteit. Geen statisties beduidende geslagsverskille tussen die geborge sekuriteit van manlike en vroulike adolessente uit geskeide gesinne vir moeders of vaders is gevind nie. Twee teoretiese modelle (tersaaklikheidsteorie en die reflektiewe funksie van ouers) word bespreek as riglyne vir beleidsverbeteringe van geborge sekuriteit vir kinders uit geskeide huisgesinne.

Sleutelwoorde: geborge sekuriteit, egskeiding, adolessente, nie-residensiële vaders, Inventory of Parent and Peer Attachment, tersaaklikheidsteorie, reflektiewe funksie van ouers.

Fifty years since its inception, attachment theory remains an actively developing field, and currently researchers are increasingly describing issues of attachment as they relate to child custody and the courts (Rutter, Kreppner, & Sonuga-Barke, 2009; Shore & McIntosh, 2011; Siegel & McIntosh, 2011). The importance of continued attachment relationships between parents and children and the increased focus on the quality of parent-child relationships after divorce are possibly attributable to a sea change in how children are currently viewed and dealt with in legal processes (Moloney, 2009; Wilson, 2006). Children's experiences of and views on parental divorce and involvement in post-divorce decision making are also advocated increasingly to ensure meaningful relationships with both parents after their divorce (Trinder, 2009). Central to the focus on attachment processes in family law, is the understanding that variation in the quality of caregiving by a parent, such as emotional availability, acceptance, responsiveness and sensitivity, particularly during times of distress, will predictably lead to different secure or insecure attachment behaviour in children (Pascuzzo, Cyr, & Moss, 2013; Schmidt, Cuttress, Lang, Lewandowski, & Rawana, 2007). With this view in mind, family courts increasingly focus on attachment processes, essentially advocating that continued post-divorce contact between non-residential parents and children will foster attachment relationships that are more secure. However, there remains a paucity of work by attachment researchers who review the field by specifically focusing on the long-term impact of divorce on attachment relationships between parents and their offspring (Main, Hesse, & Hesse, 2011). This may be somewhat surprising since divorce, by definition, creates disruptions in attachment relationships, and non-residential parenting invariably affects attachment, as continued contact and involvement are prerequisites for developing secure attachments (Shore & McIntosh, 2011).

Attachment theory, initially developed by Bowlby (1988) and buttressed by considerable evidence from several decades of research, posits the parent-child relationship

as the foundation of intrapsychic and interpersonal functioning across the life span (Kruk, 2010). It hypothesises a biologically based need from infancy to form close affectionate bonds and proposes that the quality of the child's experiences with attachment figures plays a central role in self-regulation and resilience, essentially providing children with internal working models (IWMs) to cope with adverse life experiences such as parental separation and divorce (Goodsell & Meldrum, 2010). According to Bowlby (1988), internal working models are formed through everyday interactions with caregivers. Differences in the quality of affective bonds between child and parent correspond to individual differences in the internal working models of self and others. Secure attachments foster the development of models in which others are viewed as available and trustworthy, while the self is conceptualised as worthy of love, care and attention. Insecure attachments result in internal working models of the self as unworthy and unlovable, while others are considered as unavailable and/or unreliable. These patterns remain moderately stable over long periods of time, and internal working models are viewed as the main source of continuity between attachment in infancy and adolescence and adulthood (Pace, Martini, & Zavattini, 2011).

The central tenet of attachment theory is that disruptions of the attachment bond can produce an innate fear response in children, leaving them vulnerable to psychological disorders (Bowlby, 1988). Accordingly, it may be predicted that parental divorce and the associated conflict that frequently occurs might adversely affect the formation and maintenance of secure and close attachment relationships between a child and his or her non-residential parent. While attachment research mostly has emphasised the importance of secure attachment for infants and young children, the relevance of attachment relationships for well-being during adolescence is also receiving increased theoretical attention (Bretherton, Seligman, Solomon, Crowell, & McIntosh, 2011). Given the fact that most children continue to reside with their maternal caregivers after divorce, there is a growing

body of literature specifically focusing on attachment relationships between children and their fathers after divorce (Grossman, Grossman, Kindler, & Zimmermann, 2008; Lee, Borelli, & West, 2011; Pascuzzo et al., 2013). Early versions of attachment theory placed fathers in an ambiguous position within families. The primary attachment figure was considered to be the mother, with the father's position considered secondary and culturally variable. Since 1980, however, a great deal of research has been focusing specifically on understanding children's attachments to both mothers and fathers (Goodsell & Meldrum, 2010; Kruk, 2010). Current attachment research confirms that fathers exhibit a higher threshold for infant distress, encourage exploration and risk-taking by engaging with young children in games, and provide important attachment-driven directions for older children in social play and bonding through shared interests and activities (Bretherton, Lambert, & Golby, 2005; Cabrera, Fitzgerald, Bradley, & Roggman, 2007; Newland, Coyl, & Freeman, 2008; Paquette, 2004).

In addition to this, recent advances in the study of the neuroscience of attachment emphasise the centrality of the attachment relationship to human brain development. Seminal work emphasises that attachment experiences "shape the way neurons are connecting up to each other in the early years of life, from birth on" (Siegel & McIntosh, 2011, p. 514). Furthermore, it is now a well-established notion that attachment relationships continue to develop and prosper across the life span of the child, even in the context of divorce (Sroufe & McIntosh, 2011). Attachment relationships are not interchangeable, implying that the specific and unique bond with each parent can never be replaced, even in the context of divorce and the emergence of possible stepparents. As such, Sroufe and McIntosh (2011) indicate that attachment is a gradual building process and that children form attachment relationships with their parents that are built on their own terms. Grossman et al. (2008) further suggest a broadening of the term "attachment" to related terms that may better access post-divorce

child-father relationships, such as “sensitivity”, “involvement” and “interactions” (p. 860). Furthermore, Bretherton et al. (2011) point out that the quality of the parent-child bond essentially promotes secure attachments, and that the actual amount of time that children spend with non-residential parents is of less importance. Rather, it is the “predictable access to a caregiving relationship that has shared presence, shared activity, shared recognition, shared positive affect” (Bretherton et al., 2011, p. 541) that results in positive attachment formations. With the emphasis on shared parental responsibility and continuity of care by both parents after divorce, the question still remains: To what extent does divorce affect attachment relationships between non-residential parents and their children in the years following marital dissolution?

Method

Purpose and Aim of Research

The purpose of this paper was to investigate the influence of parental divorce on adolescents’ perceptions of the quality of parent-child attachments. The study was conceived to assess the perceptions of the positive and negative affective/cognitive dimensions of adolescents’ attachment relationships with both parents, and to investigate whether these figures serve as sources of psychological security specifically after parental divorce. Furthermore, it was deemed necessary to investigate the difference between attachments to maternal and paternal figures and to determine whether parental divorce affects the security of male and female adolescents’ attachment to parental figures differently.

Data Gathering

The data used to answer the questions came from participants at five secondary schools within the area of the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan Municipality. Written permission was obtained from the principals of all the schools prior to commencing with the research. The

children received consent forms to obtain permission from their parents to participate in the study. The schools were randomly chosen to provide a representative sample of all the population groups, i.e. white, coloured, black or Asian. One of the schools represents learners from an above-average socio-economic demographic (private Jewish schooling) population, while the remaining four schools accommodate children from middle to lower socio-economic demographic populations. The representative percentages of participants from the five different schools were respectively 20,5% (middle/lower socio-economic inner-city school), 28,7% (middle socio-economic suburban school), 17,3% (upper socio-economic suburban school), 19,3% (private school), and 14,2% (middle/lower class inner-city school).

Participants

The participants in this study were school-attending adolescents between the ages of 13 and 19 years. The data were collected in the classroom setting, and participants were told that the questionnaires were anonymous and confidential, so they could feel free to respond sincerely to the questions. The median age of the participants was 16 years. The median age of the group instead of the mean age is reported because the age of the respondents did not follow a normal distribution, and 24 of the respondents did not indicate their ages. In this sample, 290 research participants indicated that they were from intact families, and 86 participants indicated that their parents were divorced. The majority of participants from divorce homes indicated that they were in the primary residential care of their mothers (N=61), while 19 participants from divorce homes indicated that they primarily resided with their fathers. A further four participants from divorce homes indicated that they were residing with their extended family. Of the remaining two participants from the divorce group, one participant did not indicate a specific residential agreement and one participant indicated a living arrangement with both mother and father despite parental divorce. Of the 61 children from divorce homes in maternal care, the majority reported regular direct and indirect contact with

their non-resident fathers, ranging from daily contact to bi-weekly, weekly, once a week and every second weekend, every second weekend and every holiday with no significant differences in the reported contact between boys and girls.

Measuring Instruments

The adolescents completed the following questionnaires during the investigation:

Biographical information: The adolescents recorded their age, gender, position in the family and ethnic group on a self-compiled biographical questionnaire. They also reported whether their parents were married, divorced or separated. If they indicated that their parents were divorced, they were asked to comment on how long their parents had been divorced (from a period of 1 year to 4 years and more) and whether their respective parents were remarried, living with a partner or single.

The Inventory of Parent and Peer Attachment (IPPA): The IPPA is a self-report questionnaire that was developed by Armsden and Greenberg (1987) specifically for teenagers to assess their relationship with both their parents and peers. In this study, the focus was to assess adolescents' perceptions of their attachment to their parents, and they were not required to complete the section on attachment to peers. The aim was to establish whether parental divorce adversely affected the attachment relationships of the children with their non-residential fathers, and if so, what particular aspects of the attachment relationship were affected adversely. This is not atypical practice, as Johnson, Ketring, and Abshire (2003) and Vignoli and Mallet (2004) used the parents-only form of the IPPA previously in other studies to measure attachment to parents only. The IPPA has been demonstrated to be a valid measure of attachment for the developmental periods of mid- to late adolescence (Gullone & Robinson, 2005) and is used increasingly in international research (Pace et al., 2011). There

are 28 items assessing parent attachment, and respondents are required to rate the degree to which each item is true for them on a five-point scale ranging from “almost always true or always true” to “almost never or never true”. This instrument consists of an overall score for attachment security as well as three subscale scores: trust (i.e. “I trust my mother/father”); communication (i.e. “I tell my mother/father about my problems and troubles”), and alienation (i.e. “I get upset a lot more than my mother/father knows about”). The Trust Scale specifically measures the degree of mutual understanding and respect in the attachment relationship. The Communication Scale assesses the extent and quality of spoken communication, and the Alienation Scale assesses feelings of anger and interpersonal alienation. Pace, et al. (2011, p. 84) also indicate that the trust scale can be interpreted in terms of “parental understanding and respect and mutual trust”, the communication scale in terms of the “extent and quality of verbal communication”, and the alienation scale in terms of “feelings of alienation and isolation from parents”. Even though the IPPA does not allow for the classification of attachment styles, Vivona (2000) indicates that the three sub-scales can be used to assess individual differences according to the following attachment categories:

a) Secure attachment, when both trust and communication levels are medium or high and the alienation level is medium or low. Alienation scores should always be lower than those for trust and communication.
b) Insecure-avoidant attachment, when the trust level is medium or low, the communication level is low and the alienation score is high.
c) Insecure-ambivalent attachment, when the trust level is medium or low and the communication and alienation scores are medium or high.

In their psychometric investigation of the IPPA, Armsden and Greenberg (1987) found significant inter-correlations between all the subscales. Specifically, trust and communication

were found to correlate positively (r= 0,76). In contrast, the alienation subscale inversely correlated with the communication (r= -0,70) and trust (r= -0,76) scales. Pace et al. (2011) investigated the factor structure of the IPPA with a sample of 1059 Italian adolescents and confirmed the reliability of the IPPA as initially established by Armsden and Greenberg (1987). South African researchers such as Schultheiss (2005) and Williams (2005) also applied the IPPA successfully.

Statistical Analysis

The data were analysed statistically using SAS Version 9.2. Descriptive statistics, namely frequencies and percentages, were used for the categorical data. To compare the frequencies and percentages of the different marital groups, analytical statistics, namely p-values, were calculated to indicate significant differences between the groups. The p-values were for the Signed Rank Test or the Kruskal-Wallis Test. A significance level of 0.05 was used.

Results and Discussion

The results of this study will be presented next. Table 1 reflects the comparative findings concerning attachment relationships of participants with their mothers and fathers in three groups of adolescents who were from married, divorced or separated homes respectively. The results are presented in terms of the four scales of the IPPA: trust, communication, alienation and total attachment security.

Table 1

Median scores (inter-quartile range) for each IPPA scale (N=291)[10]

IPPA SCALE	Father	Mother	p-value
Trust	39 (31-45)	42 (36-47)	<0.0001*
	N=290	N=291	
Communication	32 (25-39)	36 (29-43)	<0.0001*
	N=290	N=291	
Alienation	29 (22-34)	29 (24-35)	0.2737
	N=289	N=289	
Total Attachment Security	96 (81-114)	105 (89-122)	<0.0001*
	N=290	N=291	

* If p <0.05 there is a significant different between the two groups (Signed Rank Test)

The results of Table 1 provide an overview of the attachment security of the entire group of adolescents, regardless of parental marital status. It indicates that security of attachment to fathers is compromised significantly in the areas of trust and communication; hence, the total attachment security score is affected negatively. The results on the IPPA in this study suggest that, overall, adolescents reported greater security of attachment to their mothers than to their fathers. In fact, the results point to insecure-avoidant attachment to fathers in adolescents who reported that they were from divorced families. This is problematic, as Howard and Medway (2004) reported that insecurely attached adolescents display difficulties in two areas of self-regulation (one of the cornerstones of attachment theory) i.e. (i) attention orientation (task-orientated, avoidant and emotion-orientated strategies); and (ii) social support-seeking. As such, the authors reported that, in comparison with insecure adolescents, secure adolescents' stressful life episodes (such as divorce) led to an increase in parent-child communication and a decrease in strategies centred on negative avoidance (e.g. drug and/or alcohol abuse).

[10] N does not always equal 291 as responses were included in the sample only when the data collected was an aspect that could be assessed. For example, some of the adolescents did not respond to all of the items.

Armsden and Greenberg (1987) also found that securely attached adolescents used more social support-seeking strategies than did their insecure peers.

Even though it is not possible to draw inferences regarding the causes of the attachment patterns found in this study, a number of confounding factors need to be considered. Firstly, divorce may have affected the adolescents' overall perspective of their attachment security to parents. Adolescents' perceived attachment to parents has been associated with a range of indices of well-being, including self-esteem, life satisfaction, mental health and the quality of peer relationships (Armsden & Greenberg, 1987; Woodward, Fergusson, & Belsky, 2000). Findings from longitudinal studies indicate that children from divorced families reported feeling less affection for their parents, spending less time with them in adulthood and engaging in fewer intergenerational exchanges of assistance compared to adults from intact families (Amato & Booth, 1996; Booth & Amato, 1995). Collectively, it seems as if parental divorce, regardless of the quality of the relationship with non-residential fathers, has a negative effect on parent-child relations over the course of life.

In conjunction with the stress of having to cope with parental divorce, the results in this study may also point to the fact that adolescence is a particularly difficult time to assess the perceived attachments of children to their parents. As Pace et al. (2011) indicate, "adolescence is a peculiar period in the life cycle: on the one hand, developments and changes in internal working models distance adolescents from their parental figures and allow them for form an adult identity, but on the other hand, these changes will depend on the adolescent's personal history of attachment relationships" (p. 83). In their study on attachment relationship with fathers, Pace et al. (2011) also found that "16-year old adolescents showed an overall global score of attachment security towards their fathers that was lower than for younger and older participants" (p. 87). These authors did not have a reasonable explanation for their results and as such did not discuss this finding. This would

be a valuable aspect to address in future research in this area. Table 2 presents the median scores for each of the IPPA scales for adolescents' attachment relationship with both parents by marital status.

Table 2

Median scores (inter-quartile range) for each IPPA scale by marital status

Parental Figure	**IPPA Scale**	**Married**	**Divorced**	**p-value**
Father	Trust	39 (32-45)	35 (21-42)	0.0019*
		N=227	N=63	
	Communication	32 (26-39)	29 (23-39)	<0.0078*
		N=227	N=63	
	Alienation	29 (23-34)	29 (20-33)	0.3703
		N=226	N=63	
	Total Attachment Security	100 (84-115)	91(66-112)	<0.0118*
		N=290	N=63	
Mother	Trust	41 (35-47)	42 (38-48)	0.1746
		N=227	N=64	
	Communication	35 (28-41)	39.5 (30-44)	0.0633
		N=227	N=64	
	Alienation	29 (23-35)	31 (24-35.5)	0.4995
		N=225	N=64	
	Total Attachment Security	104 (88-120)	111 (94.5-126)	0.0887
		N=290	N=64	

* If $p < 0.05$, there is a significant difference between the two groups (Kruskal Wallis Test)

The results in Table 2 reveal the presence of clear negative associations between parental divorce and attachment to fathers. Literature on parental divorce and its effect on adolescent attachment suggests that age may be a confounding aspect in interpreting results on the IPPA, with the age of 16 indicated in two studies as particularly difficult to obtain positive outcomes on attachment towards parents. The abovementioned study by Pace et al. (2011) confirms the results in an earlier study by Woodward et al. (2000) on adolescent attachment

after parental divorce in New Zealand. Both studies indicate that the younger children are at the time of first separation, the worse their attachment relationships and relationship perceptions towards their parents are likely to be at ages 15 and 16, with these "associations being similar for both males and females" (Woodward et al., 2000, p. 168). The authors postulate that parental divorce places children at risk of lower levels of attachment to their parents. They further state that the results from their longitudinal study reveal that "at age 15 children exposed to parental separation perceived themselves as less closely attached to their parents than children who were not exposed to parental divorce. At age 16 – again, in comparison to children whose parents had not separated – they tended to view their parents as having been less caring and more restrictive toward them in childhood. These results suggest that parental divorce may have a detrimental effect on children's evaluations of both their mothers' and fathers' concern for them and also on the quality of parent-child attachment relations" (Woodward et al., 2000, p. 170). In this study of South African children, the negative evaluations of attachment to mothers were not noted, and it seems as if divorce has a more devastating impact on attachment relationships with fathers. The results in Table 3 provide an overview of the perceived attachment relationships of adolescents with their non-resident fathers from divorced families by gender.

Table 3

Median scores (inter-quartile range) for each IPPA scale by gender (N=63)[11]

Parental Figure	IPPA Scale	Boys (N=27)	Girls (N=36)	p-value
Father	Trust	36 (29-43)	35.5 (20.5-41)	0.5216
		N=27	N=36	
	Communication	30 (22-40)	26.5 (22-33.5)	0.4180
		N=27	N=36	
	Alienation	30	24.5 (19-31.5)	0.9295
		(26-33)	N=36	
	Total Attachment Security	96 (73-118)	86.5 (64-104.5)	0.6683
		N=27	N=36	
Mother	Trust	44 (39-48)	42 (37-48)	0.4161
		N=27	N=36	
	Communication	40 (32-44)	38 (29-44)	0.5180
		N=27	N=36	
	Alienation	32 (26-34)	30 (23-37)	0.1244
		N=27	N=36	
	Total Attachment Security	111 (98-126)	111 (90-126)	0.2432
		N=27	N=36	

If $p > 0.05$, there is no significant difference between the two groups (Kruskal Wallis Test)

Evident from the results in Table 3, is that the male and female participants from divorce homes did not report statistically significant differences with regard to their attachments to either parent. The aim here was to investigate whether boys and girls perceived their attachment relationships with their parents differently after divorce, given the widespread assertion in early research that boys are more vulnerable than girls are to the effects of divorce (Woodward et al., 2000). However, more recent research on the effect of divorce and the gender of children clearly indicates that boys and girls are equally disadvantaged when faced with the breakdown of a family (Benbassat & Priel, 2012; Dykas, Ziv, & Cassidy,

[11] Two participants from the divorce group did not complete the IPPA questions relating to father attachment.

2008; Pascuzzo et al., 2013; Stamps Mitchell, Booth, & King, 2009). Hence, the results of the current study, based on gender, are in line with international studies on attachment relationships after divorce.

The conflicting results obtained in research on attachment relationships during adolescence mirror the complexities of the process of attachment formation during this critical developmental phase. In this regard, Pascuzzo et al. (2013) point out that attachment needs during adolescence can be met in the absence of proximity to parents when peers are able to provide support and encouragement in facing developmental challenges. Zeifman and Hazan (2008) found in their study that, even though peer attachment is important, parents were found to be the primary sources of separation distress and preferred bases of security for children between the ages of 6 and 17, although there was an increased preference to seek out peers more than parents for comfort and emotional support between the ages of 8 and 14. However, this trend does not seem to be true for children affected by divorce, as Kilmann, Carranza, and Vendemia (2006) pointed out in their longitudinal study of the attachment patterns of college women from intact vs. divorce families. Their findings suggest that parental divorce during adolescence resulted in insecure attachment relationships in adulthood and consistent ratings of both parents as more absent, distant and demanding than those in intact families. Their results also indicate that children of divorce consistently rated their peers as primary sources of support (from adolescence onwards), given their negative perceptions of parental characteristics. Grossman et al. (2008) concluded on findings from a 22-year longitudinal study on the effect of divorce on attachment relationships that the "quality and predictive power of the father-child and child-mother attachment relationships derive from different sets of early social experiences, and consequently should be assessed differently" (p. 861). Similarly, Freeman, Newland and Coyl (2010) indicate in their editorial on new directions in father attachment research on divorce that context is critical in

explaining variance in the quality of father attachment and related child outcomes for children affected by divorce. They conclude, "To be sure, the nature of a child's tie to his/her father has evolved within complex social ecologies in which father attachment is a single stand connected to many. The search for commonalities in father attachment is most likely to be found at the level of interactions and indirect effects" (Freeman et al., 2010, p. 6).

Conclusions

The findings of this study are of particular importance when investigating the perceived attachment relationship of adolescents to their non-residential parents. It begs the question as to why divorce particularly affects father-child attachment. Literature suggests that, because of parental separation, some adolescents disengage earlier from the family, which in turn creates exposure to psychological dysfunction (Castillo, Welch, & Sarver, 2011). While adolescence is typically thought of as a time during which parent-child relationships become less important, with increased focus on peer relationships, most adolescents wish and need to maintain their parents as "attachment figures in reserve" (Brown, McBride, Shin, & Bost, 2007, p. 199), continuing to seek parental support and comfort during times of distress. However, the degree to which adolescents use their parents as secure attachment figures will depend on the adolescent's personal history of attachment relationships (Allen & Land, 2008). Gullone and Robinson (2005) point out that, during adolescence, males typically report more positive attachments to their parents than do females, who generally report more positive attachments to their peers when compared with males. Overall, the results in this study suggest that adolescents from divorce homes reported slightly higher levels of security of attachment to their mothers, but no significant differences between male and female adolescents were reported in their attachment relationships to either mother or father. Of significance in this study is the significant difference in attachment security between adolescents from intact homes, as opposed to those from divorce homes.

From the results obtained in this study, it seems as if current legal remedies as envisaged by the Children's Act No 38 of 2005 (2006) and increased calls by advocacy groups aimed at fathers to invest more time and resources in the lives of their children after divorce, i.e. increased father involvement, seem to have a limited effect on the attachment security of their children. Evident from this study is that, even in the face of children spending time with their non-residential fathers and non-residential fathers investing resources in the lives of their children, divorce still has an adverse effect on attachment security. Increased understanding of parenting behaviours that drive and promote development of attachment between father and child seems an essential next step to suggest possible intervention strategies in assisting family law practitioners – judges, lawyers, mediators and mental health practitioners alike – to make recommendations to address the difficulties in attachment security between adolescents and their non-residential fathers. However, as Brown et al. (2007) point out, this task presents some unique challenges associated with the interactive nature of family processes after divorce. Kelly (2007) rejects the notion that the family dissolves, ending spousal and parent-child relationships, after divorce. On the contrary, there is increasing recognition of the fact that the divorce family is still a family, albeit a family where redefined relationships have to be renegotiated carefully. The moderating influences of fathers', mothers', and children's interactions create differences in family contexts that may contribute to varying father-child interactions. In the context of divorce, it is well documented that the nature of the relationship between non-residential fathers and their children is influenced by a number of internal/psychological factors and external/contextual influences (Kruk, 2010). A number of recent studies have documented how the connection between fathering and children's attachment security is moderated by maternal involvement (Cabrera et al., 2007), the degree and quality of co-parenting after divorce (Caldera & Lindsey, 2006) and fathering behaviour in particular (Flouri, 2010).

Brown et al. (2007) propose that security of attachment between father and child is best accounted for by differentiating between father involvement and fathering quality. Father involvement per se, i.e. the amount of time and/or resources invested in children after divorce, is not tantamount to fathering quality. For example, Sroufe and McIntosh (2011) state that the emphasis on the amount of time fathers spend with their non-resident children creates the hazard of fathers trying to make up for lost time by way of leisure activities. However, it is evident from attachment research that a "tremendous attachment relationship" (Sroufe & McIntosh, 2011, p. 472) is facilitated only through regular, ongoing and supportive interactions between fathers and their children. Similarly, Brown et al. (2007) indicate that father-child attachment relationships are less dependent on time and the more critical aspect is *what* fathers do with the time they spend with their children.

To facilitate meaningful relationships between both parents and children after divorce, two theoretical frameworks, developed within the framework of attachment theory, deserve special attention, namely the "theory of mattering" (Rosenberg & McCullough, 1981) and the "reflective functioning" of parents (Benbassat & Priel, 2012). Both views emphasise that the perception of how much children "matter" to their parents and how much parents are capable of reflecting on the experiences of their children are critical for children to develop a sense of being adequately parented – regardless of marital status. The interactive nature of both theories are of importance, as they emphasise Flouri's (2010) view that both parents and children simultaneously influence adjustment and continuing attachment processes after divorce. As such, mattering is not only important for children, but also for parents. In support of this notion, research by Schenck et al. (2009) indicates that mattering to one's children not only encourages non-residential fathers to remain involved in the lives of their children, but for children a sense of mattering to parents is negatively related to internalising and externalising problems (Marshall, 2004), and positively related to self-esteem and self-

concept (Marshall, 2001). The "reflective function" of parents and children, i.e. the capacity to reflect on one's own mental experiences and those of others, is also critical in understanding attachment processes during adolescence. Parental reflective functioning is expressed in aspects such as involvement, warmth and control and is associated with positive adjustment of adolescents after divorce (Barber, Stolz, & Olson, 2005; Heider, Matschinger, Bernert, Alonso, & Angermeyer, 2006). Although not tested in this study, it is interesting to speculate about the mechanisms of mattering and the reflective capacity of parents and children in relation to attachment security. Sroufe and McIntosh (2011) liken the building of attachment security to the building of a house. Hence, the early mother-infant foundations for secure attachment may "set the boundaries of what the house can become. But many different foundations can allow you to build a good enough house" (p. 465). They point out that early attachment security provides the foundation for the building of a hierarchy of further attachment relationships, but that the formation of early attachment relationships (or lack thereof) is not destiny. Early attachment experiences do not get erased, but are "interpreted in the light of subsequent events" (Sroufe & McIntosh, 2011, p. 465). This provides some sense of hope for the children of divorced parents. If parents are more aware of their respective roles in terms of making sure that their children are aware that they matter, and if they can reflect on their own behaviour and the behaviour of their ex-spouses and growing children, they may still facilitate the building of trust and communication relationships with their adolescent and adult children. What is evident, though, is that intervention strategies focused only on mothers or only on fathers to support adjustment after divorce may not be beneficial for children in the long run. A more integrative approach to adjustment and specifically the fostering of more secure attachment relationships after divorce should include psycho-education programmes that aim to educate all divorcing parents and children regarding the importance of not only spending time with children, but providing children with a sense of a

psychological parent (Krampe, 2009) who is available and accessible, regardless of residential status.

The results of this study should be interpreted with caution for several reasons. Notably, this was a relatively small sample, and the results may not be generalised to all adolescents with non-residential fathers. In addition, the extent to which associations exist between the timing of parental divorce and later attachment and bonding relations were not addressed in this study. As such, possible confounding effects such as early mother-child attachment, interparental conflict and children's behavioural problems may also have had an adverse effect on the results obtained in this study. Finally, the results represent only the views of the adolescents, and a richer understanding of attachment relationships may have been found if data had also been collected from maternal caregivers and non-residential fathers.

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