

**Psychosocial behaviour of adolescent learners from divorced
families in Newlands West, Durban**

By

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DECLARATION OF ORIGINALITY

I hereby declare that this thesis in its entirety, unless specifically indicated to the contrary in the text, is my original work. The dissertation has not been submitted for degree purposes at any other university.



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DEDICATION

Dedicated to my late mother, Shanti Gopie
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ABSTRACT

The primary purpose of the research was to explore and describe the effects of divorce on the psychosocial behaviour of adolescent learners from Newlands West. The secondary purpose, based on this research, was to formulate guidelines to improve the quality of interventions by educators in schools which will assist adolescents to cope with the challenges associated with divorce. The sample consisted of twenty participants between 12 and 18 years. Adolescents were selected for this study because they were mature enough to articulate their awareness and experiences of the divorce situation and family issues. They were from grades eight to twelve from New West Secondary School in Newlands West.

The methodology used for this research was based on a qualitative paradigm. This ensured that data was rich and diverse in nature, especially since a small sample was used and it allowed each participant to provide in-depth information regarding their experiences of their parents' divorce. The narrative interview was used and measures were applied to ensure trustworthiness. Interviews were tape recorded to ensure that the data was accurate. The researcher had access to this information and could continuously refer to it. It also allowed the researcher to listen attentively to

the participants, without disrupting their flow of thought by writing or summarizing their responses. The researcher explained to the participants the purpose of the study and the same question was given to all participants, namely: "Could you tell me how the divorce of your parents has affected you?" The audio-taped interviews were transcribed and analysed. A descriptive analysis technique was used and central themes were identified.

The themes which emerged were:

- Adolescent learners' views on why their parents are getting divorced
- Effect of the divorce on the adolescent learners
- Sources of support for adolescent learners to cope with the divorce
- Adolescent learners' views on parent reconciliation
- Relationship of adolescent learners with non-custodial parent(s)

The study concluded that divorce had a debilitating impact on the psychosocial behaviour of adolescents in this school and that there was a need for appropriate structures to be established to effectively address the issue in school.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION AND RATIONALE, PROBLEM

STATEMENT AND COURSE OF STUDY

1.1 INTRODUCTION AND RATIONALE

The focus of this study is on the psychosocial behaviour of adolescent learners from divorced families in New West Secondary School in Newlands West, Durban. According to Mckenry and Price (1994, 200) it is common belief that unhappily married couples should stay together “for the sake of the children”. Cawood (2000, 46) states that experts have come to believe that it is better for the children that their parents should divorce. The rationale behind this is that greater harm would come to the children if they were constantly faced with conflict between parents.

The divorce rate in South Africa is increasing rapidly. In 1995, there were 148148 registered marriages and in that same year, 31592 divorces were granted. A total of 40156 children were part of this process (Central Statistics, 1995). It appears that the number of divorces increases annually and more children find themselves having to adjust to and deal with the effects of the divorce in addition to the many challenges that come with being an adolescent.

Recent research on divorce has shown that divorce has a far greater impact on children than was initially believed (Strijdom, 1997, 48). The researcher has noticed an increase in this phenomenon in Newlands West over the past seventeen years that he has been employed as an educator and school counsellor at New West Secondary School in Newlands West, where the vast majority of learners come from middle-income homes. There were an extremely high number of learners who were from families who had experienced divorce. Informal discussions with pupils at New West Secondary School revealed that divorce had occurred for a number of reasons, ranging from the absence of financial support and extramarital affairs to abuse.

As a social worker, trainer of student social workers from the University of South Africa, an educator and school counsellor, the researcher was disappointed with the dearth of research and studies available, which specifically focus on the impact of divorce on adolescent learners in South Africa. Although the subject area of divorce and its impact on children has been widely researched, very little research in this area has been conducted in South Africa focusing specifically on South African adolescents. The research, which does exist, is mostly outdated and presents considerable methodological problems (Steyn, 1997, 49).

The researcher chose pupils from New West Secondary School for his research. New West Secondary School is situated in Newlands West, which forms part of the greater Newlands Area. The Newlands suburb is divided into two main sections, namely, Newlands East, predominantly occupied by coloured residents, and Newlands West, predominantly occupied by Indians. Both areas were developed on the basis of the apartheid policies of the past and to relieve the critical housing shortage for the low income-earning members of both groups (refer to map 2). The majority of the residents are Indians, descendants from indentured workers and free traders who arrived in Natal between 1860 and 1911, contributing to the sugar industry and the commercial life of the province. Newlands West is located north of Durban and comprises second and third generation Indian South Africans. The majority of the Indian residents have relocated to Newlands West from the surrounding former Indian areas, namely Chatsworth and Phoenix. Presently, the Newlands West area is undergoing transformation in terms of its population dynamics and demographics. Many Indian homeowners have sold their homes to African and Coloured buyers in their quest to make a profit and move to more affluent areas. However, the majority of the residents are still Indian. Newlands West comprises the following built up areas, namely, Hillgrove, Earlsfield, Castlehill, Briardale, Riverdene, Westrich and the informal settlements of Cleremont and Richmond Farm.

New West Secondary School, situated in Castlehill, serves learners mostly living in this area. However, learners from surrounding areas also form part of the school population. There are also learners who travel from areas such as Umlazi, Ntuzuma, KwaMashu, Pinetown, Westville and Newlands East but they form a very small part of the school population (The Independent on Saturday, 15 April 2000). (Refer to maps 1, 2 and 3)

Newlands West is approximately twenty kilometres north of Durban and provides housing for approximately two hundred thousand people. Housing comprises of the following types: single units, sub-economic dwellings and informal settlements.

During counselling sessions with learners, it was brought to the attention of the researcher that a large number of learners were from unstable homes where parents had divorced. It was clearly evident that learners from such homes presented problems such as low self-esteem and a drastic lack in confidence. Other behavioural problems included truancy, smoking, theft, teenage pregnancy and aggression. The researcher further gauged that those learners were vulnerable and felt victimized by other learners. As a result they were reluctant to reveal their family situation, as they were sensitive about this issue.

The school provides a wide range of extra-curricular activities such as cricket, soccer, netball, volleyball and athletics to name but a few. Whilst some learners participated actively in these sports others chose not to. There are also co-curricular activities such as chess, debates, speech-contests, quizzes and team speaking competitions held at regular intervals. Pupils of the various grades are motivated to participate in these activities. Subjects like Art and Speech and Drama also give learners an opportunity to participate in competitions and concerts. This enables learners to tap into their talents and abilities. There is also an exhibition of learning held every two years. This gives learners and educators an opportunity to display their outstanding work. The school also arranges excursions for pupils in all grades. The broad range of curricular and extra-curricular programmes aim to develop the whole child, and equip him/her to meet the challenges of the 21st century. The mission and vision of the school propagate the development of individuals who will take their rightful place in society and this includes children who come from 'broken' homes.

The school has been instrumental in creating awareness in learners on issues such as sexuality, drug and alcohol abuse, other substance abuse, HIV/Aids and sexually transmitted infections. These topics have been discussed on an ongoing basis through seminars, assembly talks, forum

discussions and also incorporated into Life Orientation lessons. In addition, the school arranges talks on these pertinent issues, conducted by experts in the different fields from different organisations (namely Newlands East Children's Society, Child Protection Unit, Newlands East South African Police Service, Newlands Rehabilitation Centre, Alcoholics Anonymous). Hence, the needs of adolescent learners from divorced families are addressed to a certain extent. However, the researcher is concerned that it is not sufficient to adequately support such learners.

1.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT

Research suggests that as a result of divorce, adolescent learners experience problems in terms of their psychosocial development. Therefore the primary research question can be stated as: *How are adolescent learners affected by the divorce of their parents?* The key questions which arise out of this research question are:

- How do adolescent learners respond to parental divorce?
- How do adolescent learners cope with parental divorce?
- Who provides adolescent learners with support to cope with divorce?

The secondary research question can be stated as: *What guidelines in the form of recommendations can be made to lessen the effect of the divorce of parents on the adolescent learners?*

1.3 PURPOSE OF THE RESEARCH

1.3.1 Primary research purpose

The primary purpose of the research is to explore and describe how adolescent learners are affected by the divorce of their parents.

1.3.2 Secondary research purpose

The secondary purpose, based on this research, is to formulate guidelines to improve the quality of interventions by educators in schools that will assist adolescents to cope with the challenges associated with divorce.

1.4 OPERATIONAL DEFINITIONS

1.4.1 Adolescent learner: According to Gouws and Kruger (2000, 1), the term ‘adolescence’ derives from the Latin verb ‘adolescere’, meaning to grow up or to grow to adulthood, thus referring to a development phase in the human life cycle that intervenes between childhood and adulthood. For the purpose of this study an adolescent learner is an individual between 12 and 19 years who is still attending school.

1.4.2 Divorce: Philips (1988, 3) defined divorce as "dissolution of a validly contracted or celebrated marriage". According to the South African Law (Schaeffer, 1999, 27) divorce dissolves marriage and the court should pronounce the marriage as dissolved.

1.4.3 Psychosocial behaviour: According to Donald, Lazarus and Lolwana (1997, 33), psychosocial is the state where individual psychological characteristics and social contexts are seen in continual interaction. Swartz & Scott (1999, 189) maintain that adolescence is a period of increased social demands and roles. This could bring about considerable strain and stress in the life of the adolescent, and any other stress factors, e.g. divorce, escalate the stress experienced by the adolescent and this sometimes leads to emotional, social and behaviour problems. This could also result in smoking, drinking, sexual activity, gang activity, theft, suicide attempts, drug consumption and physical fights. Included is violence, the intentional use of physical force of power, threatened or actual, against oneself, another person, or against a group or community, that either results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, maladjustment or deprivation (Stevens, Wyngaard & Van Niekerk, 2001, 147).

1.5 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

1.5.1 Research design

According to Silverman (1997, 32), qualitative research cannot provide a mirror reflection of the social world, but it may provide access to the meanings people attribute to their experiences and social worlds. Those of us who aim to understand and document others' understandings choose qualitative research because it provides us with a means for exploring the points of view of our research participants.

1.5.2 Research methodology

The qualitative research methodology allowed the researcher to obtain information relevant to the experiences of adolescent learners from divorced families in Newlands West.

1.5.2.1 The sample

The participants were drawn from New West Secondary School in Newlands West. This school was used because of its accessibility since the researcher is employed both as an educator and school counsellor for the past seventeen years at the above-mentioned school.

The population under investigation consists of adolescent learners aged between 12-19 years who are from divorced families. Therefore the type

of sampling was purposive since the researcher sought specific characteristics of the participants, such ~~as that such as that~~ they are adolescent learners, that their parents are divorced and that they are information rich. Twenty adolescent learners from divorced families were included in the sample and data collection was continued until saturation was reached, i.e. no new information emerged (Bogdan and Taylor, 1999, 15).

1.5.2.2 Data collection and analysis

Data was gathered during individual interviews using the narrative interview (Schurink, 1998, 298). The researcher explained to the participants the purpose of the study. The same question was given to all participants, namely: "Could you tell me how the divorce of your parents has affected you?" The audiotaped interviews were transcribed and analysed. A descriptive analysis technique (Creswell, 2003) was used. Central themes were identified. Finally guidelines were generated to improve the quality of interventions by educators in school.

1.6 DELIMITATIONS OF STUDY

This research falls within the theoretical location/framework of Educational Psychology as it focuses on the effects of divorce on the

psychosocial development of adolescent learners whose parents are divorced.

1.7 COURSE OF STUDY

Chapter one is concerned with the introduction and rationale, problem statement, purpose of the research, operational definitions, research design and methodology, delimitations of study and course of study.

X Chapter two focuses on a theoretical perspective on the psychosocial behaviour of adolescent learners. A review of the literature will centre on the psychosocial life of the adolescent learners.

X Chapter three will present an outline of the research design and research methodology.

In chapter four the results of the research will be stated and discussed. It will then be reviewed in the light of relevant literature.

Finally in chapter five, the researcher will summarize the effects of divorce on the psychosocial behaviour of adolescent learners and will provide guidelines to improve the quality of interventions by educators in schools that will assist adolescent learners cope with the challenges

associated with divorce. The limitations of the study will be pointed out and recommendations for further research will be provided.

1.8 CONCLUSION

In this chapter, a background to the study was provided. The researcher noted the lack of information regarding the effects of divorce on adolescent learners in South Africa and the very scant guidelines provided to educators to deal with the problems.

CHAPTER TWO

THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVE ON THE PSYCHOSOCIAL BEHAVIOUR OF ADOLESCENT LEARNERS

2.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, the researcher provides a theoretical perspective on the psychosocial behaviour of adolescent learners, with particular reference to the behaviour of such learners from divorced families.

2.2 ECOSYSTEMIC FRAMEWORK

It is absolutely vital that one regards the situation of parents experiencing marital problems or going through a divorce holistically and not in isolation, as one needs to explore their interaction with other family members and be aware of the impact on the members.

A system is defined as a unit that consists of parts that need to work together and are dependent on each other. Since each system is made up of structures and boundaries, they define the tasks and responsibilities of the different parts that need to fit together to form the entire system (Munice, Wetherell, Dallos & Cochrane, 1995, 7). This interdependence

is brought about by the process of exchange in the form of information and resources. Systems are not stagnant but change over time due to the interactions and influence of other systems (Berger, Federico & McBreen, 1994, 9). An example of a system within the system is the family.

Berger, *et al.* (1994, 24) pointed out that if a family experienced problems, e.g. marital problems, alcoholism and abuse, they were more likely to keep that information within their family unit and only much later share this with others or not at all. This is known as a closed system, which does not allow for easy, accessible levels of interactions with other systems such as relatives, support groups or other institutions, such as schools. An open system allows for effective continuous interaction between the different systems. It makes people aware of goals, tasks and objectives that need to be achieved, i.e. the input and then the end result of whether these tasks had been completed or not, i.e. the output (Munice, *et al.*, 1995, 11). This type of system allows people to adapt to transformations in the external environments.

Systems theory allows one to view the individual's involvement and interaction in relation to other systems that they interact with, i.e. the family, peers, the school and the community. According to Dallos (1991,

32), this theory provides a “picture of families as engaged in the construction of patterns of behaviour and beliefs.” Thus all the members of the family are actively involved in developing and “jointly building a shared reality” (Dallos, 1991, 32). Certain actions of children such as temper tantrums and other attention seeking behaviour tend to draw the parents’ attention away from the problems between themselves and rather than dealing with these problems immediately, they prolong them. The children sense feelings of unhappiness between their parents or witness the abuse/arguments and react by becoming restless and lacking concentration or crying as they experience feelings of fear or anxiety. This is an important point that illustrates that problems within one system, i.e. the couple, impact on the actions and behaviour of other systems, i.e. the children (Munice, *et al.*, 1995, 17), and in this research, on adolescent learners.

The ecosystemic model plays an important part in the family life cycle because families are constantly subjected to an environment that changes and alters (Dallos, 1991, 7). In order to deal with these changes the family needs to be flexible and adaptable so as to be able to cope with day-to-day as well as major changes, which take place at different phases of their lives such as marriage, divorce, children leaving home or death.

The family is therefore seen as an “organic entity” which has its own identity but is not constant and is continuously evolving (Dallos, 1991, 7). Often forces such as cultural aspects and religious beliefs also affect/impinge on the environment (Dreman, 1999, 156). When a divorce takes place the family has to adapt from living with a unit that consists of a father, mother and children to a unit with just one parent as the head, i.e. either a male or a female household (Compton & Galaway, 1984, 31).

According to Dallos (1991, 8), families experience the following transitional stages, i.e.:

- the courtship period;
- marriage and its consequences;
- childbirth and dealing with the young;
- middle marriage difficulties;
- weaning parents from children; and,
- retirement and old age.

However, if at any stage of this cycle, divorce takes place, and then the logical and natural cycle of family life is broken. This will impact on, amongst others, the adolescent learner in that family unit. The stages of family development stress the importance of processes such as socialisation, adaptation as well as learning that takes place within families. Learning is a dual process because the parents are continuously

learning new information from their children while the family values and norms are taught to their children (Dallos, 1991, 9).

A divorce is often seen as being similar to the death of a spouse because there is a period of loss and bereavement (Parkinson, 1987, 37). Just as a person experiences depression after the loss of a partner through death, similar feelings are experienced after a divorce. There is a loss of identity because where they had previously been a “couple”, after the divorce this identity falls away (Parkinson, 1987, 38). According to Parkinson (1987, 27), one could get a good understanding of the interaction in a family at precisely the moment at which one of the members asks for help from a professional. Often the couple may decide to go through a period of separation before resorting to a divorce. Parkinson (1987, 29) states that this sometimes affects the children more severely than the divorce itself. If the children were unaware of the seriousness of the marriage problems or even totally oblivious to it, then the period of separation followed by a divorce was often a shock for them.

It is accepted that ecosystems are continually changing and evolving but at the same time maintaining coherence so that the changes in various parts ‘fit’ into an overall organisation (Dallos, 1991, 19). An important point is that one needs to focus on other parts of the system, because if

too much emphasis is placed on only one part of the whole system one would be unaware of problems experienced by the other parts. There has to be an acknowledgement that the family does not exist in isolation but is in fact part of a larger ecosystem.

2.3 PSYCHOSOCIAL LIFE OF THE ADOLESCENT

2.3.1 Divorce as a social problem affecting the adolescent learner

According to Jary & Jary (2000, 573) social problems are aspects of social life seen to warrant concern and intervention, e.g. crime, domestic violence, child abuse, poverty and drug abuse. The identification of a social problem is the outcome of social processes including a moral evaluation of people's behaviour. In analysing social problems it is important to identify the group of people for whom the behaviour is a problem. What is considered pathological can differ from one period of time to another within society. There must therefore be a relationship between social pathology and social change. Since deviation from the institutionalized expectations is considered to be pathological, e.g. divorce, the only way that something can cease to be pathological, or something else comes to be considered pathological, is by change in what is generally expected. This change in the values and norms in a society may be the results of adjustments to strains and stresses brought about by internal or external factors (Colin, 1982, 45).

According to Lowe (1993, 33), in contemporary western society, the norms with regard to family life expect that families be organised in smooth functional units that provide for the emotional and sexual satisfaction of the parents and the procreation, care and socialization of children. The nuclear family consists of the mother, father and children. The following positions are therefore possible in the family, i.e. husband, father, wife, mother, son, brother, daughter and sister. Each member plays an important role in the family, making that family a whole. Each of these statures entails certain obligations and prescribed ways of behaviour both towards other members of the family and to persons outside the family circle.

According to Collins (1990, 69) children are socialised in the relevant behaviour patterns depending on whether they are male or female. They are more likely to grow up facing problems of socialising if there is conflict in the interpersonal relationship between both parents. They tend to manipulate both parents in various ways, i.e. financially as well as in terms of dependency. Children whose family life breaks down and for whom no supportive structures are available, are faced not only with the loss of parental care and confidence that springs from it, but also experience long-term feelings of rejection by society and a damaged identity (Harrington, 1996, 39).

It is well known that at least until late adolescence most children hate to feel different from their peers. Children are, understandably, particularly sensitive about their families, especially their parents. Adolescents of divorced parents tend to look at their family as having “awful family problems”. Their peers view adolescents of divorced parents in the same light, associating them with that awfulness. This has obvious consequences on their social lives (Steyn, 1997, 31).

Dreman (1999, 153) maintains that poor early adjustments to family life are often followed by poor adjustments to society at large. Attitudes towards parents can become generalised and later may be applied to a wider circle of people. Therefore it is possible that adolescents of divorced parents could not only feel rejected by their parents but also society at large. These feelings brought on by divorce, coupled with the day-to-day complications of adolescence in general, could develop or manifest itself in the form of behaviour that is contrary to the norms of society.

2.3.2 Psychosocial development of adolescents of divorced parents

Swartz & Scott (1999, 189) maintain that adolescence is a period in which marked changes occur in respect to duties, responsibilities, social roles and in relationships with others. It is also a period of increased

social demands and roles. This brings about considerable strain and stress in the life of the individual, which precipitates different behaviour patterns depending on their extent or severity. Swartz & Scott (1999, 189) go on to say that any other stress factors, e.g. divorce, escalate the stress levels experienced by adolescents and this sometimes leads to behaviour problems.

A longitudinal study involving nearly 12000 British and 2280 American boys experiencing academic, social or emotional problems after the divorce showed that problems manifest themselves because of the marital discord and impending divorce (Van Zyl, 1997, 219-220). This study also revealed that adolescents of divorce share an in their awareness that a shadow has been cast over their lives. Guilt is also present, blaming themselves for having failed to rescue their parents. Some adolescents took flight from home, school and their usual activities. They would play truant from school and seek new companionship. These new friends often were engaged in more serious delinquencies, sexual activities and drinking which brought them to the attention of the school authorities.

The above concurs with another study conducted by Needle, Su and Doherty (1990), cited by Kaminer (1994, 72), which shows the impact of changes in family structure on the prediction of youth deviant behaviour. It was a longitudinal study among African-American adolescents and

looked at the different outcomes among girls and boys. This study concludes that both boys and girls from divorced families engage in more deviant behaviour, e.g. initiate sex earlier and are more likely to fall pregnant in their teens and engage in substance abuse than those from intact families.

Depression in adolescents that could be brought on by parental conflicts or stress in the family often manifests itself in the form of substance abuse, problems at school, interpersonal problems, incidence of sexual behaviour, violent thoughts, alcohol abuse and early pregnancy (Watkins, 1999, 6).

A study conducted in the United Kingdom (Retrieved on April 3, 2003 from www.ridgeway-surgery.demon.co.uk/health/divorce.htm) revealed that divorce affects adolescents in a way that makes their world seem turned upside down and they could also start to feel abnormal. These feelings present themselves in the form of behaviour problems. The adolescent also experiences feelings of insecurity. This happens because the adolescent is fearful of being rejected by the custodian parent as well. This gives rise to them 'acting out' different behaviour.

Swartz & Scott (1999, 39), however, maintain that adolescents may react to divorce differently, as some may see parental separation to be better for them than remaining in a conflict-ridden family. In this situation the divorce could have a positive effect on the child who then may not present any behaviour problems.

2.3.3 Academic performance of adolescents of divorced parents

Simple cause-effect relationships between divorce and problems at school have not been clearly established (Dreman, 1999, 154). Certainly some adolescents are deeply upset by parental divorce or separation, so their grades in school could suffer as a result. But this does not happen to all, as some remain unaffected as far as scholastic achievement is concerned.

A comparison of 559 British youths in seventh, eighth and ninth grades showed that the children from single parent homes had the lowest grades and occupational aspirations. Other research has suggested that parental divorce or separation delays cognitive and/or moral judgements (Rice, 1995, 40).

Rice (1995, 49) however also suggested that a number of studies on children's academic performances are based on teacher evaluation and rating that reflect prejudices against those from one-parent families. He

maintained that teachers base their judgements of children's performance not on the individual child but their knowledge of the child's family background.

A significant number of children were unable to resume their customary activities at school and on the playground after divorce. They remained lonely, worried and unhappy as they continued to experience difficulty in school and at play (Dreman, 1999, 157). Research by Sdorow (1998, 74) also confirms that performance of pupils from broken families in scholastic achievement tests was considerably poorer than their peers from two-parent homes. Strijdom (1997, 75) conducted a study in which he compared 1,000 grade eight pupils from divorced families with those from two-parent families. He found the following:

- Children from disrupted families were absent from school more often.
- Their grade point averages were lower than those of two-parent homes.
- Truancy and expulsion as well as ending their school careers too early were more common among children from disrupted families.

Strijdom (1997, 70) expresses the notion that “man thinks, not the brain” implying that more than the human brain is involved in the process of learning. Although learning has strong cognitive components, it presupposes a stable affective base. This means that a child who is emotionally disturbed or upset may experience problems with effective learning and scholastic achievement, as could be the case of the adolescent in a family considering divorce or separation.

2.3.4 Emotional effects of divorce on adolescents

As referred to previously, children of divorce could present with behaviour, learning and social problems as a result of the divorce. It is important to note that many of these presenting problems are brought on by underlying causes such as stress and depression. Disentangling oneself from a marriage, especially one of long duration or one that had produced children, could turn out to be an extremely traumatic affair (Dreman, 1999, 159) and the stress of the divorce could cause stress in the adolescent learner.

One of the major psychological effects of divorce on adolescents is stress (Garmenzy & Rutter, 1983, 48). According to Collins (1990, 87) marital rupture is second only to a death of a parent, both in its intensity as a stressor and the length of time required to accommodate it. Garmenzy &

Rutter (1983, 268) found in a comprehensive review of the psychological, psychiatric and medical literature relevant to the adult divorce population, that the severe consequences of divorce-induced stress could be expressed in a surprisingly wide variety of physical and emotional disorders. Garmenzy & Rutter (1983, 274) found that late adolescents suffer from nightmares, moodiness, headaches and stomachaches, while early adolescents display academic and behavioural problems at school.

According to Erikson the adolescent stage of development focuses on identity formation. For this to take place successfully, the presence of a strongly admired person of the same sex in the environment is essential (Dreman, 1999, 152). The absence of either parent through the cause of divorce can have serious consequences on the development of the adolescent in that they could experience difficulty in developing an independent individual identity.

Strijdom (1997, 43) reviewed research on the psychosocial implications of divorce. He found that stressors manifest themselves in a wide variety of nervous behaviour patterns. According to Harrington (1999, 38) children who lose a parent through death may be less susceptible to depression than those whose parents divorce. He maintains that children who suffer from the death of a parent show fewer behavioural and mental

problems than those who go through a divorce with their parents. When depressed adults are asked about their childhood experiences, they are more likely to report neglect, abuse and parental conflict. Feelings of guilt, which are experienced at the time of the divorce, are often carried with them even into adulthood (Harrington, 1999, 38-39).

2.4 CONCLUSION

This chapter provided an overview of the ecosystemic framework in which the family is situated and referred to arguments both for and against the notion that divorce affects the psychosocial behaviour of adolescents. However most of the information presented here relates to foreign studies and research. The researcher experienced great difficulty in obtaining erudition that is relevant to the South African situation, as very little exists.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH DESIGN AND RESEARCH

METHODOLOGY

3.1 RESEARCH DESIGN

The research design is qualitative, explorative, descriptive and contextual (Mouton & Marais, 1990, 45-46). The phrase 'qualitative methodology' refers in the broadest sense to research that produces descriptive data – people's own written or spoken words and observable behaviour (Bogdan & Taylor, 1997, 7). The research undertaken for this dissertation has attempted to obtain information about the experiences of adolescent learners from divorced families in New West Secondary School. The nature of qualitative research is such that whilst it allows the researcher to investigate the data that is presented to him, it allows for a discussion of the findings within the context of published literature (Mouton, 1988,13).

3.2 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.2.1 The sample

The research was conducted at New West Secondary School, which is located in Newlands West. Most of the participants live in Newlands West and the surrounding area. The participants were drawn from New

West Secondary School because of accessibility since the researcher was both an educator and school counsellor at the school for the past 17 years, and had noticed an increase in adolescents whose parents are divorced.

Purposive sampling is a type of non-probability sampling. Bless & Smith (1995) maintains that purposive sampling is based on the judgement of the researcher regarding the characteristics of a representative sample. Therefore the sampling was purposive since the characteristics sought were that participants were adolescent learners and that their parents were divorced, and that they were information rich participants.

Table 3.1: Gender of participants

MALE	10
FEMALE	10
TOTAL	20

The sample of participants included twenty learners from New West Secondary School. The known cases on school records indicate 32 boys and 29 girls from divorced families. Both male and female learners were included in the study. An equal number of males and females were used.

Table 3.2: Age of participants in years

<u>AGE</u>	<u>NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS</u>
13	3
14	8
15	4
16	1
17	2
18	2
TOTAL	20
MEAN AGE	15

The participants ranged in age from 13 to 18 years old, the mean age being 15 years.

Table 3.3: Grades of participants

<u>GRADES</u>	<u>NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS</u>
8	3
9	6
10	6
11	4
12	1
TOTAL	20

Three of the participants were in grade 8, six in grade 9, six in grade 10, four in grade 11 and one in grade 12.

3.2.2 Data collection and analysis

Data was gathered during individual interviews, using the narrative interview (Schurink, 1998, 298). The researcher briefly explained the aim of the study to the participants. The same question was posed to all the participants, namely, “Could you tell me how the divorce of your parents has affected you?” Responses were tape recorded, then transcribed and analysed. According to Silverman (1997, 29), one samples until one reaches data saturation point. Tesch’s (Poggenpoel, 1998, 258; Creswell, 2003,153-158) descriptive analysis technique was used. Central themes were identified. Finally, guidelines were generated to improve the quality of interventions by educators in schools. Guba’s (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) measures, such as credibility, transferability, dependability and cofirmability were used to ensure trustworthiness of the results.

3.2.3 Literature control

A literature control was conducted in order to verify the results since the published work of other researchers plays an essential role in identifying the results that support the literature or claim to be unique contributions (Poppengoel, 1998, 334; Dreman, 1999, 152).

3.2.4 Ethical measures

Ethical issues were addressed. The first was that of informed consent. This was necessary since the participants were minors. The researcher dealt with this by sending out consent forms to the parents/guardians of the participants. (See appendix A)

Anonymity was ensured. Each participant was allocated a number. This made them feel more comfortable about giving their own opinions so as to help other adolescents in similar situations (Huysamen, 1994, 73). According to Miles & Huberman (1994,47) confidentiality means that information about individual participant is kept private. Participants must be protected from injury that could result from the disclosure of sensitive and personal information obtained in a research study. The researcher ensured confidentiality of the participants by keeping them anonymous and safeguarding the information when collected.

Due to the nature of information acquired from the participants, the researcher had a responsibility to prevent any harm to the participants as well as restore them to their state of minds prior to the study. This was accomplished by setting up debriefing sessions for the participants individually. At the end of the study they were furnished with the details of the debriefing sessions in which help would be available to them.

3.3 CONCLUSION

This chapter covered the research design, the method of data collection and analysis. In addition ethical issues were referred to. The results and discussion are integrated and are conveyed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The results of the research will be stated and discussed in this chapter. It will then be reviewed in the light of relevant literature to verify the results since the published work of other researchers play an important role in placing the results in the context of established knowledge and to identify the results that support the literature or claim unique contributions (Poggenpoel, 1998, 334; Dreman, 1999, 150).

4.2 THEMES

4.2.1 Adolescent learners' views on why their parents are getting divorced

The participants' reasons for the parents divorcing related to argument and fighting, family/wife abuse, extramarital affairs, no financial support and alcoholism/drug abuse.

Some participants expressed themselves as follows about the father's behaviour as cause for the divorce:

“But his main problem was drinking and that was something he refused to give up. Whenever he drank he became violent and hurt my mother a

lot” and “My dad was most violent when he was drunk. He should kick and boot my mother and that also affected me.” Physical abuse was often accompanied by verbal abuse, shouting, insults and threatening the family. A participant stated, “My father was always looking for an argument and picked on minor faults with my mother.” This then led to physical abuse that concurs with the views of Dallos & Mclaughlin (1993).

Some of the participants offered other reasons why they thought that the divorce took place, e.g. “ the abuse and violence that my mother had to endure was painful and my mother could not leave the house, otherwise he used to use bad language.” Extra-marital affairs were also mentioned, as “I had always thought that my parents still loved each other and that they still had love in them. My dad was having an affair,” stated one participant. There are a variety of reasons why people engage in affairs, such as retribution against their partner for any number of reasons as this was their way of hurting them; the fulfilment of emotional and physical needs which their spouse may not have been able to satisfy; dissatisfaction with their marriage; alcohol usage; or being unable to be faithful, loyal and dedicated to one person (Spanier & Thompson, 1987, 31).

Lack of finances proved to be an issue for two participants as one family had no other means of income and in the other situation, the mother was unable to support her family and pay all the household bills on her salary, as the father used his money to buy alcohol rather than provide for his family: *“He should spend all the money on drinking and we had no money to buy food.”* Both families found it extremely difficult to have their basic needs met.

Two participants did not know why their parents divorced. *“My parents have been divorced from the time I was 5 years old”* and *“You see my mother is my father’s second wife. So although they were married at one stage he never lived with us full time,”* said a participant who thought her parents’ divorce was due to an arranged marriage, which did not work out.

4.2.2 Effect of the divorce on the adolescent learner

Divorce is known to affect the adults involved as well as their children (Parkinson, 1987, 26). Participants in this study had differing ideas about whether the divorce had affected them or not. Their responses to the effect of the divorce on them included no effect, financial suffering, losing the family togetherness, seeing other children with the families

cause envy and sorrow, feeling sad, adverse effect on the schoolwork, relief from strain of conflict and feeling angry, and self blame.

4.2.2.1 No effect

Recent research shows that divorce affects both coping strategies and adjustment in children (Dreman, 1999, 150). While four of the participants indicated that their parents' divorce had no effect on them, this could neither be verified nor followed up. However, according to Parkinson (1987, 27), very rarely were children left unaffected by the divorce because it impacted on their lives even though the impact may not have been obvious to them.

4.2.2.2 Financial suffering

Four of the participants reported the issue of financial suffering after the divorce, as is seen in the following statements: *"I had a hard life living in poverty"* and *"The part that hurts the most is that my father never pays maintenance, neither does he make the effort to visit us."*

The child support or maintenance helps to maintain the well being of the children. If the parent regularly fulfilled this obligation, it would ensure that the financial burden placed on the state was lightened. Maintenance grants provided by the state come into play when the parent has run out of options and lacks the financial means for survival. But even though this

grant provides a reprieve, the amount is minimal and the family has to still find other ways to supplement this income (Edin, 1995, 225).

4.2.2.3 Losing the family togetherness

Some of the participants felt that they had “lost the family” and five of the participants were pining and longing for the other parent, as becomes clear in *“I feel like I lost my father and I am losing my mother”* and *“I loved my father and when some of my friends spoke about their fathers and how they used to go out, I felt like a total outcast from the conversation because my father was not there for me”* and *“I realised that it is not my fault because he really has lost out. But now there’s still a void in my heart and it will always stay until the day he comes back.”*

The above concurs with Parkinson (1987, 39) who agrees that most children wanted their parents to be together despite their problems and wherever this was not possible, their immediate concern was that even though their parents were going to be separated, neither of them would leave or abandon them.

4.2.2.4 Seeing other children with their families cause envy and sorrow

The emotional impact of not having an intact family is clear from the envy and sorrow mentioned in the following statements:

“When I was invited to a 16th birthday party, when it came to the opening of the dance, the birthday girl danced with her father which brought immense tears to my eyes as it reminded me of my father who is not there for me at all, and this happens to me all the time when I see fathers and daughters having special moments. I feel this way not because I am jealous but because I have missed out so many years with my father and this tortures me for each and every day of my life.”

“When I go to the beach or to a party or get together with family members and I see families together, laughing, joking, and having fun, it hurts because I feel I will never have a chance to do all that with my family.”

“When we have family gatherings everyone’s there with their whole family, it’s only our dad that’s missing.”

Mc Kenry & Price (1994, 89) concur with the above for they state that the effects of a divorce in the form of emotional or psychological problems were most prominent in adolescent learners of divorced parents.

4.2.2.5 Feeling sad

The divorce experience is accompanied by stress for the adolescents since they have to cope with situational circumstances such as changes in residence and school, loss of friends and relatives, diminished economic resources, and parental conflicts regarding visitation and custody (Dreman, 1999, 152).

Some of the participants experienced sadness about the changes in their situation: *“At times I do cry and get all emotional.”* and *“I even go to sleep crying sometimes and wake up heart-broken. You know the feeling when your heart is ripped out of your body.”*

The above is agreement with Harrington (1999, 61) who compares the death of a parent to divorce. He maintains that children who suffer the death of a parent show less behavioural or mental problems than those whose parents' divorce. This relates to some adolescents experiencing a sense of loss after their parents divorce.

4.2.2.6 Adverse effect on schoolwork

As stated before a simple cause - effect relationship between divorce and problems at school has not clearly been established (cf 2.3.3), however twelve of the participants stated that divorce had an adverse effect on their schoolwork, e.g.

“It really disturbed me in my academic work” and “She told us what is a divorce, and then she said it, your father and I have got a divorce. When I heard that, I totally lost hope in school. From that day I started doing bad at school” and “The thing that is affecting me is my schoolwork. There is nobody to help me that’s the reason I don’t do my work.”

The above is in line with research by Sdorow (1998, 74) which reveals that scholastic performance of pupils from broken families was considerably poorer than their peers from two-parent homes.

4.2.2.7 Relief from strain of conflict

Five of the participants displayed relief from the strain of conflict of the divorce of their parents. Some participants saw the benefits of their parents’ separation as it indicated to them that there was no more abuse, reduced conflict and a sense of relief:

“I am a big girl and I have always been a bit mature for my age so I understand that this marriage wasn’t good for my mother and that she was hurting badly. I actually encouraged the divorce.”

“ After my father divorced, I did miss him for the first couple of months but after that it became easier to live without him because there was no worry about him ever coming home drunk and fighting with my mother.”

“I did miss my father though at first. But I soon realised that if my parents continued to stay together they would not be doing it for the right reasons.”

Swartz & Scott (1999, 39) maintain that adolescents may react to divorce differently as some may see parental separation to be better for them than remaining in a conflict-ridden family. In this situation the divorce could have a positive effect on the child.

4.2.2.8 Feeling angry

Some of the participants felt a deep sense of anger, directed at their parents and society:

“Well, for example, when fathers’ day comes, it’s kinda hard because I mean I don’t feel he’s earned the right to be called ‘daddy’ for what happened” and “My mom is also seeing someone else and I think to myself that why do people have children, get married and then separate after a few years and then on top of that to make things worse, see other people when they have no idea how much the child is being crushed” and “I feel hurt and disturbed and I feel like I cannot trust anyone. I feel very emotional and feel like crying. It’s like I don’t exist anymore. I hate my mother and father for putting me through all this shit. I wish I was never born.”

Dreman (1999,164) concurs with the above for he states that adolescent learners whose family lives broke down, and for whom no supportive networks were available, are faced not only with the loss of parental care and confidence that springs from it, but also experienced long term feelings of lack of acceptance by society and a damaged identity.

4.2.5.9 Self-blame

It is not unusual for the children to feel that they could possibly have contributed to the divorce, as a participant experienced feelings of self-blame, e.g. *“At times I do cry and get all emotional and I ask myself what did I do wrong that my father does not want to be with my mum and myself.”*

Research shows that children of divorcing parents experience self-blame, have lower perceived competence, more psychological symptoms and more behaviour problems (Dreman, 1999, 152).

4.2.3 Sources of support for adolescent learners to cope with a divorce

Support during difficult times assists in making the burden lighter. Although most of the participants received support there was a small

group of participants who were left to fend for themselves. Support from the school is revealed as:

“My counsellor is there for me” and “When I am down and out, my L.O. teacher supports me.”

The school provided support for six of the participants during school time which itself has serious limitations with regard to continuity, personnel shortage and adequate training of personnel to handle such problems.

The above concurs with Dreman's (1999,163) finding that the school environment may serve as a source of social support. Children of divorce adjust better in school settings that there is a structured supportive environment (Dreman, 1999, 163).

Five of the participants received professional support from appropriately trained sources, such as social workers, doctors/psychiatrists and psychologists, e.g. *“I should always scream at night and my mother took me to the psychiatrist” and “My social worker always assist me whenever I have problems” and “When I was depressed the doctor gave me tablets.”*

Some of the participants received support from relatives and friends. Dreman (1999, 161) found that the extended family serves as a source of psychological and economic support in divorce. Grandparents are likely

to provide better support than siblings because the latter often hold childhood grudges and may be preoccupied with their own families. As one participant stated, *“My grandfather used to guide me. So now my grandfather has passed away”*.

For children of divorce, the distinction between support from family versus non-family may be particularly important. Support from family may be important in facilitating one of the primary adaptive tasks of divorce, restructuring of family patterns. Alternatively, support from non-family members may be useful because these people are not personally involved in the ongoing divorce process and may provide an outside perspective and relief from the stressful situation (Dreman, 1999, 162).

4.2.4 Adolescents' views on parent reconciliation

The adolescent learners' views on parent reconciliation are determined by their perceptions of the degree of harmony that existed within the home before the divorce. Twelve participants were in favour of parent reconciliation, as is revealed by the following:

“But what I really wish to have is my father back and all those days we missed out together” and “I somehow wish my father was back and we are a happy family together.”

However, according to Parkinson (1987,42), for some children the unpleasantness and pain caused prior to the divorce had lasting memories

for them and as much as they missed opportunities that other children shared with their parents that they were not able to, due to the absence of their own parent, they realized that the divorce was a vital and necessary step that their parents had to take to protect themselves and their children from further pain and harm (Parkinson, 1987, 42).

Six participants were quite satisfied to continue their life without the father, e.g. *“But after my father left, yes, I did miss him for the first couple of months but after that it became easier to live without him. Because there was no worry about him ever coming home drunk and fighting with my mother.”*

“The divorce was when I was in standard five. I was sad but I knew it was for the better.”

Spanier & Thompson (1987, 93) stated that whilst a divorce affected the children, it would be beneficial for them in the long run to live with one loving parent who provided them with the stability and security that they may have never had before rather than with two parents who were constantly arguing which led to tension and unhappiness for all members of the family.

4.2.5 Relationship of adolescent learners with non-custodial parent(s)

During the interviews, participants referred to their relationships with the parent(s) with whom they are not living.

Four participants had no contact with their non-residential parent, indicated as: “ When I reached high school, he stopped visiting and has no contact with us” and “I don’t see my father and I miss him very much.”

However, Dreman (1999,155) does not agree that all non-custodial parents break total contact, as often prior to the divorce some parents had been less involved in their children’s lives, but after the divorce, this changed and it seemed as if the divorce encouraged both parents to develop and establish close bonds with their children.

Nine participants had a good relationship with their non-custodial parent(s) and contact was maintained. They had regular phone calls and visits from them. One participant whose grandparent had custody of him found that since they were away from their situation (which had been marked by arguments and fighting), they were now more at ease with both their parents. *“I am now living with my grandfather and friendly to my parents”*. He saw them as friends whom he could talk to about any issue, but he did not feel comfortable enough to spend the night or the

holidays with either parent. Day visits were all right, but he was most at ease when he had returned home to his grandparents. According to Dallos (1991, 112) this participant saw his grandparents in the role of “parents” as they had provided him with the security and stability that had been lacking in his life previously.

4.3 CONCLUSION

Most of the matters raised in the interviews have been used to support the notion that divorce affects these adolescents.

In Chapter Two, it was concluded that the adolescents of divorced parents presented with psychosocial problems and the analysis of the findings concur with such conclusions.

In the final chapter, the researcher will attempt to come to some general conclusions of the findings and then make recommendations to help existing practitioners to understand more clearly just what they could do to assist adolescents of divorced parents to cope with their loss.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

One of the basic assumptions made in this study is that adolescents of divorced parents could possibly have psychosocial problems. There has been a considerable body of empirical research conducted overseas on such problems. However the dearth of South African research prompted this study – evidence herein supports the hypothesis that adolescents of divorce do present with behavioural problems.

5.2 CONCLUSIONS

Adolescent learners submitted the following *reasons for their parental divorce*:

- Domestic disagreements which were expressed through arguing and fighting;
- The physical/emotional abuse of the spouse and children by the offending spouse;
- Besides alcoholism/drug abuse being a problem itself, it exacerbates abusive behaviour towards the family;

- Financial problems that caused the household to be unable to honour debts and household expenses. This triggered disagreements;
- Extramarital affairs.

Adolescent learners are affected by the immediate *material changes in their lifestyle* that results from the divorce and the emotional impact of dealing with their parents divorce. The diminished economic status imposed on the adolescent learner by the divorce often results in drastic and negative material changes to adolescent learners' lifestyle. This is exacerbated by the non-payment of maintenance. The divorce also results in the relocation of adolescents to new homes and schools.

The *emotional suffering* ranges from a sense of yearning for the absent parent, sense of loss of home, pining for family togetherness and emotional support the absent parent provided. The adolescent learners are placed in invidious positions when parental conflicts arise regarding visitation and custody. They bear the guilt of 'betraying' the one parent by associating with the other. Adolescent learners of divorced parents apportion blame to themselves to the breakdown of their parents' marriage.

Support during the difficult times of the divorce makes the burden on adolescent learners lighter. Although most participants received support, a small group of participants were left to fend for themselves. Immediate sources of support to the adolescent learner were derived from family and friends, school, social workers and in more needy instances from relevant professionals such as doctors, psychologists and psychiatrists.

While adolescent learners cherish the dream of living within a harmonious family unit, the greater the level of discord within the home before the divorce, the less likely it was for the adolescent learner to entertain the ideals of their *parents reconciling*.

The relationships of adolescent learners with non-custodial parent(s) varied according to the degree and nature of contact they had with their non-custodial parent. In instances where there was no contact with non-custodial parent, the adolescent learner does not hold bitterness of the non-custodial absence, blame themselves for non-custodial parent(s)-unwillingness to maintain contact or blame their resident parent for the role in separating them from the non-custodial parent. Many adolescent learners however, do harbour feelings of hostility and resentment towards the non-custodial parent(s) especially if they maintain no contact with them. Some adolescent learners saw the non-custodial parent as an

unfortunate victim of the divorce while some participants were able to enjoy a better relationship with non-custodial parent(s) because they could interact with each other in an environment free from domestic conflict.

5.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the conclusion of the study the following recommendations can be made:

The Department of Education must establish *posts for professionals* who can provide competent social and psychological support to all poor learners. Such professionals ought to be fully trained in dealing with issues related to the impact that divorce has on the adolescent learner. The reintroduction of school guidance counsellors can effectively address the counselling needs of adolescent learners from divorced families. The guidance counsellor should be able to enlist the support of all relevant role players and support structures that influence the adolescent learner's well-being, namely the parents, extended family, social worker, religious institutions and institutions which offer family/couple counselling services. The guidance counsellor should also be able to refer adolescent learners with specific needs to psychiatrists/psychologists. It is therefore

incumbent upon the guidance counsellor to establish his/her professionalism within the school and broader community.

Under the guidance of the professional guidance counsellor, the *curriculum* should be reconceptualised to embrace issues such as divorce in Life Orientation lessons. The curriculum should demystify the subject of divorce, explore the rights of the adolescent learner affected by the divorce and offer guidance to children on maintaining relationships with parents. It should also educate the adolescent learner on destigmatising single parent families. Sometimes adolescent learners may feel that teachers who are not close to their family are better listeners. Since they are not as close to the problem they could be more objective and understanding, therefore the participation of schools in such programmes could provide adolescent learners with teachers to talk to (Rooth, 1995,49).

Regarding the development of a *school policy*, the school should establish a “register of divorced parents.” This will not only expose the extent and seriousness of the problem in school, but also indicate how to handle the learners in a more sensitive way. However the confidentiality of the learner should not be breached.

The school should also assist the *community* by providing parenting classes that will encompass topics such as relationship building, conflict resolutions and child management.

Just as *teacher unions and teacher organisations* are involved in training their members through workshops on professional and curriculum issues, they should also embark on a programme to train their members in dealing with social and psychological issues that relate to the adolescent learner. Such a training programme must include the impact of divorce on the adolescent learner. This study has established that adolescent learners seek support from teachers when they are emotionally disturbed.

5.4 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The first limitation lies in the research design in terms of the sampling technique used. It is believed that purposive sampling has some disadvantages in that it relies heavily on subjective consideration of the researcher rather than scientific characteristics when selecting the sample (Bless and Smith, 1995, 77).

Even though the researcher and participants had related to each other with ease, in some instances, learners may not have been totally honest about their feelings. They might have felt obligated or protective towards their

parents and not want to hurt them; therefore, whilst they all did share information with the researcher, some may not have revealed their inner feelings.

5.5 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

The researcher would like to comment on the difficulty of obtaining literature in this area of study that was relevant to the South African situation. Therefore it is recommended that more research on the impact of the divorce on adolescent learners from divorced parents be carried out specific to South Africa.

5.6 CONCLUDING REMARKS

Divorce is a reality that could either increase anxiety in children or hope for a new life. However, it affects adolescent learners, most in a negative manner and others more positively. Divorce has a major impact on the lives of children and the family, it brings about changes in social status, financial situation and family life as found by Berger, Federico & McBreen (1994). Whatever the outcome, there are experiences that children miss out when their family separates into two distinct units.

The investigation into the psychosocial behaviour of adolescent learners from divorced families in Newlands West provides insight into the

experiences of adolescent learners from divorced families as well as ways in which the school system can become active in assisting them. The researcher believes that this study will raise more questions in this area of study and that this investigation can ultimately be used to aid and improve service facilities for adolescent learners from divorced families.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: LETTER TO PARENT/GUARDIAN

Dear Parent/Guardian

I Baccus m Educator @ University

My name is Mukesh Gopie. I am a school counsellor at New West Secondary School and I am presently completing my Master's Degree in Education at the University of Natal. One of the criteria for completing my degree is to conduct a research study.

My research study is on the psychosocial behaviour of adolescent learners from divorced families in Newlands West. The study involves me to interview your child and all information provided will be kept in strict confidence. If you consent please sign this form.

Parent/Guardian

Date

Thank you for your co-operation

RESEARCHER

MUKESH GOPIE

PHONE: SCHOOL (031) 5782544

HOME (031) 5776751

APPENDIX B: LETTER OF APPRECIATION

Thank you for participating in this study. Our time together has been a learning experience for me and extremely informative. I have enjoyed chatting with you about your experience and definitely have a better understanding about the topic.

The findings of this study will be made available to you as soon as possible. A copy of the report will be available from me and if you wish to look at it you are welcome to do so.

Thank you

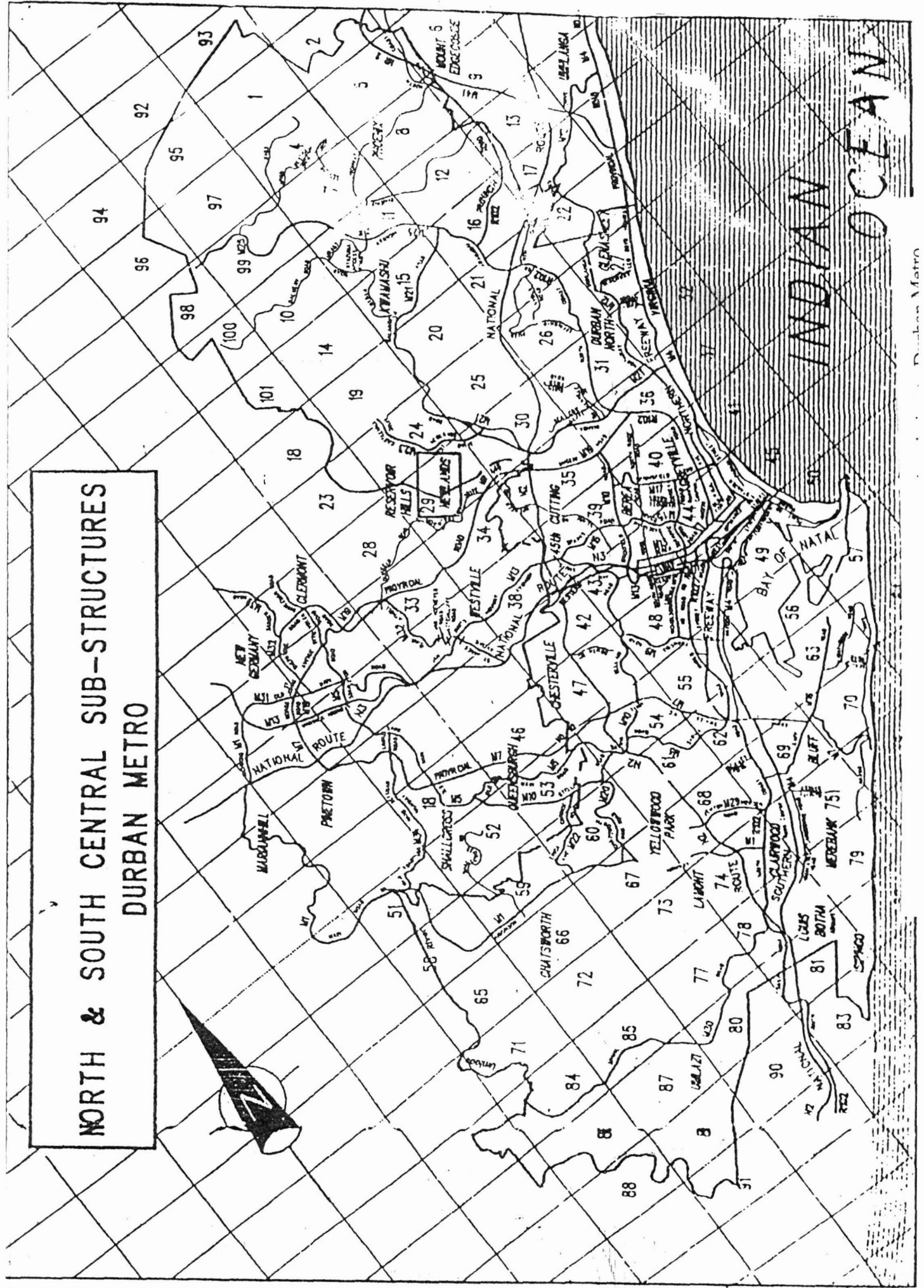
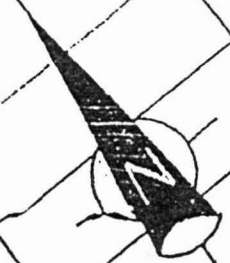
M. GOPIE

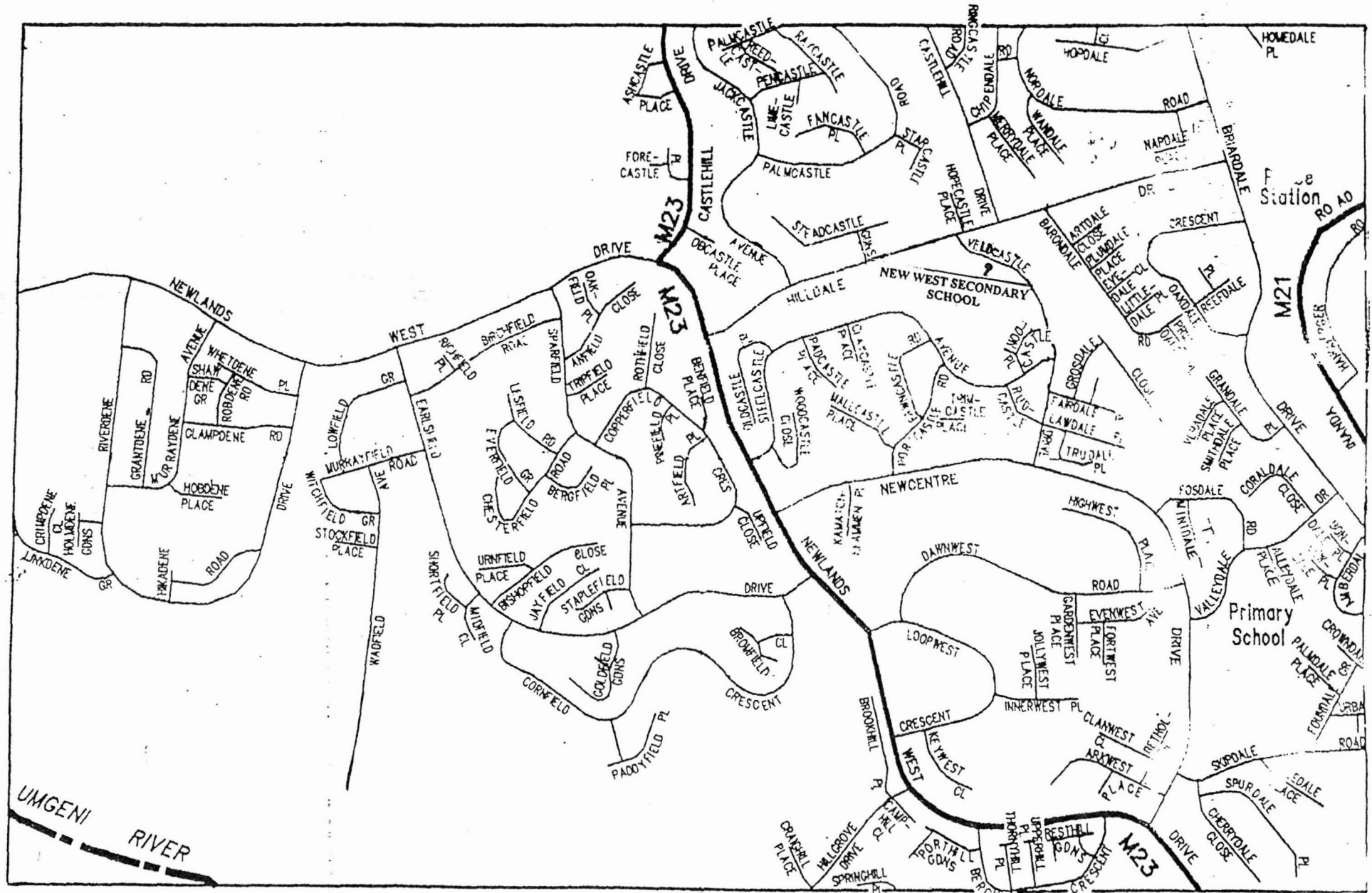
SCHOOL COUNSELLOR/RESEARCHER



Map 1: The relative location of the Newlands area in relation to Durban Metro

NORTH & SOUTH CENTRAL SUB-STRUCTURES DURBAN METRO





SCALE : 1 IN 12500

Map 3: Location of the study area in relation to Newlands West.