

**I KILLED MY CHILD(REN): A QUALITATIVE STUDY EXPLORING THE  
PHENOMENON OF PATERNAL FILICIDE IN THE SOUTH AFRICAN CONTEXT**

**Tumisang Precious Sedumedi**

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### **Abstract**

The present research investigated paternal filicide in South Africa. It aimed to understand the factors underlying fathers killing their child/children. Study one explored paternal filicidal offenders' processes of construction, construing of events leading to the filicide, and meanings of their lived experience of killing their child/children. Study two examined the filicidal offenders' extended families' construction processes, construing of events before the killing, lived experience and construing of filicide, and construing of the filicidal offenders' construing of the filicide. Four paternal filicidal offenders and nine family members of the offenders who had different backgrounds (i.e., age, racial, ethnicity, cultural, educational, occupational, and the nature of the filicide) were purposively sampled and recruited into the research.

Personal construct theory (Kelly, 1955) underpinned this research. A semi-structured individual interview which was structured according to the Experience Cycle Methodology (ECM) interview proforma (Oades & Viney, 2012), Perceive Element Grid (PEG) (Procter, 2002), and the ABC model (Tschudi, 1977), were administered to the filicidal and family participants. Data was analysed using Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (Smith, Flowers, & Larkin, 2009) and personal construct analytic methods (diagnostic construct analysis, PEG, ECM, and the ABC model).

The analysed themes suggest that filicide might co-occur with familicide and attempted suicide by the offender in some instances. While in many filicidal cases intimate/marital problems might be contributing factors, in a few cases filicide might be accidental in which it might not be precipitated by intimate/marital discord. Most filicidal offenders who tend to only construe their partners/wives and intimate/marital relationships in

terms of positive construct poles might slot rattle when encountering invalidations of constructions. The encountered problems might trigger threat, anxiety, in which the problems are experienced as unconstruable, and anger which might lead to hostility. The filicidal offenders might lack constructions to deal with the issues which might result in unaddressed problems which might lead to a sense of being overwhelmed and feelings of hopelessness. The filicidal offenders might broaden or delimit their perceptual field or fluctuate between constriction and dilation to construe and cope with the situation. They might exceed their inhibition ability which might result in the avoided issues and inhibited feelings exploding in violence. The extended family members might not intervene in the couples' problems, if intervening might be possible, because of an unawareness of issues as a result of submergence and constriction in which they avoid construing the couples' problems, limit their views to issues, and minimise the seriousness of the construed problems.

Psychological support, personal construct family therapy and Employee Assistance Program, might help the filicidal offenders cope with their intimate/marital problems, and therefore might prevent filicide. Considering the implications of the filicide on the offenders' identities, relations, and relationships, and also the relationships of their families, intervention programs such as Restorative Justice and sport might help the offenders re-establish their sense of self, find commonality and sociality while rebuilding the damaged relationships.

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## Chapter 1: Introduction

Filicide, the killing of a child/children less than 18 years old, by a parent (Friedman, Hrouda, Holden, Noffsinger, & Resnick, 2005; Resnick, 1969; West, 2007), might appear incomprehensible and shocking but is a major social problem in South Africa and internationally. Although South Africa adopted the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa 108 of 1996, Domestic Violence Act 116 of 1998, and the Children's Act 38 of 2005, which aim to protect South Africans' rights and ensure that children are treated fairly, domestic violence remains rife. 654 child homicide cases were reported in 2000 (Seedat, Van Niekerk, Jewkes, Suffla, & Ratele, 2009) and 91% of child homicides occur in the household (Bourget & Gagné, 2005).

Filicide is not a newly researched phenomenon. However, most studies have focused on maternal filicide, the killing of a child/children by their mother (Bourget & Gagné, 2002; Friedman, Horwitz, & Resnick, 2005; Gupta & Singh, 2008). There is abundant information on issues concerning maternal filicide and very limited information on paternal filicide, the killing of a child/children by their father (Bourget & Gagné, 2005), particularly in South Africa. Furthermore, studies on paternal filicide (Adinkrah, 2003; Bourget & Gagné, 2005) and those which compared the filicide with maternal filicide were quantitative, used secondary sources (Kauppi, Kumpulainen, Karkola, Vanamo, & Merikanto, 2010; Liem & Koenraadt, 2008), and only described psychiatric and socio-demographic profiles of filicidal fathers (Marleau, Poulin, Webanck, Roy, & Laporte, 1999). Therefore, the meanings and constructive processes of filicidal fathers are unknown. Exploration of societal constructions of masculinity (Hearn, 2007), and the personal constructions of perpetrators of violence (Kelly, 1970; Winter, 2003; Winter, Feixas, Dalton, Jarque-Llamazares, Laso, Mallindine, &

Patient, 2007) might help to understand why some fathers kill their children and their anticipations of filicide.

## **1.1 Literature Review**

This chapter reviews the literature on paternal filicide. It discusses the concepts, corollaries, and professional constructs of personal construct theory, which underpins this research. The literature on the construction processes of one-off offenders in relation to paternal filicidal offenders is reviewed. The personal construct view of different pathways to violence (Winter, 2003) is employed to explain the filicide.

**1.1.1 Construing a parent killing:** Filicide might be considered to include infanticide, the killing of a child who is less than a year old (Marks, 2009), and neonaticide, the killing of a child less than 24 hours old (Resnick, 1969). Historically, some people such as the Vikings committed filicide to avert evil and appease the gods (Montag & Montag, 1979). Infanticide was legalised in ancient Greece to control the population of deformed children (Kellet, 1992). Likewise, neonaticide which symbolised the preference for male versus female children (Kellet, 1992) was also committed by some African cultures and Aborigines of Australia for eugenic purposes (Laughlin, 1994).

In the Middle Ages in England filicidal cases were considered a sin, from a Christian perspective, instead of a crime (Kellet, 1992). Illegitimacy was identified as a main contributing factor to filicide (Kellet, 1992). Other factors which also seem to be applicable in the contemporary society are discussed in *Risk factors* in relation to the personal construct theory diagnostic constructs.

The legalisation of infanticide was overturned in the 20<sup>th</sup> century in the UK by the Infanticide Act 1922 reformed in 1938. Infanticide was considered manslaughter instead of murder provided that the mother could prove that she was mentally disturbed as the result of giving birth at the time of the killing. However, the exclusion of filicidal fathers in the Act appears to contribute to the discrimination in the sentencing of filicidal fathers versus mothers. For instance, most filicidal fathers, including a few of those who pleaded insanity, were found to receive severe sentences such as life imprisonment or restricted admission to a psychiatric institution in comparison to filicidal mothers (Wilczynski, 1997).

**1.1.2 Familicide.** Filicide might occur in the context of familicide, in which other family members are also killed, and attempted or committed suicide (Friedman et al., 2005; Liem & Koenraadt, 2008). However, sometimes only filicide-suicide may be attempted or committed (Friedman et al., 2005; Léveillée, Marleau, & Dubé, 2007). In filicide-suicide, the child might be perceived as a part of the self which is taken along in death (Liem & Koenraadt, 2008). Filicide-suicide is elaborated in the concept of altruistic filicide.

**1.1.3 Considered theoretical perspectives.** This dissertation considered various theoretical approaches to explain filicide. The theoretical perspectives, *Biopsychosociocultural approach*, *Displaced aggression theory*, *Insecure-disorganised attachment and violence: Attachment theory*, and *Social learning theory* are discussed.

**1.1.3.1 Biopsychosociocultural approach.** A biopsychosociocultural model, which views an individual holistically, has been proposed to provide a comprehensive understanding of filicide (Silva, Leong, Weinstock, Yamamoto, & Ferrari, 1996). Silva et al. (1996) argued that brain abnormalities which are regarded as secondary to psychiatric

disorders, psychosis and personality disorders with borderline features which have been associated with filicide (Kauppi et al., 2010), and psychological and socio-cultural factors might contribute to violence. The model has been criticised for failing to recognise individuality, in which individuals within cultural groups construct their realities (Benning, 2015), and therefore the theory was not used in this research.

**1.1.3.2 Displaced aggression theory.** Displaced aggression theory posits that aggression might be displaced towards another person if it cannot be directed towards the source of provocation (Anderson & Bushman, 2002). Aggression in this instance refers to any behaviour including violence involving an intention to inflict harm (Berkowitz, 1993). Displacement is a psychodynamic psychoanalytic term in which a substitute is used to gratify an urge (Freud, 1961a). Therefore, some filicidal offenders might be expected to displace their aggression towards their partners/spouses onto their children following provocation (Debowska, Boduszek, & Dhingra, 2015). However, displaced aggression theory was not used in this research because it does not seem to consider that filicide might occur in the context of familicide in which the partner/wife is also killed.

**1.1.3.3 Insecure-disorganised attachment and violence: Attachment theory.**

Attachment involves an affectionate interpersonal and reciprocal relationship between two people (Bowlby, 1969). People develop internal working models, which are mental representations about themselves, other people, their relations with other people, and their worlds during development (Bowlby, 1973). Internal working models of the self and other people are transactional and interactive (Fonagy, 2004). For instance, a securely attached individual who experiences an attachment figure as a secure base for exploration (Ainsworth, Blehar, Waters, & Wall, 1978) and responsive will normally develop a working model of the

self as lovable and other people as reliable (Sigelman & Rider, 2003; Simpson, 1990). In contrast, an insecurely attached individual who experiences an attachment figure as unresponsive, insensitive, and absent will usually develop a working model of the self as unlovable and unworthy, and other people as unreliable (Fonagy, 2004; Sigelman & Rider, 2003). This child might remain in a state of arousal and anxiety (Dallos, 2004).

Drawing on evidence from the Strange Situation (Ainsworth et al., 1978), which examined infants' responses when their mothers temporarily left them with a stranger, insecurely attached children develop different coping strategies and working models which vary according to attachment patterns:

1. Insecure-avoidant children show little or no signs of distress during separation and avoid/ignore the attachment figure when reunited. The children become detached when distressed (Simpson, 1990) and react with anger and aggression (Baer & Martinez, 2006). They normally develop mental representations of the self as sceptical and detached, and other people as unreliable (Simpson, 1990). If the child expects to be rejected when seeking closeness, he/she might distract himself/herself from his/her need for attachment to avoid rejection (Dallos, 2004).
2. Insecure-ambivalent children become immensely distressed during separation. Although the children might want a sense of closeness, they usually display temper tantrums (Baer & Martinez, 2006), anxiety, and alternate between anger and clinginess (Holmes, 1993). Insecure-ambivalent children with experiences of contradictory and inconsistent responses during interaction with insecure-preoccupied caregivers will normally develop working models of other people as

unpredictable (Dallos, 2004; Main, 1991). The children might have difficulty developing and maintaining stable mental representations of the self and their attachment figures (Main, 1991).

3. In addition, Main and Solomon (1986) proposed an insecure-disorganised attachment pattern in which behaviour is disorganised and does not appear to have an observable and explainable goal (Main & Solomon, 1990). Insecure-disorganised children have “fright without solution” in which their strategy of dealing with issues lacks a sense of organisation (Hesse & Main, 1999, p. 484; Main & Hesse, 1990). Insecure-disorganised attachment is associated with childhood abuse/maltreatment (Baer & Martinez, 2006; Barnett, Ganiban, & Cicchetti, 1999) in which the children experienced extremely inconsistent, threatening, and dangerous responses (Dallos, 2004). However, Finzi, Ram, Har-Even, Shnit, and Weizman (2001) in their study which investigated attachment styles and aggression in physically abused and neglected children found that the physically abused children displayed an insecure-avoidant attachment pattern while neglected children showed an insecure-ambivalent attachment style.

The experience of abuse disconfirms the child’s attachment behavioural system, which involves mental representations of the self, the parent/caregiver, and the parent/caregiver-child relationship (Bowlby, 1973). The parent/caregiver, who is expected to be a source of protection, is perceived as frightening and threatening (Kobak & Madsen, 2008). Therefore, the child encounters a dilemma of wanting comfort from the parent/caregiver while being terrified of being harmed by the parent/caregiver (Farber, 2008). This might result in annihilation anxiety

(Hurvich, 2003), in which the child freezes (Main & Solomon, 1986) in a trance-like state which might precipitate dissociation (Perry, Pollard, Blaicley, Baker, & Vigilante, 1995).

Although some survivors of childhood abuse are resilient (Dumont, Widom, & Czaja, 2007), childhood trauma might affect the nature of the person's attachment relationships later in life, and precipitate emotional and behavioural problems (Finzi et al., 2001; Holmes, 2000). For instance, insecure-disorganised individuals have been found to be at risk of being violent towards the self (Adam, Sheldon-Keller, & West, 1996; Farber, 1997, 2008) and other people (Fonagy & Target, 1995; Lyons-Ruth, 1996). Most offenders with an insecure-disorganised attachment pattern in Schimmenti, Passanisi, Pace, Manzella, Di Carlo, and Caretti's study (2014) were found to have committed extremely violent acts. Although Edge, Subramaney, and Hoffman (2017) in their study of maternal filicide found a link between severe mental illness and filicide, they identified that a lack of parental involvement, parental rejection, and witnessing domestic violence amongst other risk factors perhaps also contributed to the filicide. Furthermore, the maternal filicidal offenders were found not to seem to have a well-defined sense of self, to feel unloved, and to struggle to maintain successful relationship attachments (Edge et al., 2017). Perhaps these filicidal mothers as in Barone, Bramante, Lionetti, and Pastore's (2014) study, which explored the nature of attachment filicidal mothers had with their child/children, struggled to have secure attachments with their children. Their inability to bond with their child/children perhaps triggered feelings of frustration which might have led to filicide (Debowska et al., 2015). This echoes Dollard, Doob, Miller, Mowrer, and

Sears' (1939) frustration-aggression hypothesis, which argues that feelings of frustration lead to aggression, which is behaviour that is intended to harm a person.

Similar to people who self-harm as an act of dissociation (Farber, 2008), perhaps filicidal offenders dissociated, in which one part of the self which internalised the working models of the abusive relationship with their parent/caregiver identified with the abusive attachment figure. Drawing on personal construct theory (Kelly, 1955), the offenders perhaps shared constructions of violence with their abusive parent/caregiver, hence enacted their parent's/caregiver's role of violence in their playing of roles with their children. The "dissociated self states" which are evident in some abused people and comprises multiple, fragmented, and incompatible models of attachment (Blizard, 2003, p. 2) perhaps led to the unstable and disorganised attachments between the filicidal offenders and their children. The fragmented models of attachment are similar to a fragmented construct system in personal construct theory, in which a person draws on incompatible constructions to construe (Kelly, 1955). Similar to personal construct theory, exploring the filicidal offender's internal working models and attachments might perhaps offer insight into the incidence of filicide.

However, attachment theory was not used in the current research because it has been criticised for, firstly, failing to consider systematic distortions in which one child's perceptions, experiences, and interpretations of the caregiver's behaviour may vary from those of another child because of internal states of fantasies and conflict (Fonagy, 2004). Secondly, the theory has been criticised for not

recognising that a child's representational system may change as the child develops and matures (Fonagy, 2004). Thirdly, attachment theory has been criticised for arguing that changes in the child's environment lead to changes in the child's attachment behavioural system, but environmental changes do not always impact on the attachment system (Fonagy, 2004). Finally, from a personal construct theory perspective, Sassaroli, Lorenzini, and Ruggiero (2005) argued that a secure attachment does not only provide a child with an opportunity to explore and develop flexible and adaptive working models but enables the child to learn not to be anxious and threatened by invalidations. The child might learn how to subsume constructions that invalidate his/her anticipations into his/her construct system (Sassaroli et al., 2005).

**1.1.3.4 Social learning theory.** Social learning theory posits that behaviour is learned through observation and imitation (Bandura, 1977). Although not all abused children become violent (Wyman, Cowen, Work, & Parker, 1991), some children who have experienced domestic violence seem likely to imitate abusive acts (O'Keefe, 1998). For instance, some filicidal fathers have been found to have a history of childhood abuse (Lucas, Wezner, Milner, McCanne, Harris, Monroe-Posey, & Nelson, 2002). Social learning theory was not used in this research because it has been criticised for failing to recognise that individuals also contribute to their development (Boonzaier & De la Rey, 2004).

**1.1.4 Personal construct theory.** Personal construct theory, which this research is based upon, might contribute to the knowledge of domestic violence by examining the offender's anticipations and constructions at a personal, family, and social level.

Personal construct theory is a psychology of personal meanings (Kelly, 1955). It is underpinned by constructive alternativism, which posits that constructions used to anticipate and construe, which is to interpret, events are subject to revision (Kelly, 1955). The fundamental postulate of the theory, “a person’s processes are psychologically channelized by the ways in which he anticipates events”, indicates that people make anticipations which they test by applying constructions (Kelly, 1955, p. 47). Validated anticipations and constructions might lead to a repeated application of constructions, while invalidations might result in an abandonment of constructions and a revised construct system (Kelly, 1955). Therefore, people are constantly transforming through a change in their construct systems, and the experienced events do not dictate their behaviour but instead validate or invalidate their anticipations and constructions (Kelly, 1970).

**1.1.4.1 Corollaries.** Kelly (1955) developed corollaries to elaborate the fundamental postulate. Corollaries relevant to the research are defined.

1. Choice Corollary, in which one chooses a pole in a dichotomised construct which he/she anticipates might elaborate his/her construct system. A construct is a bipolar dimension which provides a person with an opportunity to make an elaborative choice.
2. Individuality Corollary, in which people’s constructions of events are different.
3. Commonality Corollary, concerning the extent to which an individual employs constructions and psychological processes which are similar to another person.

4. Sociality Corollary, in which an individual engages in a playing of roles in a social process with another person based on his/her understanding and acceptance of that person's construction processes.
5. Fragmentation Corollary, in which a person employs constructions which are incompatible with each other.
6. Modulation Corollary, in which a person's construct system might change depending on the permeability of superordinate constructs which subsume other constructs.

**1.1.4.2 Additional corollaries.** Procter (1981) added new corollaries, and prominent in this research is the Family Corollary, which focuses on family members' construal of themselves and each other, their expectations, and the anticipations they have about the family. A family can only function if the members negotiate a family construct system, which entails common constructions which govern their interaction with each other, and make choices within their construct systems to maintain the common family constructions (Procter, 1981). However, individuals within the system assume a position, which is their way of construing their world, which may be similar or different to other family members (Procter, 1985; Procter & Ugazio, 2017). Therefore, the family members must understand and accept each other's positions (Procter, 2001). Lack of sociality and incompatible constructions of the family members might disrupt the family and result in conflict and possibly violence. For instance, Ugazio (2013) in her research on family semantic polarities, which are the contrasting poles of meaning which govern the family, found that problems might arise when the family members construe from opposing poles. Intimate/marital problems seemed to be

an instigating factor in most of the filicidal cases which have been investigated (Liem & Koenraadt, 2008; Marleau et al., 1999). Perhaps the filicidal offenders and their partners/wives construed their problems from contrasting poles, which resulted in unaddressed issues which led to filicide.

#### ***1.1.4.3 Diagnostic constructs and the processes of construction and construing.***

Kelly's (1955, 1991) diagnostic constructs facilitate sociality in that they enable the researcher to understand the participants' construing. The discussed diagnostic constructs may be of relevance to paternal filicidal offenders.

*1.1.4.3.1 Structure of construing: Core and superordinate constructs.* These are constructs involved in the maintenance of a sense of self. Core constructs maintain one's identity and superordinate constructs, of which core constructs are a subset, are at the top of the hierarchy of a person's construct system. Some filicidal fathers have been found to commit filicide and familicide as the result of infidelity (Adinkrah, 2003; Wilson, Daly, & Daniele, 1995). Perhaps constructions of faithfulness were superordinate in their construct systems, and their invalidation triggered extreme violence.

*1.1.4.3.2 Submergence.* This refers to a situation of low cognitive awareness in which one construct pole is used while another pole is less available. One-off offenders, who most paternal filicidal fathers might be classified as, seem to submerge the negative construct pole when construing their victims, who tend to be mostly family members (Houston, 1998; Howells, 1983). They appear to perceive their victims in a positive and idealised manner, and therefore slot rattle, in which they reconstrue from the opposite construct pole (Kelly, 1969) when facing invalidations of their constructions about another person (Houston, 1998). One-

off offenders seem to struggle to maintain the positive and idealised perception of the other person amidst interpersonal relationship problems (Howells, 1983). Therefore, extreme violence might be a result of slot rattling (Houston, 1998; Winter, 2003).

Furthermore, people may also slot rattle into a “not me” role (p. 228), such as law-enforcement agents who break the law (Winter, 1993), or in the eruption of hostility and violence phase, in which people increasingly impose on each other invalidated constructions (Doster, 1985). For example, a reserved husband might switch roles into a violent self in which violence is an expression of hostility, which involves an extortion or manipulation of evidence to validate invalidated constructions (Kelly, 1955). However, violence is not always hostile in Kelly’s sense of this term, and hostile acts do not always include violence (Winter, 2003).

*1.1.4.3.3 Construing strategies.* These are strategies that are employed to make better sense of reality.

1. Tight versus loose construing, in which tight construing involves precise and invariable predictions, and loose construing involves variable predictions.

Considering that one-off offenders only seem to construe their victims positively (Houston, 1998) suggests that their predictions about their victims and relationships might be so tight that they fail to anticipate problems. Since tight predictions may be vulnerable to invalidations (Winter & Procter, 2014), one might predict that the offenders might not know how to deal with the unexpected problems.

2. Dilation versus constriction, in which dilation involves a person expanding his/her perceptual field when experiencing incompatibilities to reorganise his/her construct system at a comprehensive level. Constriction is when one delimits their perceptual field to avoid invalidations and incompatibilities in construing. Since violence can be an act of constriction (Winter, 2003), a filicidal offender who is experiencing intimate/marital problems might kill his partner/wife (Marleau et al., 1999) to delimit his field of perception by removing a person presenting incompatibilities.

*1.1.4.3.4 Constructs of transition.* These involve constructs relating to change (Kelly, 1955, 1991).

1. Threat is an awareness of a possible comprehensive change to one's core structure. Some of the filicide-homicide incidents which have been investigated seemed to be instigated by the partners/wives leaving or wanting to leave the offenders (Kauppi et al., 2010). Since violence might be employed to eliminate threat (Howells, 1983; Winter, 2003), the offenders perhaps felt threatened and reacted with extreme violence to extinguish the source of threat and protect their core structure.
2. Guilt is when one construes the self as dislodged from his/her construing of his/her core role, which is a role that he/she enact with other people. One-off offenders seldom react with violence to situations because they overcontrol and inhibit their feelings (Megargee, 1966). However, as the result of an exhausted frustration threshold, they might react with excessive and extreme violence when

provoked (Megargee, 1966). The extreme violence might induce guilt if construed as a dislodgement from their non-violent core role. Furthermore, the feelings of guilt might be perpetuated by societal punishment in that they might perceive themselves as dislodged from their construing of the core role in society (Kelly, 1955). Additionally, the sense of guilt might be escalated by the filicidal offenders perceiving the act of killing as sin, which is a personal experience in which one construes a committed act as not part of the self (Kelly, 1969).

In contrast, filicidal fathers with a history of violent crimes (Friedman et al., 2005; Marleau et al., 1999; Wilczynski, 1997) might not feel dislodged from their core role by killing because violence is a part of the self. Instead, the violence might be used to avoid guilt (Winter, 2003).

3. Aggression is when a person employs new constructs to elaborate their perceptual field. Some people might extend their field of perception to include criminal acts (Winter, 2003), e.g., Ian Brady, the serial killer (Brady, 2001). Therefore, the filicidal offender might aggressively use violence to construe unconstruable events, and therefore avoid anxiety, an inability to construe events which lie outside the range of convenience of his/her construct system (Kelly, 1955).
4. Hostility which might manifest when a person slot rattles into a core role that is different to the self was defined on page 25. Additionally, drawing on McCoy's (1977) view of anger, in which an invalidation of one's constructions might lead to hostility, filicidal fathers might be angered by their partners/wives and use violence to forcefully validate invalidated constructions. For instance, some

filicidal fathers were reported to be violent after discovering their partners'/wives' infidelity (Adinkrah, 2003; Marleau et al., 1999). Therefore, domestic violence seems to be a means of extortion of validation of constructions, manipulation, and control (Horley & Johnson, 2002). Anger in the sense of McCoy (1977) and Cummins (2003), one of the emotional responses to invalidation, appears to be a precursor which justifies the chain of events (Horley & Johnson, 2002). In contrast, Yorke and Dallos (2015) in their study on anger in young offenders, who were violent and non-violent, found that anger which seemed to be deeply embedded in their participants' identities was used to communicate their emotions.

5. Shame. This involves construing the self as dislodged from people's construing of one's core role (McCoy, 1977). In a patriarchal society, a father is socially expected to be protective (Olawoye, Omololu, Aderinto, Adeyefa, Adeyemo, & Osotimehin, 2004), and therefore a father who committed filicide might feel shame. However, some people might be violent to avoid shame by conforming to people's expectations of them (Winter, 2003).

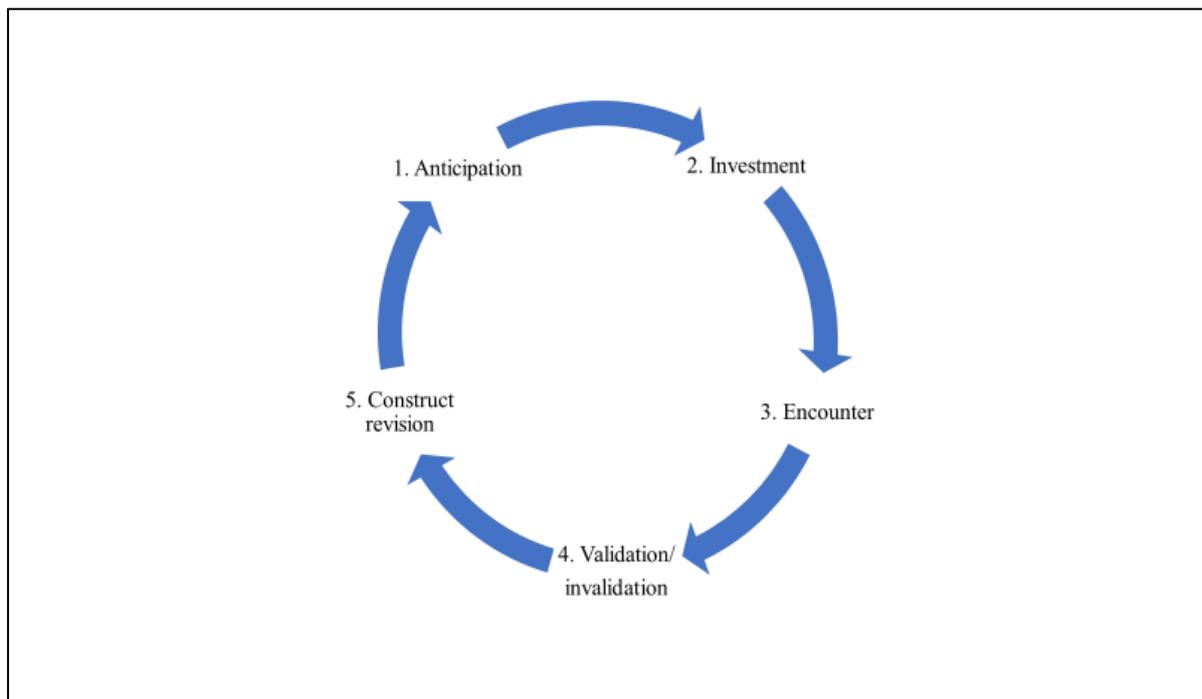
*1.1.4.3.5 Circumspection-Preemption-Control (C-P-C) Cycle.* This is involved in decision-making (Kelly, 1955). An individual successively goes through the phases of circumspection, in which various issues or constructions of a situation are explored, preemption, in which one construct is chosen, and control, in which one pole of this construct is chosen before decision-making. One-off offenders seem to foreshorten the C-P-C Cycle, in which they impulsively use reactive violence, which is precipitated by provocation (Berkowitz, 1993), to address problems (Winter, 2003, 2016). As the result of the

foreshortened C-P-C Cycle, they might struggle to recall the traumatic killing and construe what they did (Winter, 2016). Impulsivity seems to be common amongst most men who abuse their families (Horley & Johnson, 2002; Tweed & Dutton, 1998).

**1.1.4.4 The Experience Cycle.** This cycle is involved in the construing process (Kelly, 1970). It is based on the tenet of personal construct theory that people invest anticipations in events, and a validation of anticipations might lead to a preserved construct system, while invalidation might result in a revised system (Oades & Patterson, 2016; Oades & Viney, 2012). The cycle comprises five phases according to Kelly (1970):

1. Anticipation, in which the individual predicts events.
2. Investment, in which the individual involves him/herself in the anticipation.
3. Encounter, in which the individual experiences the event.
4. Validation/invalidation, in which the individual assesses whether the outcome of the encountered event validates or invalidates his/her anticipations.
5. Construct revision, in which based on evidence new constructions might be developed to make new anticipations which restart the cyclical process, see Figure 1.

Figure 1: *Experience Cycle* (Kelly, 1970). Source: Oades and Patterson (2016, p. 126)



Optimal functioning occurs when the cycle is successively completed resulting in an elaborated and defined construct system used to predict future events (Kelly, 1970). However, a disrupted cycle might lead to suicidal tendencies (Neimeyer & Winter, 2006), and perhaps homicidal tendencies. Similar to the anticipations of suicide (Neimeyer & Winter, 2006), filicidal-suicidal fathers might anticipate filicide-homicide-suicide to validate constructions about themselves, their nuclear families, and death. Suicide might sometimes be used as an act of hostility (Stefan & Linder, 1985). Therefore, similar to the psychiatric inpatients whom Aldridge (1998) found to engage in a hostile cycle with staff members, involving self-harm, to extort validation of their constructions (Aldridge, 1998), filicidal fathers might also commit filicide-suicide as a hostile act.

**1.1.4.5 Construing respect-disrespect.** Personal construct theory focuses on the individual and how he/she constructs his/her world by developing and testing constructs

which he/she uses to make predictions (Kelly, 1955). However, how people interact and relate to each other is also central to personal construct theory (Leitner, 1985). Kelly's (1955) view of the basis of such relationships was stated in his Sociality Corollary, "to the extent that one person construes the construction processes of another, he may play a role in a social process involving the other person" (p. 95). That is, one may engage in an intimate relationship with another person based on his/her construing of that person's ways of construing (Leitner, 1985). A role is a continuing pattern of behaviour following an understanding that one has of another person's view of his/her world (Kelly, 1955). People can establish ROLE relationships based on the depth of their construing of each other's construction processes (Leitner, 1985). ROLE relationships involve an intimate understanding of the other person's construing of his/her world and are different to social roles (this differentiation indicated by the capitalisation of the word by Leitner), in which one does not know the other person's experiences (Leitner, 1985). Moreover, ROLE relationships involve respecting the integrity and uniqueness of the other person (Leitner, 1985).

The personal and ROLE relationship constructions might be validated or invalidated based on the anticipations and construal of the other person's behaviour (Leitner, 1985). Invalidated constructions might trigger anxiety, fear, threat, hostility, and guilt (Leitner, 1985). This dissertation proposes respect, a validation of a construing of someone's core role towards oneself, and disrespect, an invalidation of a construing of someone's core role towards oneself, which are also inherent in ROLE relationships and social roles. An experience of disrespect might provoke an emotional response of feeling insulted, which is often associated with a construal of disrespect. Anger which might lead to hostility (McCoy, 1977) which might manifest in violence<sup>1</sup> might also be experienced.

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<sup>1</sup> Violence in this dissertation refers to physical and verbal violent acts.

A disrespected person might use violent and non-violent manipulative tactics to exert control, and therefore extort power and respect. For instance, some young offenders in Yorke and Dallos' (2015) study were found to use violence or expressed anger to obtain power by showing people not to "mess" (p. 131) with them. Therefore, some people in ROLE relationships and social roles might engage in a power struggle involving Ugazio's (2013) power-submission, overbearing-submissive, boastful-humble, fighting-surrendering, and self-efficacy-inadequacy semantic polarities. The nature of the power struggle indicates that some people seem to construct their identities in comparison to other people, which supports the hypothesis that people develop their identities and assess their abilities by comparing themselves to other people (Festinger, 1954). An individual who construes him/herself as entitled to respect might feel dislodged from his/her core role if he/she does not assume the power and fighting poles and fight for respect. Therefore, the violence may be instrumental in the avoidance of guilt (Winter, 2003).

Although anger is not inseparably entwined with hostility (Cummins, 2003), and hostile acts are not always violent, and violent acts are not always hostile (Winter, 2003), disrespect seems to be concomitant with anger and hostile violence in some cases involving domestic and street violence. Most people who engage in street violence appear to construe respect as an asset that gives status and protection (Anderson, 1999). Respect seems to be superordinate amongst these people, and they might impulsively adopt violence to obtain it when construing disrespect. This is evident in Brookman, Bennet, Hochstetler, and Copes' (2011, p. 22) study which explored the use of street violence amongst convicted offenders.

*"I will fight them back, it is simple, I won't walk off, I will stand my ground, I won't walk off from nobody."*

The participant seemed to preemptively choose to fight instead of walking away when construing disrespect. Ugazio's (2013) semantic polarities of fighting-surrendering and power-submission appear to extend also to a violent extortion of respect in a social context. Therefore, the polarities seem to be prominent in the constructions of respect-disrespect.

Additionally, the quote indicates that violence might not only be used to extort respect but also avoid shame, in a sense used by Winter (2003). For instance, some gang members appeared to engage in fights after being encouraged by other members to be violent, e.g., "*You know we with you, baby. Go ahead and dust him*" (Toch, 1969, p. 55). Failure to fight might have resulted in shame.

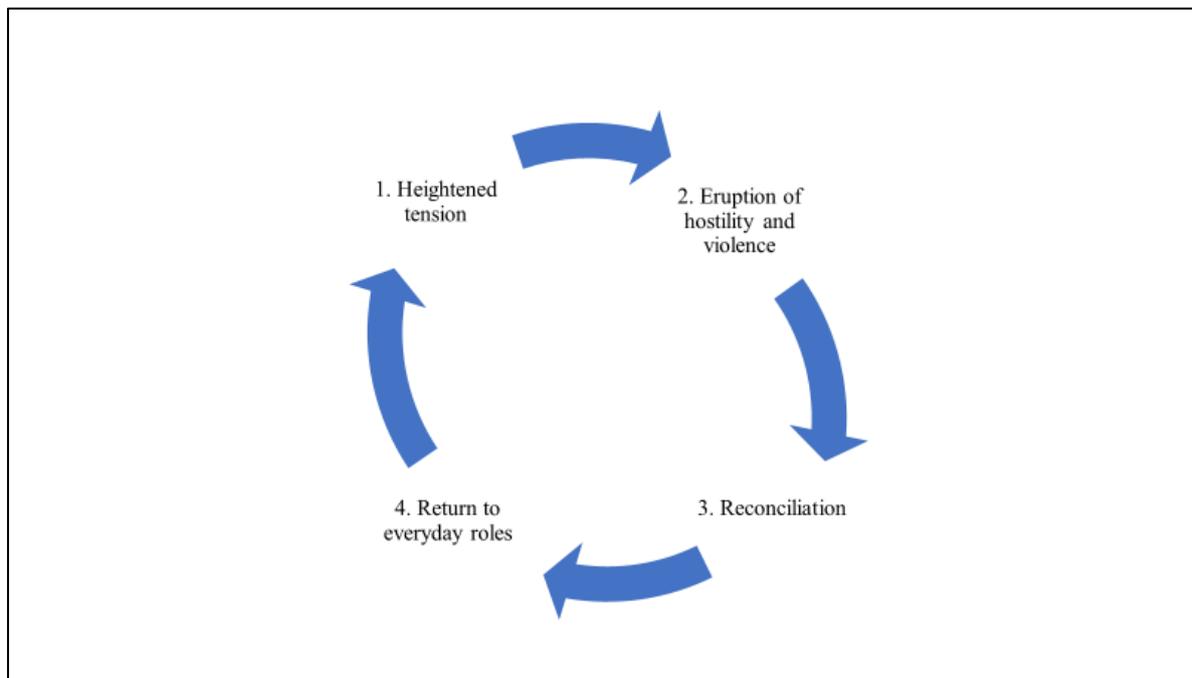
Furthermore, street fights involving gang members in which violence is used to extort respect supports Winter's (2003) view of violence as a shared construction. This might apply to abusive men who were raised in violent homes (Eriksson, Mazerolle, Wortley, & Johnson, 2016) in which they perhaps observed their fathers using violence to get respect and force their mothers into a submissive role. Violence as a shared construction is elaborated later.

In conclusion, people in ROLE relationships do not just have an understanding of the other person's construction process and act on those understandings (Leitner, 1985), but also expect to engage in a certain interplay of roles. During the playing of roles, the other person's behaviour might be construed as respectful or disrespectful. However, the construing of respect-disrespect seems to also extend to social roles. Construing respect might trigger anger, leading the disrespected person to assume power and fighting poles of the semantics of power in which they may employ violence and other manipulative tactics to extort respect.

Violence may be used to avoid guilt and shame, in Kelly's sense. It might also be an expression of shared constructions.

**1.1.4.6 Cycle of abuse.** Abuse is a vicious cycle comprising heightened tension, involving a construal of an increase in invalidation of predictions; eruption of hostility and violence (see definition on page 25); reconciliation, in which the couple draw on constructions which attracted them to each other; and return to everyday roles, in which the couple re-enacts their usual roles with each other (Doster, 1985). In some paternal filicidal cases, the filicide-homicide seemed to be part of, and therefore an end of a cycle of abuse (Bourget & Gagné, 2005). However, in some instances, the filicide-homicide occurred in the absence of previous domestic violence incidents (Friedman et al., 2005). Figure 2 presents the abuse cycle.

Figure 2: *Abuse cycle (Doster, 1985)*



**1.1.5 Risk factors.** Traumatic childhood experiences might significantly contribute to filicide. Various researchers found that some perpetrators of filicide, mothers and fathers, experienced childhood abuse (Haapasalo & Petäjä, 1999; Kauppi et al., 2010; Koenen & Thompson, 2008; & Lucas et al., 2002). 74% of paternal filicidal offenders in Kauppi et al.'s (2010) study were found to have been raised in abusive homes. Kauppi et al. (2010) found that most paternal filicidal offenders in their study experienced emotional abuse. Other childhood adversities experienced by some filicidal fathers involved parental separation (Koenen & Thompson, 2008) and death of a parent (Kauppi et al., 2010).

Other risk factors of filicide include young age, low educational status, poor support, unemployment, financial problems, and intimate/marital relationship issues (Campion, Cravens, & Covan, 1988; Marleau et al., 1999; Overpeck, Brenner, Trumble, Trifiletti, & Berendes, 1998). Feelings of resentment towards the child might also be a contributing factor (d'Orban, 1979). Some filicidal fathers have been found to abuse substances and be under the influence of alcohol or drugs during the killing (Friedman et al., 2005). For example, Bourget and Gagné (2005) reported that a few of the fathers in their study were intoxicated during filicide-homicide. Alcohol or drugs perhaps acted as constrictive agents, delimiting the filicidal fathers' perceptual field to avoid invalidations of construing and incompatibilities involved in killing one's child/children including their partner/wives in some instances. Furthermore, alcohol might have a tightening (Hoy, 1977) or a loosening effect (Chambers & Sanders, 1984; Winter, 1992), which suggests that the offenders either tightly or loosely anticipated the filicide to validate their predictions and constructions. However, an exclusive use of one strategy might be problematic (Winter & Procter, 2014). In contrast, alcohol might also lead people to oscillate between tight and loose construing (Landfield, 1977). Although

people normally move between two opposing construing strategies (Winter & Procter, 2014), constant oscillation may also be problematic.

**1.1.6 Filicide motives.** Classification systems have been proposed (Bourget & Gagné, 2005; d'Orban, 1979; Resnick, 1969) to determine the reasons for filicide. Resnick's (1969) motives are discussed in line with personal construct theory.

1. Altruistic filicide, in which the child is killed to relieve him/her of real/imagined suffering, is rarely committed by fathers (Eriksson et al., 2016). The filicide is mostly concomitant with suicide (Friedman et al., 2005). The decision to commit altruistic filicide-suicide seems to be impulsive, which supports Stefan and Linder's (1985) view of a foreshortened C-P-C Cycle contributing to suicide. Although extreme violence towards others might be considered reactive, and therefore indicative of a foreshortened C-P-C Cycle (Winter, 2003, 2016), similarly filicide-suicide might also be a form of reactive violence. For instance, a man experiencing wife-husband abuse which involves the children might impulsively kill the children and himself to escape the abuse. This is chaotic/indeterminacy suicide, in which the outcome of the situation cannot be predicted (Kelly, 1961).

However, suicide might also be deterministic/realism, in which the outcome of events seems all too predictable (Kelly (1961). Therefore, as in depressive fatalism, the suicide becomes an ultimate constrictive act in which one permanently removes him/herself from an invalidating and incompatible situation (Kelly, 1961; Neimeyer, 1984). Similarly, the filicide might also be constrictive in

the sense of removing the children from an incompatible situation. As suggested by Neimeyer and Winter (2006) that a constricted construct system is one of the predictors of suicide, the filicide-suicide appears to indicate a constricted system in which deadly violence was construed as the only solution. Furthermore, the suggested suicide predictors, invalidated anticipations in the Experience Cycle and polarised constructions of the self (Neimeyer & Winter, 2006) might also be extended to filicide-suicide. For instance, the filicidal father might construe events in his intimate/marital relationship as invalidating his family constructions, and therefore anticipate filicide-suicide to bring validation. Additionally, perhaps dichotomised competent-failure self-constructions might present him with a dilemma which might be resolved by filicide-suicide.

2. Acutely psychotic filicide, in which the psychosis instigates the filicide, has been reported in some filicidal fathers (Bourget & Gagné, 2005, Eriksson et al., 2016). Constructions of psychiatry and similarly evil appear to be often employed to understand extreme violence, e.g., in the cases of Anders Behring Breivik (Winter & Tschudi, 2015). Although psychiatric diagnosis may assist with treatment and the legal process, the constructions of mental illness and evil seem to prevent one from understanding the offender's construction processes, meanings, and their choice to kill (Winter & Tschudi, 2015). It is imperative to understand the reasons and processes for choosing a "dark vision" (p. 521), which is an identity and lifestyle which may be construed by another person as destructive, to curtail and prevent such choices and consequences (Nowinski, 2004). Viewing the offenders' behaviour as pathological or demonic and regarding them as having a poor prognosis for rehabilitation is preemptive, in which we are only construing them

from one dimension, but rather we should construe the offenders the same way we construe other people to understand their worlds (Winter & Procter, 2014).

3. Unwanted child filicide is committed when the parent no longer wants the child. Although the filicide appears to be rarely committed by fathers, it may be motivated by jealousy towards the child (Wilczynski, 1997), questioned paternity (Adinkrah, 2003), or the child being perceived as a fiscal burden or a restriction to one's career (Resnick, 1969). The killing motivated by jealousy and the child construed as a burden might be an act of constriction. However, concerning doubted paternity, it might be a hostile act.
  
4. Accidental filicide, which might be caused by abuse or neglect (Friedman et al., 2005), is reported to be committed by mostly fathers with a history of childhood abuse (Eriksson et al., 2016). The elaborated constructions of abuse seem to support findings on traumatic events being over-elaborated and superordinate in the person's construct system (Sermpezis & Winter, 2009). In contrast, Sewell, Cromwell, Farrell-Higgins, Palmer, Ohlde, and Patterson (1996) found that constructions of traumatic events are under-elaborated in the person's construct system.

Furthermore, drawing on the notion of the family construct system in which family members might have shared constructions (Procter, 1981, 1985), these filicidal fathers perhaps employed violence as a shared construction of the construct system of their family of origin. Therefore, violence might be used to perpetuate and maintain the shared construction of the family or social groups

(Horley & Johnson, 2002; Winter, 2003).

5. Spouse revenge filicide, which is intended to punish or hurt one's spouse, has been reported in studies which have found some men to commit filicide in retaliation against their partners/wives (Wilczynski, 1997). The extreme violence might be triggered by separation (Eriksson et al., 2016) or divorce (Liem & Koenraadt, 2008), and used to extinguish the source of threat and protect one's core structure (Winter, 2003).

Based on the above, the dissertation argues that intimate/marital problems might significantly contribute to paternal filicide. Personal construct theory may be used to understand paternal filicide by exploring the offenders' construction processes and meanings, and their extended families' constructions processes, and construing of the killing might advance knowledge of domestic violence. The research addressed two main questions:

1. How did paternal filicidal offenders view and make sense of their world before and during the filicide?
2. How did the family members view and make sense of the filicide?

Related to the main research questions, the following areas of interest were explored:

1. What were the experiences of the family life of fathers who killed their children?
2. How did these fathers develop their understanding of fatherhood?

3. How did the fathers approach a decision to kill their children?
4. How do the fathers construe the process of making this decision?
5. Are the outcomes of this decision validating or invalidating their predictions?
6. Have they revised their view of their world after the killing?

## **Chapter 2: Methodology**

This chapter outlines the research process including details of the selection and sampling process, the process of data collection and procedure, and data analysis. Ethical issues are discussed. The chapter concludes with the researcher's reflections on encountering paternal filicidal offenders and their extended families.

### **2.1 Aims of the Research**

The research aimed to understand the factors underlying fathers killing their child/children. It explored the filicidal participants' meanings and construction processes, and their interpersonal relationships with their partners/wives, child/children, and extended families. The research was interested in examining the filicidal participants' anticipations and constructions of their intimate/marital relationships, and of being a father. It aimed to explore the filicidal participants' construing of their enacting of roles with their partners/wives and the nature of their relationship with their child/children. Most importantly, the research was interested in exploring the filicidal participants' construing and experience of events leading to the filicide-homicide. The researcher examined whether the filicidal participants revised their construct systems after the killing.

The research was also interested in understanding the filicidal participants' realities through the eyes of their extended families. Therefore, the family participants' construing of the filicidal participants' construction processes, and nature of their relationship with their partners/wives and child/children were explored. In addition, the research aimed to

understand the family participants' role in and construing of events leading to the filicide-homicide by exploring their processes of construction and construing of the killing.

However, people do not live in isolation but are interactive and influence each other (Becvar & Becvar, 2006). Therefore, the filicidal participants' constructions, meanings, and experiences were explored within the family and socio-cultural context in which they were experiencing and construing. Similar to a therapist (Dallos & Stedmon, 2014), the researcher examined the dynamics of and relational interactions within the filicidal participants' family systems. Dallos and Stedmon (2014) considered problems within a family system to have a circular cause and effect relationship. Therefore, the vicious cycle of dysfunctional interactions within the family system of the filicidal participants which perhaps perpetuated intimate/marital and family discord were explored. Procter's (2014) monadic, dyadic, and triadic construing levels were used to examine the nature of the filicidal participants' relationships. The interpersonal construing levels are defined and discussed in section 2.4.6.3.1.3.

Although common family constructions govern how family members interact and relate (Procter, 1981), the filicidal participants and their family members have unique positions, as referred to by Procter (1985), which may be similar or different. Therefore, the research explored the filicidal participants' construing and anticipations of their family members' constructions. Conflicting processes of construction and failure to understand and accept each other's construing processes perhaps triggered issues which might have led to the filicide-homicide.

Even though people create their unique realities by developing constructs, they also draw on socio-cultural and gendered constructions to develop personal constructs (Leitner, Begley, & Faidley, 1996; Walker, 1996). The constructions are tested, and events in the world in which the individual is experiencing and making meaning provide validating or invalidating evidence which might lead to the retention or abandonment of the constructions (Kelly, 1955). Drawing on the notion of sociality (Kelly, 1955), a person's process of construction can be further understood by understanding socio-cultural constructions (Leitner et al., 1996). Therefore, during a semi-structured individual interview, the filicidal and family participants were explicitly asked about their construing of their socio-cultural constructions of manhood. The filicidal participants were asked how they fulfilled the socio-cultural expectations of being a man. They were also asked how they construed people with whom they shared cultural beliefs construing them after the filicide-homicide.

Furthermore, the family participants were asked how they construed the filicidal participants enacting their manhood role as according to their culture. The family participants were also asked how they construed people of their culture construing the filicidal participants after the killing.

Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (Smith, Flowers, & Larkin, 2009) and personal construct analytic methods (diagnostic construct analysis (Kelly, 1955), Perceiver Element Grid (Procter, 2002), Experience Cycle Methodology (Oades & Viney, 2012), and the ABC model (Tschudi, 1977)) were used to analyse the filicidal participants' lived experience and construing of intimate/marital problems and their effect on their relationship with their partners/wives, child/children, and sense of self. The analytic tools were also used to examine the filicidal participants' understanding of socio-cultural constructions of

masculinity-femininity and how these might have influenced the construction of their identities and relationship with their partners/wives and child/children.

## **2.2 Introduction**

Research methodologies have to be epistemologically and ontologically consistent with the studied phenomenon (Viney & Nagy, 2012). Drawing on the assumption of personal construct theory that people construct meaning from personal experiences (Neimeyer & Neimeyer, 1993), this research, therefore, is conceptualised under an interpretive constructivist paradigm which posits that reality is relative so there may be different realities (Fellows & Liu, 2015). People are considered to construct their realities, and therefore might have different perceptions and construing of events (Fellows & Liu, 2015). Their experiences can only be understood from their viewpoint (Fellows & Liu, 2015). Therefore, the filicidal participants' construal of their experiences of family life and the events preceding the filicide were interpreted. Furthermore, the filicidal participants' extended family members' perceptions of the offenders' family life and the events leading to the killing were analysed. Therefore, an interpretive epistemology position was adopted, and Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) and personal construct analysis were used to analyse the data.

## 2.3 Background to the Dissertation

The research consisted of two studies. Study one focused on the filicidal offenders in South Africa and aimed to understand their construal of themselves, interpersonal relationships, and events before the filicide-homicide. Study two explored the filicidal offenders' extended family members' construing of the offenders' interpersonal relationships and events leading to the killing.

## 2.4 Research Procedures

**2.4.1 Selection of participants.** 20 filicidal fathers were identified from various newspapers, but six committed suicide and eight were awaiting sentencing. The offenders awaiting sentencing refused consent because of concern about compromising their cases when applying for an appeal, and therefore consent was sought from six offenders, of whom four gave consent. The four filicidal offenders were asked for the contact details of their extended family members, who were contacted and invited to participate in study two. It was impossible to obtain a homogeneous sample of the extended families because of the heterogeneity across the families. The filicidal offenders' fathers were not contacted because Joe<sup>2</sup> and John reported that their fathers died, Sly stated that his parents separated, and Neo did not want his parents contacted out of concern for them being re-traumatised since he perceived them as tremendously traumatised by the killing. Some filicidal participants refused to give the contact details of their siblings, with whom they have a poor relationship because of the killing. Table 1 presents the extended family members of the filicidal

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<sup>2</sup> Pseudonyms are used throughout the dissertation to ensure the participants' anonymity.

offenders who consented, refused consent, and were not interviewed. A table of the other characters in the research is in Appendix A.

Table 1: *The extended family members of the filicidal participants*

| Offenders                            | Joe               | Sly                             | Neo                                | John   |
|--------------------------------------|-------------------|---------------------------------|------------------------------------|--------|
| <b>Consented</b>                     |                   |                                 |                                    |        |
|                                      | Mpho – ex-partner |                                 |                                    |        |
| Mary – mother                        |                   | June – mother                   |                                    |        |
|                                      |                   | Tumi – ex-partner’s mother      |                                    |        |
|                                      |                   | Jude – ex-partner’s grandmother |                                    |        |
| April – sister                       |                   |                                 | May – sister                       |        |
| Dave – brother                       |                   |                                 |                                    |        |
| Jack – brother-in-law                |                   |                                 |                                    |        |
| <b>Refused Consent</b>               |                   |                                 |                                    |        |
|                                      |                   |                                 |                                    | Mother |
|                                      |                   |                                 |                                    | Wife   |
|                                      |                   |                                 | Brother                            |        |
|                                      |                   |                                 | Sister-in-law                      |        |
| Norah – grandmother                  |                   |                                 |                                    |        |
| <b>Not Interviewed</b>               |                   |                                 |                                    |        |
| Sue – wife. Died during the killing. |                   |                                 | Wife. Died not during the killing. |        |

**2.4.1.1 Information on the participants.** Demographic information on the filicidal and family participants is presented in Tables 2 and 3, respectively. Interestingly, some filicidal and family participants practised different cultures within the same family system, perhaps because they followed their paternal or some of their relatives' cultural practices in their family lineage. The filicidal participants' genograms are in Figure 4-7. Figure 3 presents the genogram symbols as illustrated by Guerin and Pendagast (1976). Information on when the filicide occurred and how long after the killing the filicidal and family participants were interviewed, and also the filicidal participants' current status, e.g., length of their sentences, is not provided to protect anonymity.

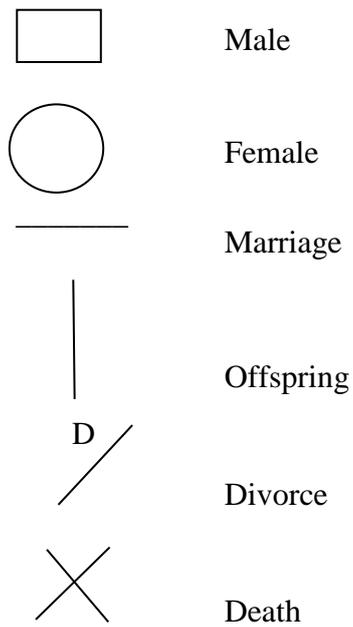
Table 2: Demographic information on the filicidal participants

| Pseudonym names | Age (years) | Race  | Ethnicity/culture | Marital status | Number of children killed/attempted to kill | Killed/attempted to kill partner/wife | History of crime  |
|-----------------|-------------|-------|-------------------|----------------|---|---------------------------------------|-------------------|
| Joe             | 37          | Black | Zulu              | Married        | 2   | Killed                                | One-off offender  |
| Neo             | 47          | Black | Pedi              | Married        | Shot two but one died                       | Attempted to kill                     | One-off offender  |
| John            | 55          | White | Afrikaner         | Married        | 3   | No                                    | One-off offender  |
| Sly             | 34          | Black | Zulu              | Single         | 1   | No                                    | Habitual offender |

Table 3: *Demographic information on the family participants*

| <b>Pseudonym names</b> | <b>Age (years)</b> | <b>Race</b> | <b>Ethnicity/culture</b> | <b>Marital status</b> | <b>Offender's name</b> | <b>Relationship with offender</b> | <b>Family history of crime</b> |
|------------------------|--------------------|-------------|--------------------------|-----------------------|------------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Mary                   | 54                 | Black       | Xhosa                    | Married               | Joe                    | Mother                            | None                           |
| April                  | 25                 | Black       | Swati                    | Single                | Joe                    | Sister                            | None                           |
| Dave                   | 34                 | Black       | Zulu                     | Single                | Joe                    | Brother                           | None                           |
| Jack                   | 42                 | Black       | Sotho                    | Married               | Joe                    | Brother-in-law                    | None                           |
| May                    | 61                 | Black       | Tswana                   | Married               | Neo                    | Sister                            | None                           |
| June                   | 54                 | Black       | Zulu                     | Single                | Sly                    | Mother                            | None                           |
| Jude                   | 72                 | Black       | Sotho                    | Married               | Sly                    | Ex-partner's grandmother          | None                           |
| Tumi                   | 48                 | Black       | Sotho                    | Single                | Sly                    | Ex-partner's mother               | None                           |
| Mpho                   | 27                 | Black       | Sotho                    | Single                | Sly                    | Ex-partner                        | None                           |

Figure 3: *Genogram symbols*



This dissertation uses the symbol ----- to mean dating and -/- to indicate separation.

Figure 4: *Genogram of Joe*

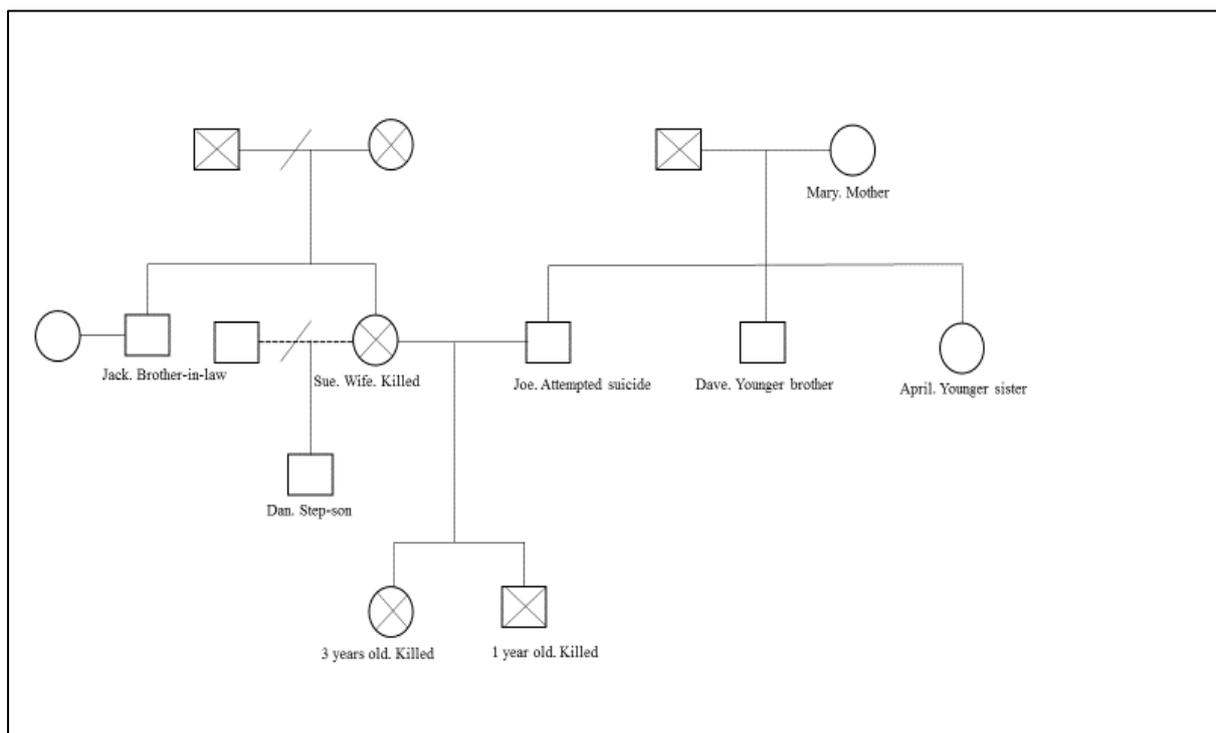


Figure 5: *Genogram of Neo*

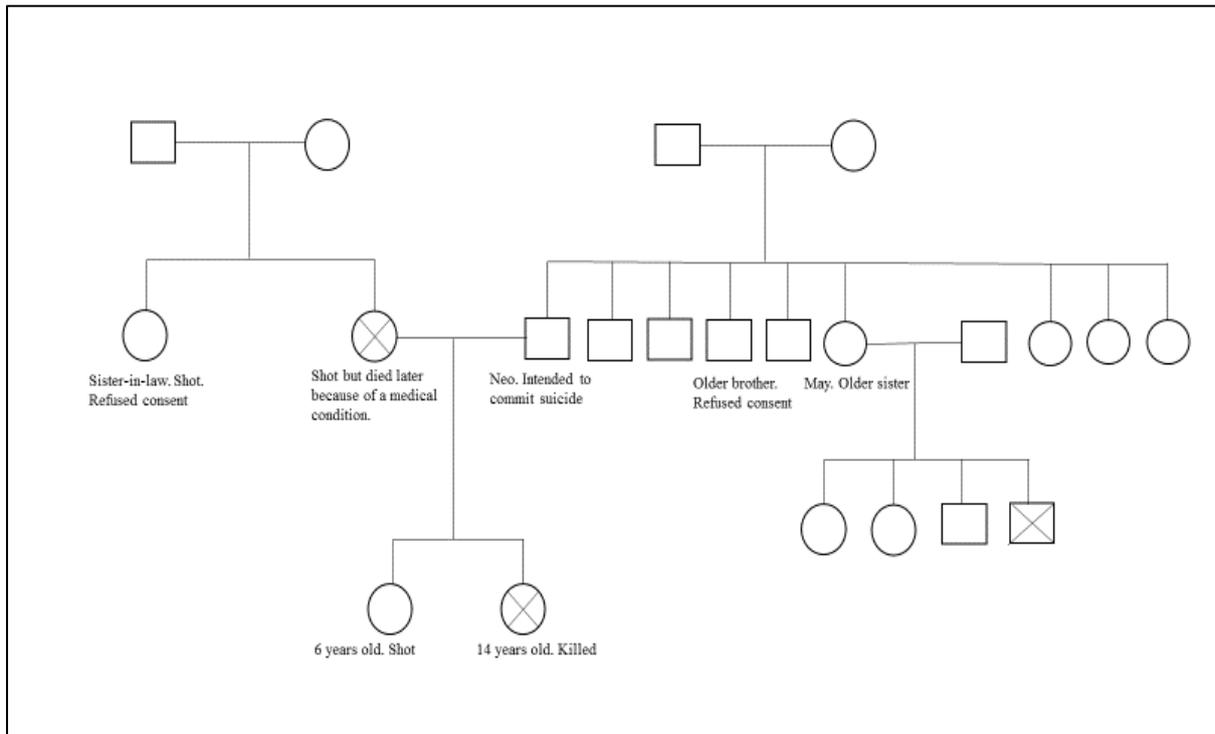


Figure 6: *Genogram of John*

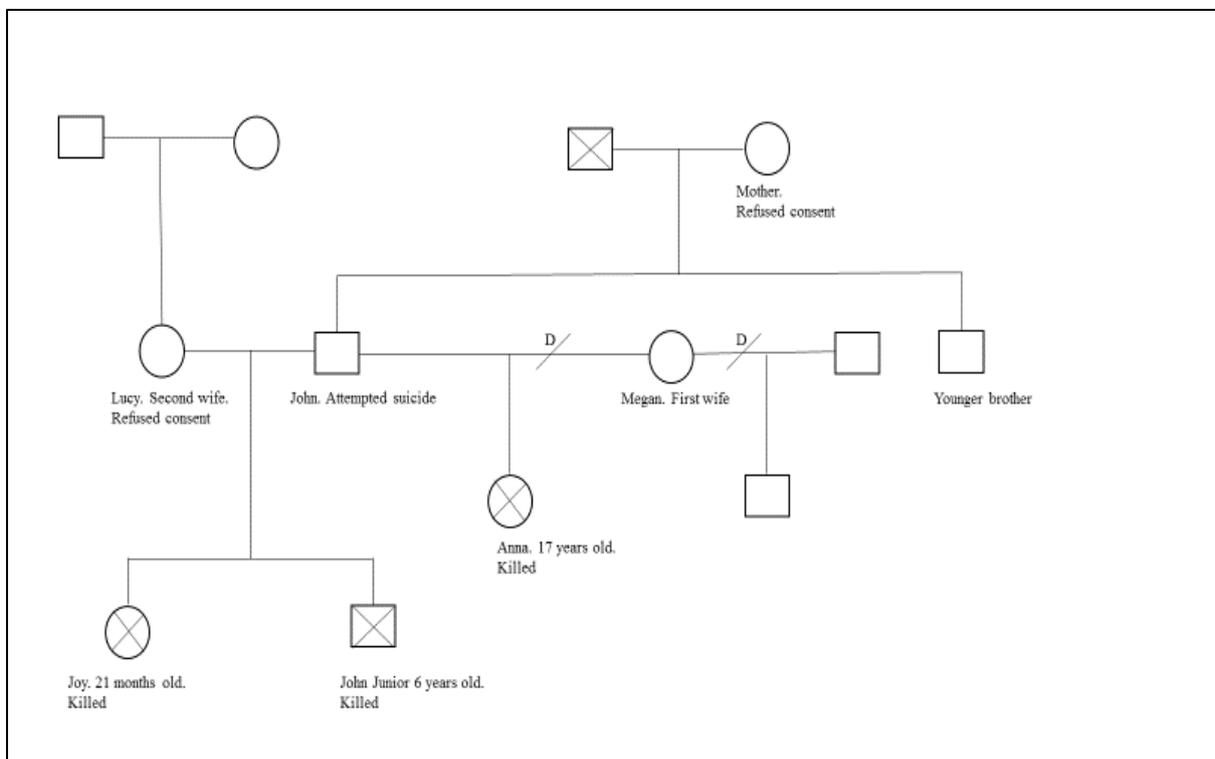
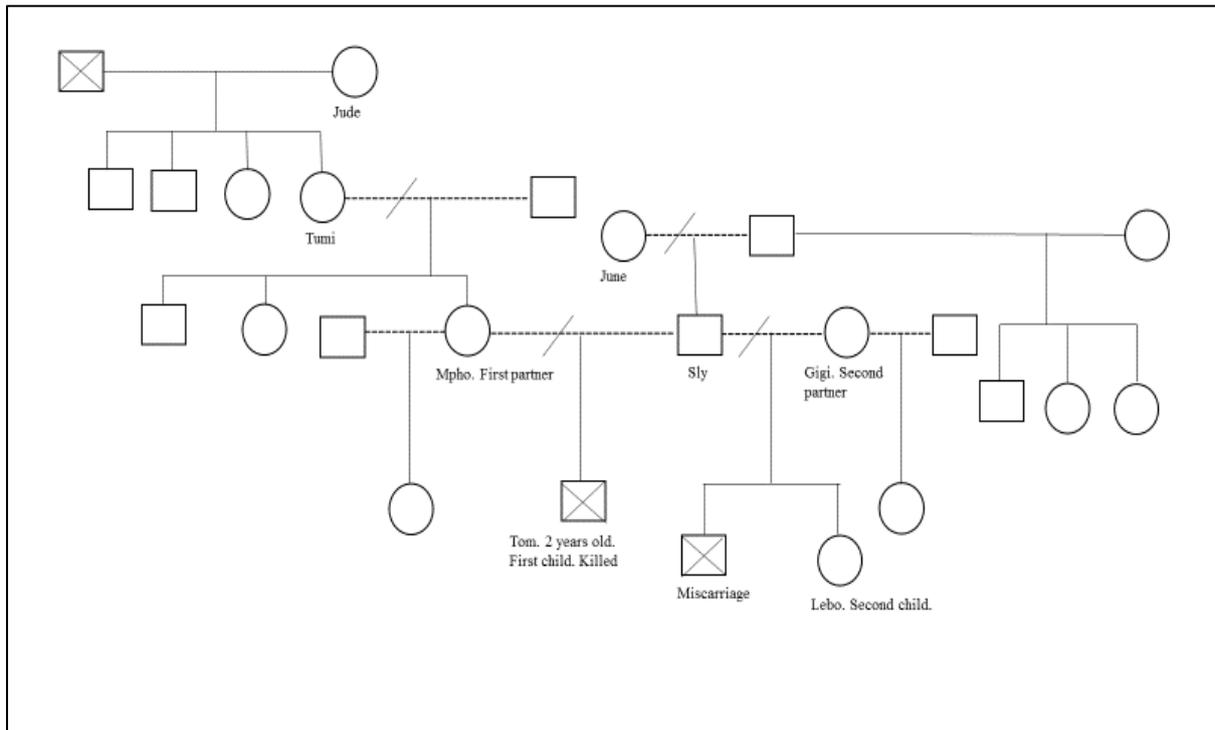


Figure 7: *Genogram of Sly*



**2.4.2 Sampling techniques.** Purposive sampling technique, which requires the researcher to use her judgment when sampling participants who might have information about the investigated topic (Kumar, 2005), was employed. The technique is useful when investigating a phenomenon which is less prevalent and researched (Kumar, 2005; Stake, 2005) such as paternal filicide. However, the researcher's judgements might vary when selecting participants (Uys & Basson, 1985).

**2.4.3 Data collection.** Semi-structured individual interviews, the Perceiver Element Grid (Procter, 2002), and the ABC model (Tschudi, 1977) were used to collect data. Therefore, triangulation, which involves the use of two or more techniques, was employed to improve credibility (Viney & Nagy, 2012). The methods are discussed.

***2.4.3.1 Structuring the interview schedule: Experience Cycle Methodology.***

Experience Cycle Methodology (ECM) (Oades & Viney, 2012), which aims to understand "the construct revision pathway" (p. 141), was used to structure the semi-structured interview schedule, in which the filicidal and family participants were asked open-ended questions in accordance with the Experience Cycle phases (see section 1.1.4.4). The methodology has been used as a semi-structured interview schedule to explore risk-taking behaviour in adolescents (Oades, 1999, Oades & Viney, 2012), adolescents' experience of selective mutism (Oades & Patterson, 2016), and the construal processes of transgendered people entering romantic relationships (Zarroug, 2011). The five principles underpinning ECM (Oades & Viney, 2012) enabled the method's compatibility with the current research, as follows:

1. ECM is consistent with the theoretical framework of personal construct theory. For instance, ECM interview proforma is based on the five phases of the Experience Cycle. Additionally, the category groupings, tight/loose predictions, high/low investment, validation/invalidation, significant/minimal construct revision, which are discussed in *Analytic categories*, are consistent with the theoretical concepts of personal construct theory.
2. The method emphasises the person's construing process, which is explored by examining the nature of the individual's anticipations, his/her level of investment in the anticipations, and if he/she might change his/her construct system based on the outcome of his/her anticipations.
3. The interview schedule is not structured in the form of a questionnaire but instead is semi-structured, and therefore allows the participant to express his/her construing of his/her world.
4. The method is qualitative and idiographic but can also be used in quantitative research.
5. ECM is straightforward and flexible.

*2.4.3.1.1 Interview questions for the offenders and families.* All the methods that are employed in this research and the semi-structured interview questions which are constructed under the domains of engaging in an intimate/marital relationship; the constructions of fatherhood; and the killing of the child/children were used to answer the research questions

for the offenders. Similarly, all the methods that are used in this research and the semi-structured interview questions which are constructed under the domains of construing the offender's intimate/marital relationship; construing the couple's relationship with their child/children; and construing the killing were used to address the research questions for the families. The domains were explored successively because they might have contributed to the occurrence of paternal filicide.

Although the semi-structured interview schedule was structured according to the ECM interview proforma, it also followed the stages suggested by Smith (1995). When developing the interview schedule, the researcher recognised that issues encountered in the intimate/marital relationship which might also involve the children might lead to paternal filicide. The researcher anticipated that asking the filicidal participants open-ended questions about their constructions and experience of fatherhood would provide them with an opportunity to talk about perhaps their feelings of joy or disappointment concerning their relationship with their child/children. Similarly, the researcher anticipated that asking the family participants open-ended questions about their construing of the couple's relationship with their child/children would provide them with an opportunity to talk about perhaps their feelings of pride or disappointment about the couple's parenting.

Most importantly the researcher had preconceived constructions that feelings of rejection of the child (McKee & Egan, 2013) and an insecure-disorganised attachment (Edge et al., 2017) are not always contributing factors in filicide. Although some filicidal fathers were found to have been violent towards their children prior to the filicide (Cavanagh, Dobash, & Dobash, 2007; Dobash & Dobash, 2012), the researcher adopted Kelly's (1955) credulous approach in taking the filicidal participants' construing of having had a loving

relationship with their child/children at face value. Therefore, the researcher did not interrogatively question the filicidal participants on the possible conflict in their relationship with their child/children. Furthermore, the researcher credulously accepted most of the family participants' construing of the filicidal fathers being loving and protective towards their child/children. The family participants who spoke about feeling concerned about the filicidal father's relationship with his child/children were probed on their feelings and construing. Therefore, the researcher's anticipations, constructions, and credulity channelised her construction of questions in the semi-structured interview, Perceiver Element Grid, and the ABC model.

The interview schedule drew on the phases of the Experience Cycle to explore each of the domains. The interview questions were as follows:

1. Interview questions for the filicidal participants

- 1.1 Engaging in an intimate/marital relationship

- 1.1.1 Anticipation phase

- What were your predictions of being in an intimate/marital relationship?
- What do you think your partner/wife expected from you?
- How do you think she expected you to fulfil those expectations?

- 1.1.2 Investment phase

- What did your predictions mean to you?

1.1.3 Encounter phase

- How did you experience being in an intimate/marital relationship?

1.1.4 Validation/invalidation phase

- How did your experience of being in an intimate/marital relationship relate to your predictions of engaging in such a relationship?

1.1.5 Construct revision phase

- What are your current thoughts about your intimate/marital relationship?

1.2 Constructions of fatherhood

1.2.1 Anticipation phase

- What were your expectations of being a father?
- What do you think your children expected from you?

1.2.2 Investment phase

- What did those expectations mean to you?

1.2.3 Encounter phase

- How was your experience of being a father?

1.2.4 Validation/invalidation phase

- How did your experience of fatherhood relate to your predictions of being a father?

1.2.5 Construct revision phase

- What are your current thoughts about being a father?

1.3 The killing of the child/children

1.3.1 Anticipation phase

- What did you predict would happen after you killed your child/children?

1.3.2 Investment phase

- How frequently did you experience the thoughts of killing your child/children?
- How did you feel when you experienced those thoughts?

1.3.3 Encounter phase

- What do you think led you to kill your child/children?
- How do you experience killing your child/children?

1.3.4 Validation/invalidation phase

- How do you feel now after killing your child/children?
- What is your perception of yourself after the incident?

1.3.5 Construct revision phase

- What did you learn from this experience?
- What do you think you could have done to manage the situation without doing what you did?

1.4 Construing social constructions of manhood

- What is a man in your culture?
- How did you try to be a man that your culture expected you to be in your home?
- How do people and people of your culture see you after the killing?

2. Interview questions for the family participants

2.1 Construing the offender's intimate/marital relationship

2.1.1 Anticipation phase

- What were your predictions about his intimate/marital relationship?

2.1.2 Investment phase

- How committed do you think he was to his intimate/marital relationship?

2.1.3 Encounter phase

- What kind of intimate/marital relationship did he have?

2.1.4 Validation/invalidation phase

- What was your perception of his intimate/marital relationship?

2.1.5 Construct revision phase

- What do you think he could have done differently in the relationship?

2.2 Construing the couple's relationship with their child/children

2.2.1 Anticipation phase

- What were your feelings about the offender and his partner/wife becoming parents?
- What do you think were their concerns about the well-being of their child/children?

2.2.2 Investment phase

- How committed were they in fulfilling their parenthood role?

2.2.3 Encounter phase

- What kind of relationship did they have with their child/children?

2.2.4 Validation/invalidation phase

- What impression did you have when you looked at their parenting style?

2.2.5 Construct revision phase

- What you think they learnt from their experience of parenthood?

2.3 Construing the killing

2.3.1 Anticipation phase

- What do you think were the offender's expectations of killing his child/children?

2.3.2 Investment phase

- How committed do you think he was in achieving those expectations?

2.3.3 Encounter phase

- How was the offender's behaviour towards his child/children prior the killing?
- What do you think led him to kill his child/children?

2.3.4 Validation/invalidation phase

- What do you think are his thoughts and feelings now that he has killed his child/children?

2.3.5 Construct revision phase

- What do you think he could have done differently to manage the situation?

#### 2.4 Construing social constructions of manhood

- What is a man in your culture?
- How did you see the offender trying to be a man that your culture expected him to be?
- How do the people of your culture see the offender after the killing?

**2.4.3.2 The Perceiver Element Grid (PEG).** This is a qualitative grid which can be administered to adults and children (Cooper, 2011; Procter 2001). It captures the family members' perceptions of themselves and each other (Procter, 2002; Procter & Procter, 2008). In accordance with Procter's (2002) proposal, the filicidal and family participants who were referred to as perceivers were put on the left-side of the grid while the perceived elements were labelled at the top. On completing the PEG, each filicidal participant was asked how he perceived himself before and after the killing, his nuclear family, his perceptions of his nuclear family's views of him, his perceptions of his extended family and an ideal family. The filicidal participants' responses were entered in the relevant boxes in separate grids. Table 4 presents the PEG template of the filicidal participants.

Table 4: PEG template of the filicidal participant

**ELEMENT**

| Offender  | Nuclear family   | Nuclear family's views of the offender  | Extended family                                      | Ideal family   |
|---|--|---|--|--|
| What was the offender's perception of himself before the killing? | What was the offender's perception of his nuclear family before the killing? | What was the offender's perception of his nuclear family's views of himself before the killing? | What is the offender's views of his extended family? | What was the offender's perception of an ideal family? |
| What is his perception of himself after the killing?              | What is the offender's views of his nuclear family after the killing?        |   |  |  |

PERCEIVER – OFFENDER

Moreover, on completing the grid, each family participant was asked how he/she perceived himself/herself, his/her extended family, ideal family, the offender before and after the killing, the offender's nuclear family, and the offender's nuclear family's views of the offender before the killing. Table 5 presents the PEG template of the family participants.

Table 5: PEG template of the family participant

**ELEMENT**

| Offender   | Offender's nuclear family  | Offender's nuclear family's views of the offender  | Himself/herself  | Extended family  | Ideal family  |
|--|--|--|--|--|---|
| How did the extended family member perceive the offender before the killing? | What was the extended family member's views of the offender's nuclear family before the killing? | What was the extended family member's perceptions of the offender's nuclear family's views of the offender before the killing? | What is the extended family member's views of himself/herself? | What is the extended family member's views of the extended family? | What is the extended family member's perceptions of an ideal family system? |
| How does the extended family member view the offender after the killing?     |  |  |  |  |   |

PERCEIVER – EXTENDED FAMILY MEMBER

**2.4.3.3 The ABC model.** This explores the positive and negative consequences of a problem and the desired alternative to the problem (Tschudi, 1977; Tschudi & Winter, 2012). The model investigates how one construes a situation, and why he/she chooses a particular construct and construct pole when making a decision (Tschudi, 1977).

The 'A' construct describes the problem and consists of 'a1', which represents a problematic pole, and 'a2', which is the desired pole (Tschudi & Winter, 2012). The 'B' construct consists of 'b1', which is the disadvantages of 'a1', and 'b2', which is the advantages of 'a2' (Tschudi & Winter, 2012). The construct provides reasons that might lead an individual to shift from 'a1' to 'a2' (Tschudi & Winter, 2012). The 'C' construct identifies constructions that might prevent change and consists of 'c2', which is the advantages of 'a1', and 'c1', which is the disadvantages of 'a2' (Tschudi & Winter, 2012).

The filicidal participants were asked their preferred construct pole between killing and not killing, and the advantages and disadvantages of killing and not killing. Figure 8 presents a template for the ABC model of the filicidal participants.

Figure 8. ABC model template of the filicidal participant

**ABC Model (Tschudi, 1977) of the offender's views of the advantages and disadvantages of killing and not killing**

|   |  |                                 |  |
|---|--|---------------------------------|--|
| a1 Killing  |  | a2 Not killing                  |  |
| <b>A: Problem construct</b>   |  |                                 |  |
| What do you prefer between killing and not killing your child/children? |  |                                 |  |
| b1 Disadvantages of killing   |  | b2 Advantages of not killing    |  |
| <b>B. Reason for change</b>   |  |                                 |  |
| What do you lose by killing your child/children?                        |  |                                 |  |
| c2 Advantages of killing  |  | c1 Disadvantages of not killing |  |
| <b>C. Prevents change</b>   |  |                                 |  |
| What do you gain by killing your child/children?                        |  |                                 |  |

The model was also administered to the family participants. The family participants were asked their views on whether it might have been possible to intervene to prevent the killing and the positive and negative implications of intervening and not intervening. Figure 9 presents a template for the ABC model of the family participants.

Figure 9: ABC model template of the family participant

**ABC Model (Tschudi, 1977) of the extended family member's views of the advantages and disadvantages of not intervening and intervening to prevent the killing**

a1 Not intervening to prevent the killing

a2 Intervening to prevent the killing

**A: Problem construct**

What do you prefer between doing something to prevent the killing and not doing anything?

b1 Disadvantages of not intervening to prevent the killing

What do you lose by not doing anything to prevent the killing?

b2 Advantages of intervening to prevent the killing

What do you gain by doing something to prevent the killing?

**B. Reason for change**

c2 Advantages of not intervening to prevent the killing

What do you gain by not doing anything to prevent the killing?

c1 Disadvantages of intervening to prevent the killing

What do you lose by doing something to prevent the killing?

**C. Prevents change**

**2.4.4 Procedures.** This section discusses how and where study one and two were conducted.

**2.4.4.1 Study one.** The Correctional Centres where the six identified paternal filicide offenders were incarcerated were located. The researcher approached the Heads of the Correctional Centres to discuss the research project, issues about security and office space for the interviews, and arrange to meet the offenders. During an initial meeting with the offenders, the researcher introduced herself, explained the reason for the meeting, discussed the nature, benefits, and risks of the research, and invited the offenders to participate in the research. The prospective participants were given the participation information sheet (PIS), see Appendix B1, and a consent form, see Appendix C1. The researcher and the offenders agreed to meet the next day at a time convenient to them to address their concerns and questions and get their response. It was also agreed that the interviews would commence that day with the consenting participants. The offenders were also informed about study two and asked to consider giving the contact details of their extended family members. Four offenders consented and gave their families' contact details, and two offenders who declined consent refused to give their families' contacts.

The participants partook in one-on-one interviews which proceeded for about one hour and thirty minutes and were audio recorded with their permission. Firstly, the participants engaged in a semi-structured interview which was about an hour long. The interviews were conducted in Setswana and IsiZulu, which are two of the 11 official languages in South Africa. Only one interview was in English. Since it may be risky interacting with offenders, the interviews took place in a private but secure office. The semi-

structured interviews were followed by the PEG and the ABC model, which proceeded for about 15 minutes each.

**2.4.4.2 Study two.** 14 extended family members were identified. The prospective participants were telephoned with the consent of the offenders. In accordance with the PIS, see Appendix B2, the researcher introduced herself and told the family members where she obtained their contact details. The possible participants were informed about the purpose and nature of the research and were invited to participate. The nine family members who telephonically consented were mailed the PIS and a consent form, see Appendix C2. They were subsequently telephoned to arrange a convenient interview date, time, and place. The interviews were conducted at their homes in a separate room to ensure privacy. During the face-to-face meeting, the researcher re-introduced herself and briefly discussed the research with the participants, during which she addressed their concerns and questions. The participants signed the consent forms and engaged in approximately one hour and thirty minutes individual interviews which were audio recorded with their permission. The interview sessions consisted of one-on-one semi-structured interviews which proceeded for about an hour, the PEG which was about 15 minutes, and the ABC model which also proceeded for about 15 minutes. The interviews were conducted in Setswana and IsiZulu.

**2.4.5 Data processing.** The interviews were translated and transcribed in English. Atkinson and Heritage's (1984) transcription system, which captures the participants' utterances, pauses, and emotional expressions, was used. Transcription notation symbols are in Appendix D. Included in the dissertation are extracts from the filicidal participants' transcripts and two family participants, Mary and May. See Appendix E1 and E2, respectively.

The researcher transcribed all the interviews, which enabled her to familiarise herself with and immerse herself in the data, and actively enter the participants' worlds.

Transcription of data, which is an initial stage of the analytic process, is important because it preserves the emotional and social aspects of the interview, and therefore helps the researcher to understand the data (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009).

**2.4.6. Data analysis.** This section discusses the considered analytic methods, Grounded Theory, Thematic Analysis, and Foucauldian Discourse Analysis. It discusses and gives rationales for why Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis and personal construct analytic methods (which comprised diagnostic construct analysis, analytic categories of the Experience Cycle Methodology, PEG, and the ABC model) were preferred methods of analysis.

#### ***2.4.6.1 Considered analytic methods.***

**2.4.6.1.1 Grounded theory.** The method generates theory from systematically collected data (Glaser & Strauss, 2009). Grounded theory was not used because the dissertation followed a deductive approach in which the researcher consulted the literature on filicide, developed research assumptions, had a set of preconceptions about the research, and methodologies which guided the data gathering process. Furthermore, the researcher aimed to use the analysed themes to understand the filicidal and family participants' experiences and meanings of filicide-homicide, instead of developing a theory to explain filicide.

**2.4.6.1.2 Thematic analysis.** Thematic analysis identifies, analyses, and reports themes in the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The method can be applied within various

theoretical and epistemological frameworks, and in an inductive or deductive approach (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Thematic analysis was not used because the researcher did not merely want to identify and report themes, but instead understand the filicidal and family participants' lived experience of filicide, construing of the killing, and construction processes.

*2.4.6.1.3 Foucauldian discourse analysis.* Foucauldian discourse analysis (FDA) is one form of discourse analysis. FDA, as used by Willig (2013), which is interested in the use of language in the construction of discourses and the role of discourses in the development of versions of the world, and how discourses legitimise social practices and power. FDA is underpinned by Foucault's (1972) notion of discourse, which is a set of meanings/knowledge which influences how a person perceives the self, other people, and the world (Parker, 1992), and his/her way of being and relating with other people (Willig, 2013). Discourses creates subject positions, which are locations within the system of meaning which a person occupies to speak or act, and power relations by categorising people into social groups (Willig, 2013). Discourses do not just exist in social groups but also institutions (Foucault, 1972; Willig, 2013) (e.g., the institution of marriage). They legitimise and reinforce social practices and power relations within those social and institutional structures which in turn validate and perpetuate the discourse and power (Willig, 2013). Dominant discourses privilege people in social groups which legitimise and justify the existing power relations and social structures (Willig, 2013). For example, discourses on gender in a patriarchal society privilege and entitle men with a sense of power/authority over women (Anderson & Umberson, 2001). The performance of gender normalises the discourse making gender appear not to be socially constructed which might lead to it being unchallenged (Anderson & Umberson, 2001). Gender discourses might contribute to domestic violence in which some men employ violence to assert and maintain power and control over women while ensuring that women

remain in their subject position of submission (Dobash & Dobash, 1998; Anderson & Umberson, 2001). Furthermore, some men perceive violence as gendered in which it is a part of their socially constructed masculinity, and therefore justifiable (Anderson & Umberson, 2001).

By analysing the filicidal participants' use of language, FDA might have enabled an exploration of how the filicidal participants employed dominant discourses of gender and a hegemonic notion of masculinity to define their identities and those of their partners/wives, and predict their performance of gender with their partners/wives. Furthermore, FDA might have enabled an exploration of how the filicidal participants perceived power relations in their intimate/marital relationships, and perhaps gendered violence in their interpretation of relationship problems which perhaps involved intimate partner violence.

FDA was not employed because the dissertation was not only interested in examining how discourses of gender impact on the filicidal participants' construction of their identities as family men and their relationship with their partners/wives, and most importantly their understanding of the use of violence in intimate/marital relationships. The researcher anticipated that the effect of dominant constructions of masculinity-femininity on the filicidal participants' relationship with their partners/wives might be evident in their overall experience and construing of problems leading to the filicide-homicide.

**2.4.6.2 Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA).** IPA is interested in interpreting and understanding people's lived experiences and how they make meaning of that particular experience (Smith et al., 2009). An IPA researcher adopts an interpretative stance in which she interprets particular people's interpretations of their particular lived

experiences (Smith et al., 2009). IPA posits that a lived experience has a significance in the life of the person living it. Therefore, the method endeavours to have a detailed understanding of how the person is experiencing his/her experience and how he/she is making sense of what is happening to him/her (Smith et al., 2009). The current research used the analytic method to explore in detail how the filicidal and family participants experienced and made sense of their lived experience of paternal filicide.

*2.4.6.2.1 Theoretical concepts.* Phenomenology, hermeneutics, and idiography philosophical approaches underpin IPA (Smith et al., 2009). From a phenomenological perspective, a person is considered as an inclusive part of the world in which he/she is entwined and embedded (Larkin, Watts, & Clifton, 2006). An IPA researcher, from a phenomenological approach, does not remove the participant from the socio-cultural and relational context in which he/she is experiencing (Larkin et al., 2006). This is because IPA recognises that the uniquely lived experience and meanings of that experience are embedded in the person's embodied and situated relationship (Smith et al., 2009). Therefore, IPA aims to understand the person's experience and meaning-making in their particular context (Smith et al., 2009).

“Hermeneutics is the theory of interpretation” (Smith et al., 2009, p. 21) in which an IPA researcher attempts to make meaning of what Conrad (1987, as cited in Smith & Osborn, 2008, p. 53) referred to as “an insider's perspective”. The researcher is interested in examining how the investigated phenomenon appears and interpreting its appearance (Smith et al., 2009). To gain an understanding of the phenomenon, the researcher engages in “double hermeneutics” (p. 3) in which she interprets the participant's interpretations of his/her experience (Smith et al., 2009). The researcher's interpretations should reflect the

participant's meanings. Therefore, it is imperative for the researcher to be reflexive to ensure that her preconceived assumptions and anticipations and personal experiences do not contaminate the interpretation process (Smith et al., 2009). Reflexivity is discussed in *Reflexivity: Spying on myself*.

IPA is idiographic in which it places emphasis on the particular instead of the general (Larkin & Thompson, 2012), and therefore endeavours to obtain a detailed understanding of a particular experience as lived by particular people in a particular context (Smith et al., 2009). A small and homogeneous sample which is purposively sampled is prominent in an IPA study in order to have an in-depth analysis of the participants' lived experiences and interpretations of the investigated phenomenon (Smith & Osborn, 2008). An IPA researcher recognises that although the participants have a shared experience, perhaps their meanings will have similarities and differences because their experience is relational and uniquely embodied and situated in their relationship to the world (Smith et al., 2009).

*2.4.6.2.2 Doing IPA.* The transcribed data of the filicidal participants and some of the nine extended family members were first analysed using IPA. Open-ended questions which allowed the participants to share their personal experiences with the researcher helped to fulfil the phenomenological requirements of IPA (Willig, 2013). The closed-ended questions used for probing also contributed to this process by encouraging the participants to elaborate on their interpretations.

Study two involved nine extended family members of the four filicidal participants. However, it was impossible to obtain a homogeneous sample of the extended family members because of the heterogeneity across the families. Therefore, to maintain

homogeneity as is required by IPA, the data of two mothers, Mary and June, of Joe and Sly, respectively, and two sisters, April and May, of Joe and Neo, respectively, were analysed separately. The small sample size was consistent with the methodological requirements of IPA because it allowed a rich exploration of the similarities and differences within the data (Smith et al., 2009). The personal meanings and construction processes of the remaining five participants alongside the two mothers and sisters were only analysed using the personal construct analytic methods.

Study two, which focused on the two mothers' and sisters' understanding of the filicide-homicide and interpretations of the filicidal participants' experiences of the killing represents an original application of IPA. Furthermore, study two is also original because some parts of the analysis of the two sisters' experiences were analysed and reported in a way that captured experiences across different time points, which is not characteristic of IPA. However, IPA has been previously used in a study to capture experiences of participants across time, namely women who grew up with mothers suffering from depression (Van Parys, Smith, & Rober, 2014).

IPA of study one and two comprised two stages, an individual case analysis and a cross-case analysis.

*2.4.6.2.2.1 Individual case analysis.* Taking into consideration the idiographic nature of IPA, each case in study one and two was firstly analysed individually. The transcribed data were transferred to a table consisting of five columns: original transcript, explanatory comments on the far-right column, codes, emerging themes, and superordinate themes on the far-left column.

Following Smith et al.'s (2009) analytic stages, the researcher initially immersed herself in the data by repeatedly listening to audio recordings, and reading and re-reading the transcripts. This was followed by an exploratory analysis level in which the researcher examined the semantic contents, use of language, and the participants' understanding of the events prior the filicide-homicide. Furthermore, she explored the data for similarities, differences, and contradictions. This process was interpretative and in line with the hermeneutic tenet of IPA (Smith et al., 2009) because the researcher interpreted the participants' interpretations of the events leading to the filicide-homicide, and their understanding of the killing. Codes were kept close to the data and in some instances the participants' verbatim extracts were coded as in-vivo codes.

The next step involved a higher level of interpretation in which the exploratory comments were analysed to develop emergent themes. Although the researcher moved away from the transcript and focused on the initial codes, she remained closely involved in the participants' experiences to ensure that the emergent themes reflected the participants' meanings. The emergent themes were ordered chronologically, and patterns between the themes were identified. The themes which were related were clustered and developed into sub-ordinate themes, which were then clustered according to their relationship and developed into super-ordinate themes. This process is referred to as abstraction (Smith et al., 2009). However, themes which opposed other themes were also clustered, and Smith et al. (2009) referred to this as polarisation. To ensure that the developed themes were grounded in the transcripts, brief quotations which supported the themes were extracted from the data and presented in a table with their page and line numbers.

*2.4.6.2.2.2 Cross-case analysis.* This stage involves a group level analysis in which the developed themes from the four individual cases of the filicidal participants were combined. Similarly, the developed themes from the two individual cases of the mothers and sisters were respectively amalgamated. The themes of the offenders, mothers, and sisters were then respectively clustered according to their patterns and relation to each other and developed into super-ordinate themes which were grouped according to their similarities and developed into master themes. A table of master and super-ordinate themes and brief quotations extracted from the transcripts was designed and used to compile a comprehensive report of the offenders', mothers', and sisters' experiences and meanings of the filicide-homicide. See some parts of the analysis process of study one and two in Appendix F1 and F2, respectively. Some extracts from Joe's transcribed data was used to illustrate the analytic process.

*2.4.6.3 Personal construct analytic methods.* Personal construct analytic methods were used to systematically analyse the individual cases of the filicidal and family participants which were followed by a cross-case analysis. The systematic analysis was considered to provide an original contribution to the methodological approach in personal construct theory. The individual case analysis comprised diagnostic construct analysis, categories analysis of Experience Cycle Methodology, and an analysis of the Perceiver Element Grid and ABC model. Provided as an illustration is some parts of Joe's, filicidal participant, and Mary's, family participant, analysis process in Appendix G1 and G2, respectively.

#### 2.4.6.3.1 *Individual case analysis.*

2.4.6.3.1.1 *Diagnostic construct analysis.* The analysis examined the construction processes of the filicidal and family participants. It employed a table of some of Kelly's (1955) and McCoy's (1977) constructs which were relevant to the construction of paternal filicide. The table consisted of five sub-headings, four of which were proposed by Winter and Procter (2014) in terms of Kelly's (1955) diagnostic constructs. The diagnostic constructs can be used to provide a formulation of a client's predicament (Winter & Procter, 2014) which is what the dissertation aims to achieve in formulating the participants' filicidal acts.

- Covert construing, which involves construing at a low cognitive awareness, and comprises preverbal constructs, which have no consistent verbal symbols, submergence (see page 24)<sup>3</sup>, and suspension, in which constructions which are incompatible are held in abeyance.
- Structure of construing, which involves the hierarchical organisation of constructions based on their importance to an individual, and consists of superordinate (see page 24), subordinate (which occur as elements in the superordinate construct), peripheral (change in which does not result in a significant change of the core structure), and core constructs (see page 24).
- Strategies of construing consist of dilation (see page 26), constriction (see page 26), and loose and tight construing (the constructs are defined in page 25), which

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<sup>3</sup> The constructs were defined earlier in the dissertation in the referred pages.

may be used in an attempt to avoid invalidations and incompatibilities in construing.

- Control comprises the Circumspection-Preemption-Control (C-P-C) Cycle involved in the decision-making process.
- Transitions in construing which as termed by Kelly (1955) involve threat (see page 26), fear (an awareness of a possible incidental change in one's identity), guilt (see page 26), anxiety (see page 27), aggression (see page 27), and hostility (see page 25). McCoy's (1977) constructions of emotions involved, anger (see page 27), shame (see page 28), love (an awareness of one's core structure being validated), happiness (an awareness of part of one's core structure being validated), sadness ("an awareness of the invalidation of implications of a portion or all of the core structure" (p. 111), satisfaction (a feeling experienced when one's predictions and ability to predict are validated), self-confidence (awareness of not being dislodged from one's core role structure), startle/surprise (a sudden need to construe events), and contempt/disgust (an awareness of someone's core role being different to one's own), and contentment (an awareness of being able to construe events).

The transcripts were analysed for evidence supportive of the constructs. The quotes were extracted from the transcripts, placed under headings referring to the relevant constructs, and explained. See template for the diagnostic construct analysis in Table 6.

Table 6: *Diagnostic construct analysis template*

**Covert Construing**

| <b>PREVERBAL CONSTRUCT</b> | <b>SUBMERGENCE</b> | <b>SUSPENSION</b> | <b>EXPLANATORY COMMENTS</b> |
|----------------------------|--------------------|-------------------|-----------------------------|
|                            |                    |                   |                             |

**Structure of Construing**

| <b>SUPERORDINATE CONSTRUCT</b> | <b>SUBORDINATE CONSTRUCT</b> | <b>CORE CONSTRUCT</b> | <b>PERIPHERAL CONSTRUCT</b> | <b>EXPLANATORY COMMENTS</b> |
|--------------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
|                                |                              |                       |                             |                             |

**Strategies of Construing**

| <b>DILATION</b> | <b>CONSTRUCTION</b> | <b>TIGHT CONSTRUCT</b> | <b>LOOSE CONSTRUCT</b> | <b>EXPLANATORY COMMENTS</b> |
|-----------------|---------------------|------------------------|------------------------|-----------------------------|
|                 |                     |                        |                        |                             |

**Transitions in Construing**

| <b>THREAT</b>  | <b>FEAR</b>       | <b>GUILT</b>     | <b>EXPLANATORY COMMENTS</b> |
|----------------|-------------------|------------------|-----------------------------|
|                |                   |                  |                             |
| <b>ANXIETY</b> | <b>AGGRESSION</b> | <b>HOSTILITY</b> | <b>EXPLANATORY COMMENTS</b> |
|                |                   |                  |                             |

| <b>ANGER</b>        | <b>SHAME</b>           | <b>LOVE</b>             | <b>HAPPINESS</b>        | <b>SADNESS</b>     | <b>EXPLANATORY COMMENTS</b> |
|---------------------|------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------|-----------------------------|
|                     |                        |                         |                         |                    |                             |
| <b>SATISFACTION</b> | <b>SELF-CONFIDENCE</b> | <b>STARTLE/SURPRISE</b> | <b>CONTEMPT/DISGUST</b> | <b>CONTENTMENT</b> | <b>EXPLANATORY COMMENTS</b> |
|                     |                        |                         |                         |                    |                             |

**Control**

**Circumspection-Preemption-Control Cycle**

| <b>CIRCUMSPECTION PHASE</b> | <b>PREEMPTION PHASE</b> | <b>CONTROL PHASE</b> | <b>EXPLANATORY COMMENTS</b> |
|-----------------------------|-------------------------|----------------------|-----------------------------|
|                             |                         |                      |                             |

*2.4.6.3.1.2 Analytic categories of the Experience Cycle Methodology.* The Experience Cycle Methodology (ECM) can be used to qualitatively and quantitatively analyse data (e.g., Oades, 1999; Oades & Patterson, 2016; Oades & Viney, 2012; Zarroug, 2011). Each phase of the Experience Cycle except for the encounter phase can be coded into two categories (Oades & Viney, 2012). The sub-categories tight or loose predictions in the anticipation phase can be rated 1 or 2, respectively. The person's investment which might be high or low which indicates how much the anticipations of the event mattered might receive a score of 1 or 2, respectively. The validation or invalidation sub-categories of the confirmation/disconfirmation phase might be scored 1 or 2, respectively. A significant or minimal construct revision might receive a score of 1 or 2, respectively, based on the validation or invalidation of the anticipations.

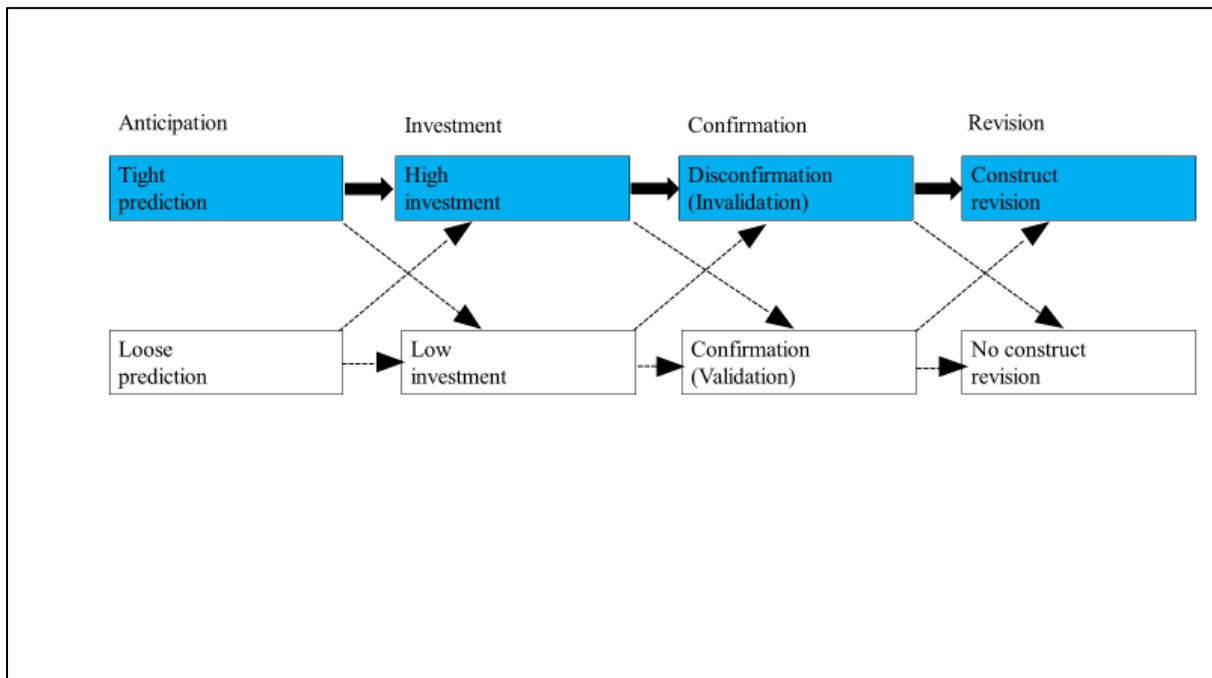
ECM was used to qualitatively analyse the filicidal participants' anticipations, investment, whether anticipations were validated or invalidated, and whether they revised their construct systems based on the validation or invalidation of the anticipations. The analysis was categorised into engaging in an intimate/marital relationship, constructions of fatherhood, and the killing of the child/children. Furthermore, the instrument was used to analyse the family participants' anticipations and construing of the offenders' anticipations, investment, and possible modification of and construed revision of the construct system based on the outcome of the anticipations and construed anticipations. The analysis was divided into construing the offender's intimate/marital relationship, construing the couple's relationship with their child/children, and construing the killing. Quotes were extracted from the transcripts to support the category groupings. See template in Table 7.

People who tightly anticipate and invest highly in an event might be more likely to revise their construct systems when experiencing invalidations. See the “construct revision pathway” (Oades & Viney, 2012, p. 141) in Figure 10. The dotted arrows indicate pathways that are less likely to lead to construct revision.

Table 7: *Template for the category groupings of Experience Cycle Methodology. Adapted from Oades and Viney (2012)*

| PHASE              | CATEGORY GROUPING        |                            | QUOTES |
|--------------------|--------------------------|----------------------------|--------|
| Anticipation       | (1) Tight predictions    | (2) Loose predictions      |        |
| Investment         | (1) High investment      | (2) Low investment         |        |
| (Dis) Confirmation | (1) Validation           | (2) Invalidation           |        |
| Construct revision | (1) Significant revision | (2) No or minimal revision |        |

Figure 10: *Construct revision pathway. Source: Oades and Viney (2012, p. 141)*



2.4.6.3.1.3 *Perceiver Element Grid (PEG)*. This qualitative grid was used to analyse data from the PEG interview schedule and the semi-structured interviews of the filicidal and

family participants. The analysis occurred at three interpersonal construing levels, monadic construing, which involves construing someone's construing processes, dyadic construing, in which the relationship and interaction between two people are construed, and triadic construing, which involves construing the relationship and interaction between three people (Procter, 2014). The notions of individuality, sociality, and commonality, in Kellyan terms, were analysed.

- *Filicidal participants.* The monadic analysis involved examining the participant's perceptions of himself before and after the killing, his views of his nuclear family, views of his nuclear family's perceptions of him, the perceptions of his extended family, and his perceptions of an ideal family. The dyadic and triadic analysis involved analysing the offender's relationship with his partner/wife, child/children, extended family, and family-in-law.
- *Family participants.* The analysis at a monadic level involved analysing the family member's perceptions of the offender before and after the killing, perceptions of the offender's nuclear family, perceptions of the offender's nuclear family's views of the offender before the filicide-homicide, how the family member perceived himself/herself, his/her perceptions of the extended family, and perceptions of an ideal family. The dyadic and triadic analysis involved examining the family member's relationship with the offender, his partner/wife, child/children, other extended family members, and family-in-law.

2.4.6.3.1.4 *The ABC model.* Analysis of data from the ABC model interview schedule of the filicidal participants involved exploration of the offender's choice to kill by

considering his views of the advantages and disadvantages of killing and not killing. Similarly, the family participants' views of the whether it might have been possible to intervene in the couple's problems to perhaps prevent the killing were examined by considering their construing of the advantages and disadvantages of intervening or not intervening.

*2.4.6.3.2 Cross-case analysis.* The cross-case (group) analysis of the filicidal and family participants was based on evidence from the individual case analysis. The filicidal participants' group analysis was classified according to the domains, *Engaging in an intimate/marital relationship*, *Constructions of fatherhood*, and *The killing of the child/children*. The family participants' group analysis was categorised under the domains, *Construing the offender's intimate/marital relationship*, *Construing the couple's relationship with their child/children*, and *Construing the killing*. The cross-case analysis adopted a triangulation approach in which it drew upon all the personal construct methods (diagnostic construct analysis, ECM analytic categories, PEG, and the ABC model) used in the dissertation. The triangulation approach in the analysis enhanced the credibility of the research. The tenets of personal construct theory, anticipation, validations/invalidations, covert construing, the structure of construing, strategies of construing, transitions in construing, and Circumspection-Preemption-Control Cycle, were used as broad themes to guide the analytic process. Central themes and sub-themes were identified and developed from the broad themes.

In the theme, *Anticipation*, evidence from the ECM analytic categories was amalgamated with evidence from the diagnostic construct analysis to develop a central theme

of the nature of the participants'<sup>4</sup> anticipations. In the filicidal participants, evidence in the central theme was clustered in terms of the construct dimension of tight-loose anticipations of the intimate/marital relationship and relationship with the child/children from which sub-themes were developed. The analysis focused on imbalances, in Winter's (2003) use of the term (see section 4.2.1.3 in clinical implications), in the way that the filicidal participants anticipated their interpersonal relationships. Although an optimally functioning person engages in a cyclical and balanced interplay between the contrasting construing strategies, a person with a disorder (see section 4.2.1.3 in clinical implications), in Kelly's (1991) sense, may exclusively use one strategy (Winter, 2003).

In the family participants, evidence of the anticipation of the couple's intimate/marital relationship and the parental relationship was clustered in terms of the construct dimensions of success-fail and good-bad parents, respectively. Sub-themes were identified and developed from the respective clusters. Furthermore, evidence in the central theme was clustered according to the family participants' construing of the couple's anticipations of their relationship and relationship with their child/children, and sub-themes were respectively developed.

In the theme, *Validation/invalidation*, evidence from the analytic categories of the ECM was substantiated with evidence from the monadic and dyadic interpersonal construing in the PEG to develop a central theme of the validation/invalidation of the participants' constructions. In the filicidal participants, evidence in the central theme was then clustered according to the emotional reactions to the validations/invalidations, which were analysed in the diagnostic

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<sup>4</sup> The term participants used without a distinction between filicidal or family refers to both the filicidal and family participants.

construct analysis of the individual cases, and sub-themes were developed thereof. The analytic process was based on McCoy's (1981) elaboration of Kelly's (1955) view of emotion as emanating from construing of transitions, in which McCoy (1981) associated negative emotions with invalidations and positive emotions with validations. Therefore, Cummins' (2003) and McCoy's (1977) notion of anger, which is associated with invalidations of constructions, was one of the sub-themes.

In the family participants, evidence in the central theme about the validation/invalidation of the construing of the couple's relationship and the parental relationship was clustered in terms of the construct dimensions of success-fail and good-bad parents, respectively. Sub-themes were identified and respectively developed.

In the theme, *Covert construing*, there was no substantial evidence in the diagnostic construct analysis and the interpersonal construing analysis in the PEGs of the individual cases which indicated the filicidal participants' lack of awareness of problems. Therefore, a central theme and sub-themes were not developed.

In the family participants, substantial evidence was extracted from the diagnostic construct analysis and the monadic, dyadic, and triadic interpersonal construing analysis in the PEG to develop a central theme of the family participants' lack of awareness of the couple's problems, *Submergence of the negative construct pole*. Evidence in the central theme was clustered according to the monadic construing of the filicidal father and the nature of his intimate/marital relationship from which sub-themes were respectively developed.

In the theme, *Structure of construing*, evidence extracted from the diagnostic construct analysis was substantiated with evidence from the monadic construing in the PEG about how the filicidal participants construed themselves before the killing to develop a central theme of their superordinate and core constructs.

There was no substantial evidence about the central dimensions of meaning in the diagnostic construct analysis of the individual cases of the family participants. Therefore, a central theme and sub-themes were not identified and developed.

In the theme, *Strategies of construing*, a central theme was developed from evidence obtained from the diagnostic construct analysis on the construing and coping strategies of the participants. Evidence in the central theme was clustered in terms of the construct dimension of dilation-constriction and oscillation between the two strategies from which a sub-theme was developed. The clustering of evidence was based on the argument that an optimally functioning person will have a balanced movement between the converse strategies (Walker & Winter, 2007; Winter, 2003), as was previously discussed, and that a rapid oscillation between the strategies may be problematic (Winter & Procter, 2014).

Furthermore, in the family participants, evidence from the central theme was clustered in terms of the family participants' construing of the filicidal father's strategies of coping with problems.

In the theme, *Transitions in construing*, evidence extracted from the diagnostic construct analysis was used to develop central themes related to the emotions associated with transitions. In the central theme, *Hostility*, in the filicidal participants, evidence was clustered

according to the purpose of the hostile violence, from which sub-themes were developed. In the family participants, evidence was clustered according to the construed purpose of the hostile violence, from which sub-themes were developed.

However, in other emotions associated with transitions such as anger, threat, anxiety, guilt, and shame, which were identified as central themes, the central themes were developed by combining evidence from the diagnostic construct analysis and the interpersonal construing analysis in the PEG. Evidence in the central themes was clustered accordingly from which sub-themes were developed.

The broad theme, *Circumspection-Preemption-Control Cycle*, was based on Kelly's (1991, p. 258) view that "all disorders of construction are disorders which involve faulty control". Faulty control involves rumination in the circumspection phase or a foreshortened exploration in the circumspection phase in which the person plunges into the preemption phase before making a choice (Kelly, 1991). Evidence obtained from the diagnostic construct analysis was used to develop a central theme relating to the decision to kill in the filicidal participants and the construed decision to kill in the family participants. Evidence in the central theme was clustered in terms of the construct dimension prolong-foreshorten exploration involved in the decision to commit filicide-homicide from which sub-themes were identified and developed. Furthermore, evidence in the central theme was clustered according to the evidence from the ABC model to develop a sub-theme of the implications of the decision to kill.

**2.4.6.4 Amalgamating IPA and personal construct analysis methods.** IPA and personal construct analytic methods were amalgamated. The two approaches were compatible because they are idiographic in that they emphasise personal meanings and experiences,

which is consistent with Kelly's (1955) Individuality Corollary. The shared idiographic quality allowed for the research objectives to be fulfilled by enabling an elaborate understanding of the filicidal participants' construing of the adverse effects of the intimate/marital problems on their sense of selves in which the self was construed changing behaviourally and emotionally. Furthermore, it enabled an in-depth exploration of the filicidal participants' emotional and behavioural reaction to the invalidating and failing intimate/marital relationships, which posed a threat to their identity as family men. The researcher was able to have a deeper understanding of the filicidal participants' construing of their act of killing, its painful and irreversible effects including the impact on their families and relationships, and most importantly on their identities in which they had to subsume the constructions of the new self who killed into their construct systems.

Moreover, exploring the family participants' unique meanings of extreme violence within families, as is the aim of IPA interviewing (Smith et al., 2009), enabled an understanding of complex relationship issues which may lead some fathers to kill their child/children including their partners/wives and afterwards attempt/commit suicide. The researcher was able to have an understanding of the painful lived experience of filicide-homicide, which may include attempted suicide, on families, the complexities of the grieving process, the impact on the family's relationship with the filicidal family member, and the intricacy of construing the filicidal family member as an acceptable person.

Combining IPA and personal construct methodological instruments added to the triangulation of methods in the research which further enhanced the credibility of the research. The achievement of credibility was validated by some of the themes analysed in IPA supporting the analysed themes in personal construct analysis, which enhanced the

understanding of the participants' overall experiences and construing of the filicide-homicide. Therefore, some of the IPA analysed themes are discussed in collaboration with the concepts of personal construct theory in the discussion chapter.

IPA was chosen because it not only acknowledges the importance of meaning but it also “allows a hermeneutics of questioning, of critical engagement, as the reader may well ask questions and posit meaning which the participants would be unlikely, unable, or even unwilling to see or acknowledge themselves” (Smith, 2004, p. 46). Considering the sensitive nature of the research, the hermeneutic nature of IPA enabled the researcher to ask sensitive questions, probe, interpret, and reflect the interpreted meanings to the filicidal and family participants to uncover meaning which the participants might have been unwilling or unable discuss of their own accord. The researcher was able to critically engage with the filicidal participants, in which some participants explicitly spoke about the sensitive issues they experienced in their intimate/marital and family relationships, and also the witnessed greatly saddening events in the interaction of their partners/wives with the children. Furthermore, the researcher uncovered that although most family participants spoke about not knowing that their filicidal family member had intimate/marital relationship problems, they appeared to have some insight into the issues which they did not seem to consider to be of a serious nature. Therefore, it can be argued that the in-depth exploration of the individual's experiences and meaning-making within the IPA interviews and the richness and depth of the IPA analysis enriched, elaborated, supported and illuminated specific aspects of the personal construct analysis in line with the research objectives.

In contrast, Kelly's diagnostic construct analysis of personal construct theory was employed because it allowed an analysis of the structure of the filicidal and family

participants' construct systems in which their processes of construction were explored. The researcher was able to analyse the filicidal participants' process of meaning-making of encountered intimate/marital relationship problems and processes of deciding to kill. The diagnostic construct analysis enabled insight into the filicidal participants' hierarchical organisation of constructions, construing strategies, and transitions in construing.

Furthermore, the diagnostic construct analysis enabled an analysis of the processes of construction of the family participants which contributed to most of them not intervening in the couples' problems and preventing the filicide-homicide if prevention might have been possible. Most importantly the researcher was further able to understand the filicidal participants' construct systems by interpreting the family participants' interpretations of the filicidal participants' ways of construing.

In addition, the notion of sociality, in Kelly's sense, enabled the researcher to meet the research aims by understanding the filicidal participants' ways of construing in their dyadic intimate/marital relationships and discovering that lack of sociality and commonality were at the root of their problems.

Therefore, it may be argued that integrating IPA and personal construct analytic methods enhances aspects of the strengths of the methods and hence enables a richer and detailed understanding of the phenomenon of filicide. Furthermore, amalgamating IPA and personal construct analytic methods contributes to methodological knowledge. Such an integrated approach was used by Dallos and Denford (2008), Turpin, Dallos, Owen, and Thomas (2009), and Yorke and Dallos (2015). The latter study is relevant to this research as it explored anger in young offenders using IPA and repertory grid analysis.

**2.4.7 Credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability.** Credibility is the extent to which the findings represent the participants' views (Elliott, 1999). Similar to the participants, the psychological processes of researchers are influenced by their anticipations (Kelly, 1955), which might lead the researcher to contaminate her interpretations of the data (Viney & Nagy, 2012). Therefore, credibility was achieved through triangulation, discussing the research with the supervisory team, and presenting to peers at academic platforms (Shenton, 2004).

Transferability, the extent to which findings can be transferred to another context or participants (Viney & Nagy, 2012). Consistent with Viney and Nagy's (2012) suggestion, transferability was ensured in the current research by selecting a diverse sample of the filicidal and family participants (i.e., age, racial, ethnicity, cultural, marital status, occupational, and the nature of the committed filicide-homicide). Additionally, by giving a thick description of the context in which the findings were obtained (Viney & Nagy, 2012), and doing purposive sampling (Shenton, 2004).

Dependability concerns whether similar findings would be obtained if the study was conducted with the same/similar participants, in the same/similar context, and with the same/similar methods (Shenton, 2004). However, the individuality of participants' constructions which might change depending on their validations or invalidations could lead to inconsistencies in findings (Bannister & Fransella, 1986). Therefore, dependability was ensured by giving detailed information on the selection of participants (Viney & Nagy, 2012) and keeping an audit trail of data collection, processing, and analysis (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Confirmability, the extent to which the study's conclusions might be replicated and verified by another researcher, was ensured by keeping an audit trail of data collection, processing, and analysis (Viney & Nagy, 2012), and a reflexive journal (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). See *Reflexivity: Spying on myself*.

**2.4.8 Ethical considerations.** The research project was granted ethical clearance by the University of Hertfordshire and the Department of Correctional Services, South Africa, see Appendix H and I, respectively. The ethical issues discussed below were considered.

**2.4.8.1 Informed consent.** As discussed earlier, informed consent was sought from the filicidal and family participants who were given the PIS and consent forms, and verbally and in writing informed about the nature and objectives of the research. They were informed that an audio recorder would be used with their permission for transcription purposes. The participants were informed that they did not have to participate and could withdraw from the study at any time and that their recorded material would be destroyed and not used in the research. They were assured that the recorded data would be securely stored and destroyed in five years, and that the interviews would be discussed with the supervisory team.

**2.4.8.2 Confidentiality.** The participants were guaranteed confidentiality except when they were suspected to be a danger to themselves or society. The recorded interviews were uploaded onto a computer and stored in an encrypted file, and the material in the audio recorder was erased. Data was transcribed and the hard-copies were stored in a steel cabinet and e-copies were saved in an encrypted file. The participants were informed that the supervisory team would be the only ones who have access to the recorded material.

**2.4.8.3 Anonymity.** The participants were informed that the research is for academic purposes, and therefore the findings would be reported in the dissertation and presented in a verbal and written format on academic platforms. However, pseudonyms were used and information that would reveal their identities was excluded. Anonymised transcripts are included as an audit trail.

**2.4.8.4 Potential risk.** To minimise the risk involved in working with offenders, the interview occurred in a consultation room that had a panic button and glass windows so that the officials could be aware of the events happening in the room.

The filicidal and family participants were informed that they might experience emotional distress due to the sensitivity of the research. The filicidal and family participants who appeared to be distressed were debriefed and given the opportunity to stop the interview. Furthermore, the filicidal participants were advised to fill a request form requesting to see a Psychologist at the Correctional Centre if they wanted psychological assistance. Similarly, the family participants were informed to make a psychological appointment at the local clinic or hospital in case they wanted to see a Psychologist at a later stage. The filicidal and family participants were informed that they would not endure financial costs because psychological services rendered at government institutions are free.

**2.4.9 Reflexivity: Spying on myself.** Reflexivity in personal construct theory goes beyond self-reflection, in which a researcher becomes aware of her role and possible influence on the research (Banister, Burman, Parker, Taylor, & Tindall, 1994). The researcher must be willing to see herself or part of herself from the perspective of the theory used in the research (Hennessy, 2009). Therefore, reflexivity involves self-reference (Oliver &

Landfield, 1962). For instance, like some filicidal participants who seemed to use violence to extort respect, I came close to assaulting a former colleague whom I construed as disrespectful, as proposed in this dissertation. Unlike the offenders, I engaged in the C-P-C Cycle, which allowed me to reach the decision to report the situation to the Manager. However, this shows, as asserted by Kelly (1955), that researchers/practitioners are not different to their participants/clients in that they are both aiming to construe their worlds, themselves, and other people.

Drawing on the notion of sociality (Kelly, 1955), researchers and participants may be construed as playing roles. Since their construing of each other's constructions might influence their choices and behaviour, the researcher must be aware of the constructions that she uses to construe the participants (Procter, 2009). She must be self-critical (Neimeyer, 1985), asking herself, 'Why am I asking particular questions?'; Why am I addressing the participants in a certain way? For instance, I addressed the filicidal and male family participants as 'ntate', a South African Tswana word for 'sir'. The offenders' mothers and the female family participants who were older than me were referred to as 'mama', which means 'mother'. The other female family participants who were younger than me were addressed as 'ausi', a South African Tswana word for 'sister'. The words 'ntate', 'mama', and 'ausi' in the Batswana South African culture shows respect, as proposed in this dissertation. Although 'ausi' is used to address an older sister, I wanted to give respect to the young female family participants irrespective of their age. Addressing the participants with respect seemed to have a positive effect on our playing of roles, and therefore possibly influenced the research process. The use of cultural terms is elaborated in *Encountering on the opposite side of the table*.

A reflexive journal and research notes (Ahern, 1999) helped me to minimise contaminating the researched phenomenon by becoming aware of my experiences, interpretations, and emotions, which are discussed in *First encounter with personal construct theory*, *Encountering from the opposite side of the table*, and *Feeling anxious*.

**2.4.9.1 *First encounter with personal construct theory*.** Embarking on a PhD journey was not easy in that I struggled for two years to get a prospective supervisor. I submitted the research proposal draft, which I worked on for two years, to several prospective supervisors, who all turned me down. I chose the construct pole of perseverance versus giving up and carried the draft copy wherever I went like it was a 'dompas', an infamous word for a South African identity document which Black South Africans were required to have in their possession during the Apartheid era. I became aggressive, in Kellyan terms, by physically and electronically presenting the proposal to professors at local and international Universities. However, my efforts were invalidated. My behaviour was hostile in that I tried to validate a dream that was repeatedly invalidated which resulted in a perpetuation of anger in McCoy's (1977) sense.

The hostile perseverance was validated at the 30<sup>th</sup> International Congress of Psychology in Cape Town where I met Professor David Winter, who presented a personal construct paper on victims of the civil war in Sierra Leone. Before approaching Professor Winter, I formulated constructions of him as willing to give people an opportunity to advance in life and not quick to draw on the constructions of rejection. Additionally, I construed that we shared commonality concerning researching extreme violence. Therefore, I predicted that he might agree to supervise the research. Although Professor Winter validated my constructions and predictions, he requested that I use personal construct theory. I had a

problem with this because of my limited understanding of the theory and because I had already decided on a theoretical framework. However, I assumed the submission pole in Ugazio's (2013) power-submission polarity of the semantics of power by choosing not to oppose his request. Although I perceived submission as a dislodgement from my core role, I felt that I had no choice if I wanted to study for a PhD.

Learning Kelly's (1955) personal construct theory induced anxiety because the theory lay outside the range of convenience of my construct system. I experienced Professor Winter's (1992) *Personal construct psychology in clinical practice* as unconstruable. Even though I was tempted to constrict the book from my perceptual field by not reading it, I knew that constriction was not going to benefit me. However, my construct system appeared to be modulated because of various attempts to make sense of the theory.

**2.4.9.2 Encountering from the opposite side of the table.** This theme focuses on my experience of slot rattling, feelings of guilt, and feelings of anger as described by Cummins (2003).

My first playing of roles with offenders was as a Clinical Psychologist at the Department of Correctional Services, where I occupied the rank of an Assistant Director. I assumed Ugazio's (2013) power pole in comparison to the offenders. However, since power is fluid and exists through actions and relations between people (Foucault, 1982), I slot rattled when I became a student and construed from the opposite side of the table when playing roles with filicidal and family participants. I perceived the participants as assuming Ugazio's (2013) power pole in which they could refuse consent and withdraw from the study, and therefore chose to address them as 'ntate', 'mama', and 'ausi'.

Referring to the offenders as 'ntate' did not evoke in me threat in a sense used by Kelly (1955, pp. 505-506),

*“People are threatened by ‘evildoers.’ ... The ‘evildoer’ exemplifies what we might do if we dared, or what we might be if we behaved childishly, or what we would have been if we had not tried so hard to do better. We dare not interact with him on common ground lest we slip back into the unwanted ways. In order to take protective steps against the threat that his presence arouses within us we take symbolic measures called ‘punishment’ against him. By such measures we either destroy or symbolize the destruction of the core relationship of the ‘evildoer’ with ourselves. That may make us feel a little safer from the looming shadow of ourselves as ‘evildoers.’”*

My experience appeared to be different to Winter's (2009) encounter with Ian Brady, during which he seemed to ruminate on how to address the offender. I anticipated that using 'ntate' might reduce the offenders' feelings of guilt which might have been induced by punishment in a sense used by Kelly (1955), and therefore result in them being open. My approach perhaps invalidated the filicidal and family participants' anticipations of me especially since they seemed to be judged and rejected by their families-in-law and society. The social judgement and rejection appeared to be a form of punishment. Punishers might use punishment to avoid feeling threat by distinguishing themselves from “evildoers” (Kelly, 1955, p. 505). However, as evident in the dissertation punishment might not only be directed towards the offenders but also their family members.

Following Kelly's (1955) viewpoint that researchers/practitioners should perceive their participants/clients the same way they see themselves, I chose to treat the filicidal and family participants with dignity. They seemed to reciprocate my behaviour by addressing me as 'ausi' and 'ngwana waka', a Tswana word for 'my child' which shows respect in the Batswana culture.

I realised during my role as a Clinical Psychologist that offenders might be deceptive, which was also reported by Klaver, Lee, and Hart (2007). My anticipations of the filicidal participants being deceptive appeared to result in me being suspicious of some of their statements. I also suspected the family participants of sometimes concealing the truth to protect the offenders. This supported Kelly's (1955) view that similar to the participants, the researchers' anticipations influence their psychological processes. Therefore, I struggled to maintain a credulous approach, in which a researcher acknowledges the participant's views to have an intrinsic truth (Kelly, 1955).

Although I complied with the ethics regulations and commitments approved by the University's ethics committee, when transcribing I perceived myself as not having been genuinely sensitive towards the filicidal and family participants' emotions during the interviews. Additionally, I construed myself to have lacked authenticity when debriefing them. Even though I asked them if they wanted to stop when they became emotionally distressed, I did not want them to discontinue the interview because I had so few participants who agreed to participate in the research. The construed lack of authenticity and sometimes not being credulous seemed to instigate my feelings of guilt during transcription and data analysis. I saw myself as having been selfish in prioritising getting data over the participants' feelings.

Moreover, I sometimes struggled with being sympathetic towards the filicidal participants. My father was murdered when I was young, and therefore I grew up feeling robbed and yearned for my father's protection. I perceived the filicidal participants to invalidate my fatherhood constructions, which resulted in me feeling angry in Cummins' (2003) terms. Although adopting a credulous approach does not imply accepting the constructions of the person you are credulous with (Kelly, 1955), I struggled to adhere to Kelly's (1961) suggestion to understand the personal constructions and anticipations of people committing extreme violence, whether to self or others, so as to construe their choice of violence. Similarly, Winter (2007) also spoke of initially having struggled to be credulous towards his participants who committed serial killings. Winter (2007) highlighted that the limits of credulity might become apparent during work with offenders who have been found to have a likelihood of being deceptive (Klaver et al., 2007) and making false confessions (Gudjonsson & Sigurdsson, 1994). Other limits of credulity seem to be evident in some people condemning work on people who kill, and failing to understand the killer's constructions and why his/her construing processes should be presented on professional platforms (Winter, 2009). However, research on extremely violent people may lead to a development of effective interventions (Winter, 2009). Therefore, doing reflexive bracketing, in which the researcher becomes aware of her experiences to minimise their influence on the researched phenomenon, was vital (Ahern, 1999; Gearing, 2004).

**2.4.9.3 *Feeling anxious.*** This theme explores my feelings of anxiety resulting from a change in coping skills in which I moved from being nervous to being relaxed. I appreciated feeling nervous because it seemed to induce a sense of panic which motivated me. I cannot understand why I no longer experience the surge of adrenaline which I experienced throughout my study years. I also discovered that I ruminate in the circumspection phase of

the C-P-C Cycle, which leads me to take a long time to complete academic tasks.

Furthermore, the self-construal of not being a failure appeared to have changed in that I am now experiencing an overwhelming urge to discontinue my PhD journey. I do not understand the changing self-construal because I have always believed that one must finish what they started.

**2.4.9.4 *Not who I am.*** Doing PhD on a topic as sensitive as fathers who kill their child/children is not easy. I found myself riding on a rollercoaster of emotions which drained me physically and mentally. I felt tremendously overwhelmed by listening to the recorded interviews and transcribing data which subjected me to repeatedly hearing the participants' (offenders and families) immense pain when reliving the traumatic killing. Replaying the tapes and transcribing made me realise that the participants were 'truthful' in their telling of their painful lived experience of filicide-homicide, which made me feel guilty because I sometimes thought during the interviews that they were dishonest and attempting to cover part of the 'truth'. The difficulty in maintaining credulity led to me asking the participants more questions to uncover the 'truth', which subjected them to more emotional pain. Discovering that side of myself who is selfish and capable of hurting people was unbearable, and therefore I wanted to distance myself from the research. I did not think I was a kind of person who used people for personal benefit. My mother and supervisory team (Dr. Lizette Nolte and Professor David Winter) played a significant role in offering emotional support, helping me to make sense of my experience, and encouraging me not to give up. I also found solace in prayer.

In conclusion, although I was angry and struggled to understand the filicidal participants' choice to kill because of my constructions of fatherhood, I saw some aspects of

myself in them. I understood and could relate to their reactive and impulsive violence especially when they appeared to construe disrespect. The process of reflexivity in which I engaged in self-reference and self-reflection enabled me to realise that I could be capable of drawing on the constructions of violence and being violent if I did not try hard enough to make propositional choices. I became aware that just as much as most offenders may be deceptive, I could also employ manipulative strategies to get what I want. Therefore, in some respects, I am not different to the offenders I was researching.

**Chapter 3: Findings**  
**Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis Report**  
**Filicidal Participants**

This section presents the themes and sub-themes which were analysed in an Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) which explored how four paternal filicidal offenders made sense of their worlds and events leading to the killing. Table 8 presents the master and superordinate themes which are discussed.

Table 8: *Master and superordinate themes of the filicidal participants*

| <b>MASTER THEMES</b>                         | <b>SUPERORDINATE THEMES</b>                   |
|--|---|
| <b>FEELING HURT AND DISAPPOINTED BY LOVE</b> | Feeling frustrated by communication breakdown |
|  | Sensing that the love is dying                |
| <b>FAILING AS A FAMILY MAN</b>               | Feeling confused and trapped                  |
|  | Losing reputation as a good father            |
|  | Failing to be the man I am expected to be     |
| <b>SENSING A VOLCANO ABOUT TO ERUPT</b>      | Feeling frustrated and overwhelmed            |
|  | Welcoming and rejecting help                  |
| <b>CREATING A “DISASTER”</b>                 | Turning into a ‘monster’                      |
|  | I did a “big mistake”                         |
|  | Regretting killing                            |

### **3.1 Feeling Hurt and Disappointed by Love**

This theme explores the participants’ experience of their intimate/marital relationships. Poor communication seemed to be identified as an instigator of relationship problems. Most participants appeared to feel frustrated by being unable to address problems with their partners/wives. Although escalation of issues seemed to shatter the participants’

expectations of a fruitful relationship, one participant appeared to expect his relationship to fail. The failing expectations appeared to trigger feelings of hopelessness, disappointed, and anger<sup>5</sup>. The participants perceiving their partners/spouses losing interest in them seemed to aggravate their feelings of anger. The sub-themes, *Feeling frustrated by communication breakdown* and *Sensing that the love is dying*, are described.

**3.1.1 Feeling frustrated by communication breakdown.** This sub-theme explores the failing communication which appeared to be experienced as the root of intimate/marital relationship problems. The participants seemed to express concern about communication breakdown in which they appeared to struggle discussing issues and finding solutions with their partners/wives. The escalating communication problem seemed to induce feelings of worry.

*“We communicated past<sup>6</sup> each other. There was a part in our communication where we missed each other. Later our communication became so worse that we were not even talking. I started writing letters to her if I wanted to tell her something. Like for two weeks, we did not talk AT ALL<sup>7</sup>.” (429.47)<sup>8</sup> (John)*

The loudly uttered “AT ALL” seems to indicate John’s feelings of concern about the worsening communication breakdown leading to a temporary lack of communication. John perhaps communicated via writing to avoid aggravating conflict.

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<sup>5</sup> Constructs of transition (Kelly, 1955), anger, aggression, and threat, in this section are not used in terms of personal construct theory.

<sup>6</sup> The underlining of the word indicates the emphasis of the word (Atkinson & Heritage, 1984).

<sup>7</sup> The capitalised words indicate loudly uttered utterances (Atkinson & Heritage, 1984).

<sup>8</sup> The numbers indicate the page and line numbers of the quote in the transcript.

The new experience of communication difficulties seemed to induce a sense of confusion because most participants appeared to have an impression of being able to address issues with their partners/wives.

*“We were people that if I feel that I have a problem ... I MEAN I feel that she has a problem, I could tell her that no I feel that you have such and such a problem.*

*Likewise, she also did this thing. If she felt that she sees a problem in me she told me that “I see that you have a problem which is like this and that.” However, as time went by – we started having a breakdown somewhere somehow.” (405.9) (Neo)*

Three participants appeared to defend their role in ensuring an open spousal communication relationship before their communication deteriorated.

*“But I communicated with my wife that we have a problem, my aunt has died and now her children have nobody who can care for them.” (386.30) (Joe)*

The word “*But*” appears to indicate Joe’s attempt to defend his role in discussing issues with his wife. Perhaps the participant did not want their spousal communication relationship to be seen as having been one-sided in which he was to blame for the failing communication.

Furthermore, the participants seemed to defend their good spousal communication relationship before it deteriorated by highlighting the success they achieved together.

*“Really we had a good working relationship – because most of the times in a lot of things – which I could say that I ACHIEVED – I achieved them by the fact that we could sit down and talk about them – and then we were able to advise each other.”*

*(404.39) (Neo)*

In contrast, Sly’s communication relationship with his partner seemed to be lacking from early on in their relationship. He appeared to blame his partner for the poor communication which included their inability to guide each other.

*“If she was also honest with me and told me some of the things. We were not building each other. Maybe good communication between me and her would have changed a lot of things.” (442.40) (Sly)*

An inability to solve issues appeared to trigger feelings of frustration which seemed to lead some participants to impose solutions on their partners/wives in a desperate attempt to solve problems.

*“I ended up telling her that she must please leave her work and she said “she will not leave her work – because – she is not sure what she is going to do if she stops working and we separate.”” (410.39) (Neo)*

Neo and similarly Joe did not seem to realise that their approach was forceful in which they appeared to make demands on their wives. Their failure to mutually explore solutions and make decisions with their spouses seemed to lead to an inability to reach agreements and solve issues.

The irresolvable problems appeared to induce feelings of confusion. For instance, Joe appeared to be confused by being unable to permanently solve with his wife the issue concerning his aunt's children. He seemed to feel frustrated by the resurfacing issues.

*"I would ask my wife why things are happening like this, that we are beginning to have a problem about the children again because I thought that we agreed that the children would just stay for a short period until they go stay with my mother."*

(389.24) (Joe)

However, Joe and Neo seemed to expect their spouses to agree with their decisions. Perceiving their wives' disagreeing with them seemed to trigger feelings of anger.

*"I told her that I have decided to take the money ... because there was money that I saved ... I told her that I would take the money and build a small house in the same yard where these children could live. My wife disagreed with my decision and said that "there will be no children who will have a house built for them in this yard."*

(395.35) (Joe)

Joe's feelings of anger appeared to be highlighted by the emphasis on his interpretation of his wife's utterances, "disagreed" and "in this yard". The participant's use of the word "told" suggests a one-sided communication approach and not two-way as he experienced it to be.

The feelings of anger appeared to escalate to verbal aggression. For instance, Joe seemed to be infuriated by his wife refusing to accept his aunt's children which led to him verbally attacking her and deciding to disregard her views and impose decisions.

*"I told her that you don't want to accommodate these children, but I want you to know that I will no longer listen to you and I will build this house whether you like it or not. I built the house." (395.39) (Joe)*

The underlined utterances appears to indicate Joe's sense of asserting himself in which his wife did not seem to have a say in the situation. He perhaps forced his wife to accept his aunt's children otherwise there would be consequences.

However, Joe and Neo seemed to move from confrontation to avoidance to avoid escalating an already tense situation.

*"I did not confront her just because we had ... We were people who were no longer happy in the house. So, I just looked and left it. When she got home and was startled by my presence, I just left her and continued with what I was doing." (409.18) (Neo)*

Joe and Neo also appeared to withdraw from spousal conflict which they perhaps perceived aggravating their feelings of anger.

*"I wanted to know – where she went because she told me that she was going to work. So, I phoned her workplace, and I found her not there. I wanted to know where she went, because she was supposed to tell me where she went, if she did not go to work. I*

*did not get a response. So, we ended up – not being happy – at home. However, ANYWAY I JUST LEFT IT. Because I am a kind of a person when I talk to you and if we disagree on something – I just leave you.” (406.47) (Neo)*

Neo seemed to become angry when challenged. He appeared to avoid further disconfirmation of his views and expectations as well as escalating his feelings of anger by withdrawing.

In contrast, Sly and John seemed to completely avoid engaging in conflict with their partners/wives even during provocation.

*“Mpho behaved inappropriately after she had my child. She would come to the taxi rank drunk and say – “hey this CAR belongs to my baby’s father and I am getting in it.” I never fought with her. I saw that she expected me to take her so I just left her there.” (448.30) (Sly)*

The two participants appeared to blame their partners/wives for causing conflict. For instance, John seemed to feel frustrated by his wife instigating chaos even when he attempted to maintain peace.

*“I did everything to make Lucy happy. I just wanted to give love. However, Lucy made a crisis of something. She made a BIG thing of a small thing, which led to – conflict. In later years when she wanted to fight with me, I walked away or ignored her.” (429.7) (John)*

John's emphasis on "made a crisis", "made a BIG thing of a small thing", and "fight with me" appears to indicate his feelings of frustration and anger of his wife causing unnecessary problems and provoking him to fight. The participant seemed to see his wife as a pursuer during conflict while he withdrew to avoid chaos.

All the participants appeared to perceive withdrawal-avoidance as an ineffective coping strategy. For instance, John appeared to express concern about the coping strategy precipitating communication problems in which he failed to understand his wife's feelings.

*"I never discussed these things with her but IF I WAS IN THAT POSITION, I would feel INSECURE and a failure as a man. I think those are the type of emotions that went through her. NOT that we ever discussed it. That was one of our other problems, proper communication. I kept things – inside. I kept it in here ((pointing at his heart))<sup>9</sup>. I don't easily share my problems. I try to work it out – on my own."*  
(430.17) (John)

The participant appeared to regret avoiding problems by keeping issues to himself. John seemed to regret not involving his wife in the process of attempting to solve their problems.

The sub-theme, *Feeling frustrated by communication breakdown*, spoke of the participants' feelings of frustration and confusion by the failing communication in which they seemed unable to address issues with their partners/wives. The escalating intimate/marital

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<sup>9</sup> The double brackets indicate an act which occurred during an articulation of an utterance (Atkinson & Heritage, 1984).

problems appeared to aggravate the participants' feelings of frustration and anger which seemed to lead to Joe and Neo becoming forceful while Sly and John withdrew in an attempt to solve issues, but this appeared to result in the problems being unresolved. However, Joe and Neo seemed to oscillate from confrontation to withdrawal to prevent aggravating conflict. The one-sided communication including the use of avoidance-withdrawal strategies appeared to have made it impossible for the participants to solve issues, which subsequently affected their relationships.

**3.1.2 Sensing that the love is dying.** This sub-theme explores the participants' experience of anger emanating from perceiving their partners/wives as no longer in love with them.

Most participants' constant reference to past events appeared to create a sense of problems being persistent which gradually aggravated feelings of anger. This seemed to lead to the participants becoming sensitive in which they perceived their partners/wives losing interest in them.

*“The way there were fights in the house without happiness, and the way she treated me – not treating me like her husband anymore. I felt that no, this woman there is something which she is busy with WHICH up to so far ... it means that she has decided that with regard to me ... she is no longer interested in me. I slowly and slowly developed anger. A slight thing which she did, I compared it to other things that happened in the past.” (415.23) (Neo)*

Most participants appeared to feel unvalued when they saw their partners/wives not treating them like husbands. For instance, John seemed to seek confirmation of his role as a husband through sexual intimacy. Therefore, perceiving his wife forcing herself to be intimate with him appeared to induce feelings of being unloved.

*“At – HOME things started accumulating as well. Problems piled up. Lucy’s behaviour changed. She spent hours making herself beautiful. However, she was ice-cold towards me – when it comes to sex. For the last – seven months – having sex once a week was too much for her.” (432.22) (John)*

In contrast, Joe seemed to feel appreciated by his wife amidst problems. The participant appeared to feel pleased by his wife caring for him by fulfilling what he perceived as her female ascribed domestic duties irrespective of their conflict.

*“She always performed her domestic responsibilities like caring for the children, cooking, and taking care of me. I was always neat when I went to work and I also had my lunch box. However, you would find that communication ... we had a communication breakdown between us” (393.26) (Joe)*

The participant seemed to draw on the dominant socio-gendered roles of femininity and perceiving his wife as fulfilling the socially expected and constructed role appeared to result in him perceiving her as respecting him. The perceived respect seemed to supersede his experience of their conflict.

The accumulating problems appeared to instigate a sense of insecurity in which Neo and John seemed to feel distrustful of their wives and suspected them of infidelity. The suspicion of adultery appeared to provoke feelings of anger which erupted in violence which appeared to be used to stop the suspected infidelity and therefore eliminate the threat.

*“I think she was seeing someone. That was a problem which when we tried to advise each other ABOUT SOMETHING that we saw was happening – it turned into an argument. EISH! I ended up ... it ended being a FIGHT. It ended up being a serious fight.” (410.1) (Neo)*

The emphasis on the loudly uttered utterances appears to highlight Neo’s feelings of anger which seemed to be perpetuated by perceiving his wife arguing with him, and therefore disconfirming his strong suspicions. However, Neo appeared to feel disappointed by fighting with his wife as indicated by the emphasis on the South African emotional expression, “EISH”.

Furthermore, the feelings of insecurity seemed to manifest through John and Neo having issues with their wives’ work. For instance, John appeared to feel replaced and emasculated by his wife’s work in which he seemed to view the work as being a man in the house. The participant’s feelings of intense anger appeared to erupt in violence which he perhaps used to protect his threatened masculinity.

*“She got an interdict against me – under the Domestic Violence Act. She mentioned different instances that were building up, like when I took her credit card on two occasions. She said I was financially abusing and controlling her. She also said I was*

*jealous of her work because one Sunday she spent the whole day working on her laptop. She did not speak a single word to us, just laptop and work ((banging the table)). She didn't even bath. So, I told her listen **WHY AREN'T YOU BATHING, YOU'RE STINKING MAN! I TOOK the laptop's CORD and put it in the washing machine. I said to her the thing that IS KEEPING YOU AWAY FROM US is also in charge in my house. So, I was the villain while she was sitting the whole bloody weekend working on her laptop and her family was nothing to her."*** (434.3) (John)

The emphasis on "*in charge in my house*" appears to be powerful in that it indicates John's use of conventional socially constructed role of a man in a patriarchal society to define his manhood role. Perceiving threat to his sense of manhood seemed to trigger anger which led to violence which was perhaps used to eliminate the source of threat. John's feelings of anger appeared to be aggravated by his wife filing a Court interdict in which she accused him of abuse, while he seemed to see her as destroying their relationship by neglecting her nuclear family. Since John appeared to perceive his wife as wrong for prioritising work over family, he perhaps saw violence as justifiable.

The participants' feelings of insecurity appeared to be escalated by the feeling of losing their partners/wives. They seemed to experience a sense of helplessness that there was nothing they could do to keep them.

*"I felt like my wife was slipping through my fingers."* (416.29) (Neo)

Some participants seemed to feel threatened by the sense of losing their partners/wives because they appeared to be possessive of them.

*“I said that my thing is my thing ... I was possessive – whereby I felt ... That is why I am saying that I concluded things. I felt that – there is no way that – if I say that this person is my wife, she is my wife full stop.” (415.16) (Neo)*

The emphasis on “my thing is my thing” indicates that Neo seemed to objectify his wife in which he perceived her as ‘something’ that he owned and was unwilling to lose. The participant appeared to draw on one of the dominant social constructions of women in a patriarchal society in which they are considered to be men’s objects.

The threat of their partners/wives leaving them seemed to be intolerable. It appeared to trigger feelings of anger which spiralled out of control resulting in verbal violence which was perhaps used to eliminate the threat by preventing their partners/wives from leaving.

*“She said that “today I am taking the children and I’m leaving. I am returning home because obviously I do not have a saying since I tried to advise you not to build the house but still you built it, so I think it is best if I leave.” That was the thing maybe that made me lose control ... Right there and then we had a problem and maybe exchanged words.” (395.48) (Joe)*

Some participants appeared to be unprepared to accept that their intimate/marital relationships were in trouble even when they saw other issues emerging.

*“As time went I did not have a problem as such. I was only positive because of the way I did things. I did not have thoughts of – just because the situation is like this ...*

*let me ... you find that things are changing at home. Things were still normal although I started seeing other problems.” (407.5) (Neo)*

Neo appeared to continue behaving normal amidst problems perhaps to maintain an illusion that his marriage was still fine. The participant perhaps was worried that if he changed his behaviour, he would see that his marriage was failing which was unbearable.

Three participants seemed to continue hoping that their situation will improve despite seeing a spiral of problems.

*“I believed that our problems would IMPROVE. It will get better ... I supported her because my hope was always there, listen here we will succeed.” (429.39) (John)*

Based on the two quotes above, most participants appeared to cope with the unbearable reality of their marriage failing by normalising chaos and remaining hopeful amidst what seemed to be irresolvable issues. Convincing themselves that the situation was normal and things would improve perhaps reduced their feelings of worry and kept them sane amidst chaos.

In contrast, Sly seemed unwilling to remain in an intimate relationship which he perceived as incompatible. Therefore, he decided to end the relationship.

*“EISH ... the way I live my life, she always came to my place, she was not giving me space. It was like she always wanted my attention. I was always with her and there*

*were other things that I had to do. I saw that our relationship would never move forward, so it was better for us to separate and stop dating.” (440.31) (Sly)*

The emotional expression of “*EISH*” seems to indicate Sly’s feelings of irritation with his partner. He appeared to perceive her as clingy which seemed to overwhelm him.

The development of new issues seemed to deteriorate most participants’ sense of hope.

*“Other things happened, and I asked myself why are these things happening? I saw that EISH, no here ... things are no longer right.” (408.43) (Neo).*

Some participants spoke of losing hope when they realised that the situation would never improve and that all their efforts to fix issues failed. They appeared to be confused and could not understand why their intimate/marital relationships were failing.

*“I saw that all my efforts were unsuccessful. I did not have hope anymore, especially after – the way things went in the morning. I thought to myself that whatever I have tried to do was unsuccessful.” (397.20) (Joe)*

Most participants seemed to feel hurt by and tired of the persistent issues.

*“It was something which ... it hurt me a lot and which – I ended controlling myself about the way I was going to approach it – this issue. However, I ended up leaving it.*

*ANOTHER SCENE ... another one happened to me ... this one past and another one happened to me again. This kind of scenes kept on occurring.” (409.23) (Neo)*

The utterance, “*I ended controlling myself about the way I was going to approach it”*, appears to suggest that the recurring problems became intolerable to Neo in which he seemed to allude to contemplating using violence as a solution.

In summary, in *Sensing that the love is dying*, most participants seemed to feel threatened by the persistent intimate/marital problems which involved a perceived threat of separation. Many participants appeared to draw on the socially constructed roles of masculinity and femininity to assume how their partners/wives should treat them as men. Perceiving their wives not treating them as husbands seemed to precipitate feelings of anger while perpetuating a sense of threat in some participants. The feelings of anger appeared to escalate to violence which seemed to be used by most participants to extinguish the threat. Perhaps most participants attempted to reduce feelings of threat by hoping their problems would end, while some participants also appeared to convince themselves that things were fine, but this proved to be ineffective.

### **3.2 Failing as a Family Man**

This theme explores the participants’ experience of failing as family men. Although the participants seemed to see themselves as responsible family men, they appeared to feel that they failed in their role. They seemed to feel caught in the middle of family discord and appeared to be confused about addressing issues. The sub-themes, *Feeling confused and*

*trapped, Losing reputation of a good father, and Failing to be the man I am expected to be,* are discussed.

**3.2.1 Feeling confused and trapped.** This sub-theme focuses on the participants' feelings of confusion and being trapped in family bitterness. Some participants appeared to struggle solving issues of resentment within their nuclear families. They seemed to be caught in the middle of their partners'/wives' feelings of resentment towards the children.

*“My wife – she wanted these children ... that I should abandon them and of which it was something that I was not going to be able to do. I remember when I gave my aunt’s daughter pocket money, because she attended school, she said that I am spoiling her maybe by giving her money, rather maybe she should take lunch to school. I stopped giving her pocket money – and bought food for lunch. After I bought the food you would find that my wife would complain again that the food finishes quickly before month end or that the money is finishing.” (390.1) (Joe)*

Joe seemed to be trapped by his feelings of loyalty towards his wife and aunt's children. As much as he appeared to want to respect his wife, he seemed unwilling to abandon his aunt's children whom he appeared committed to ensuring their well-being. His efforts to support his aunt's children while appeasing his wife seemed to be unsuccessful.

Some participants seemed to feel confused by their partners'/wives' bitterness towards the children. For instance, John appeared not to know how to intervene to remedy the situation because he could not choose between his wife and children.

*“I should have acted – when she started abusing us. There I failed my children. Like I did in my first marriage, I should have got a Court interdict. That was one of my BIGGEST mistakes, not being able to choose between my children and my wife. I loved my children and I loved her. However, I couldn’t choose. So, THERE I was a coward. I should not have allowed her to hit and swear at Anna, or swear at John Junior. However, I allowed it, and it became – a habit, and – I withdrew more.”*  
(431.7) (John)

John seemed to regret being unable to choose his children over his wife. He appeared to see himself as having failed in his fatherhood role in that he could not protect his children. Although the participant spoke of not being able to choose, the ongoing alleged abuse suggests that he perhaps chose his wife. He appeared to withdraw to avoid witnessing the intolerable abuse and to cope with the feelings of shame.

There appeared to be a sense of self-blame among some participants. For instance, John seemed to blame himself for exposing his children to abuse by withdrawing from the spousal conflict which led to his wife releasing her anger towards him onto the children.

*“I was not a person who fought back. I TURNED AROUND and walked away, so she AGAIN took out her frustrations on Anna. I withdrew for about three weeks when she lost her temper.”* (430.47) (John)

However, some participants seemed to experience consequences of choosing their children over their partners/wives. For instance, Joe appeared to feel angered by perceiving

people as seeing him failing in his husband role by prioritising his aunt's children's needs while making his wife feel worthless.

*“I WENT to the police station ... I found a female and male police officers who took us to a private room and interrogated us. They asked us what is happening. DURING MY DISCUSSION WITH THEM, they favoured my wife. They said that my wife is right because it is her place and then I am – showing that I am ... maybe I am not responsible because I am choosing my aunt's children so my wife is beginning to feel that maybe she does not have a place in the house.” (391.38) (Joe)*

All the participants seemed to feel confused in which they appeared not to know how to be responsible fathers without feeling judged. For instance, Sly seemed to feel confused about how he could play his role as a father without his child's maternal family misinterpreting his actions for pursuing a romantic relationship with the child's mother.

*“I once visited the child ... Mpho and I were not together anymore, I just came to visit the child ... Upon my arrival, her mother told me “Mpho is still a child, she is still at school”. She expected that I came to visit Mpho. She told me that kind of things “Mpho is a child, she is still at school, she has to finish school.” I was **SURPRISED** because I was not dating Mpho, I just came to see the child, but she is talking to me about Mpho. I did not argue with her, I just left. They also confused me.” (443.22) (Sly)*

The emphasis on the underlined utterances seems to highlight Sly's perception of the child's maternal family as not wanting him to be romantically involved with his child's

mother. He appeared to feel unwelcome when he visited his child which seemed to induce a sense of awkwardness when wanting to spend time with his child.

The participants who were involved in the conflict between their partners/wives and children appeared to feel overwhelmed and seemed to no longer be able to tolerate the situation.

*“There was DAILY CONFLICT. There was – ABUSE – towards Anna, me, and John Junior. I had enough of the abuse. I had enough of been sworn at. I had enough of – the children been hit, been sworn at. Every time that she acts like this – it feels like she is stabbing me in the heart. That is how I felt. Every time that she either shouted or swore at me, shouted at John Junior, or pulled him around, or hit Anna, it is like stab wounds.” (429.18) (John)*

John seemed to feel tired of the alleged abusive situation. He appeared to be engulfed by feelings of pain of witnessing the alleged child abuse. His inhibition ability seemed to be exceeded in which he reported having had enough of the abuse.

The sense of failing as fathers in which some participants appeared to perceive themselves as having disappointed their children seemed to induce feelings of guilt.

*“OBVIOUSLY she was looking up to me and knew that “my dad is the one who is supposed to be doing this thing for me.” You see because both of them if they had something which they maybe wanted at school ... that is, what they wanted, they came to me and asked me “daddy can you please do this and that for us?” And they knew*

*that they would get that thing, there is no way that I would tell them stories such as – this did not happen and that happened. No, I did not do that. They knew that I did everything that they wanted. Unfortunately, I am in prison, the reason ... the situation is restrictive and I ... sometimes you find that my heart becomes painful.” (414.12)*

*(Neo)*

The loudly uttered “*OBVIOUSLY*” seems to indicate Neo’s feelings of certainty about his children trusting him to fulfil their expectations. Therefore, he appeared to be engulfed by feelings of guilt and sadness of failing to meet their needs as the result of being in prison. The participant seemed to perceive prison as making him fail to fulfil his duties as a father.

The sub-theme, *Feeling confused and trapped*, reflected most participants’ experience of being trapped in family resentment. They seemed to feel confused and did not appear to know what to do which seemed to result in them feeling overwhelmed. Most participants appeared to be faced with a dilemma in which their efforts to remedy the family situation seemed to result in a negative outcome. Therefore, they appeared to experience difficulty in fulfilling their fatherhood role. The sense of failing as fathers seemed to induce feelings of guilt and pain.

**3.2.2 Losing reputation as a good father.** The sub-theme explores the participants’ experience of sadness and disappointment of losing their identity as good fathers because of the killing. It examines the participants’ feelings of shock of being seen as killers.

All the participants appeared to be proud fathers and saw their children as confirming their ability to create something good.

*“The child eish made me very happy – because it was the first time that I realised that I can make children. That thing made me VERY HAPPY, AND ALSO Tom [Sly’s son] looked just like me, EXACTLY.” (443.38) (Sly).*

The South African emotional expression, “eish”, which expresses a variety of emotions, seems to indicate Sly’s feelings of excitement emanating from being a first-time father.

The participants seemed to see fatherhood as making them feel like men. They appeared to experience a sense of pride of having nuclear families who needed and depended on them to fulfil their needs.

*“To be a father, it is nice because you can also see that there is a stage where you feel that you can be responsible. It is nice just because YOU CAN ALSO SEE that you shift away from your parents and you can do this and that for yourself AT YOUR OWN TIME. You can also – have what you can show like having a family – they have this and that which at least I can do for them. So, to be a father is nice and then it is (413.40) (Neo)*

Although the participants seemed to feel ashamed of committing filicide, they appeared to continue to perceive themselves as responsible fathers.

*“I still see myself as a fine father, BUT – what I did is not right. I have to change a lot of things in my life because other things like drugs are what mess up my life. If I did not smoke Nyaope<sup>10</sup>, this would not have happened.” (447.29) (Sly).*

The killing seemed to lead Sly to seriously re-evaluate his life in which he identified the wrong activities he engaged in, particularly smoking Nyaope, which he now regrets especially since he perceived it as having led him to cause his son’s death.

All the participants appeared to feel sad and disappointed that their efforts of being responsible fathers were superseded by the killing and no longer recognised.

*“Besides what happened, I think that I tried with all my powers ... although the situation that I am in today erases the good that I did. I think that I played my part very well. I was responsible – for my family – and children. I think I tried all my best.” (399.8) (Joe)*

The participants seemed to feel shocked that people including those whom they thought had an understanding of them saw them as bad fathers who killed their children.

*“They are thinking this person is bad and he killed his child. Even the people who know me very well see me as bad.” (447.41) (Sly)*

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<sup>10</sup> Nyaope is an addictive South African drug consisting of heroin, marijuana, rat poison, morphine, methamphetamine, and ARV medication (Grelotti, Closson, Smit, Mabude, Matthews, Safren, Bangsberg, & Mimiaga, 2014)

Most participants appeared to feel worried about being in prison which they perceived as making them lose their identities as good men and respect.

*“Prison right now – is a place on its own. When a person leaves a place like this or is in this place .... you see outside I was not a person who had a lot of friends but ... even my community respected me a lot – and also they respected me at work - and also in the church.” (399.20) (Joe)*

Some participants also seemed to feel worried by failing in their manhood role as the result of their family members possibly blaming them for ruining their lives by killing. For instance, Neo appeared to feel worried about his daughter blaming him if she fails in life.

*“When she GROWS UP she will blame me. Even if it happens that maybe she fails in life she will always say “but if I ... you did not do this kind of a thing, I would not be like this today.”” (414.24) (Neo)*

Therefore, most participants seemed to be desperate to get another opportunity, perhaps after being released from prison, to prove their competence as fathers.

*“If I get a second chance, I will prove myself as a father. I am already thinking about things that I am going to do for her, and I am sure that if I follow it, I will be **SUCCESSFUL**.” (419.23) (Neo)*

Neo seemed eager to be a responsible father to his daughter who survived the filicide. Neo and similarly John and Sly appeared to be hopeful and confident that they would re-establish their identities of being seen as good fathers once released from prison.

However, Joe appeared to experience hopelessness that his identity will never be restored, as suggested by his utterance “*Since I am already here*” (399.12), in which “*here*” seems to allude to prison.

In summary, in *Losing reputation as a good father*, although the participants seemed to hang on to their self-perception as responsible fathers despite killing, they appeared to struggle to come to terms with perceiving people seeing them as bad fathers who killed their children. Most participants seemed to feel concerned about prison further destroying their fatherhood/manhood image. Therefore, re-establishing their role as responsible fathers appeared to be important to the participants, however, one participant seemed to feel hopeless about never being able to regain his image as a good father.

**3.2.3 Failing to be the man I am expected to be.** This sub-theme focuses on the participants’ experience of failing to fulfil the cultural expectations of a man. The participants seemed to adamantly perceive a man as a leader of the household who is entitled to respect.

*“A father is somebody who is supposed to be respected – he is the one who makes decisions at home most of the time.” (449.15) (Sly)*

Therefore, some participants appeared to feel angered by perceiving their partners/wives emasculating them by turning them into ‘women in the house’.

*“It did not take me well. I was often caught unprepared because you found that most of the time when I am at home I am the one who was always busy – it was almost like I have become a woman in the house. Because always when she returned from work – it is a matter of her just arriving ... she found everything done” (406.21) (Neo)*

Neo’s quote seems to support evidence discussed previously in which most participants appeared to employ dominant socio-gendered roles of masculinity and femininity to draw expectations of their roles and partners’/wives’ roles in the house. Therefore, Neo appeared to be angered by his wife forcing him to perform what he perceived as female ascribed domestic duties by not playing her role as a wife. This seemed to result in the participant experiencing a loss of his manhood in which he spoke of feeling like a woman.

Some participants appeared to feel powerless. For instance, John seemed to perceive his wife as a man in the house in which she was in charge and oppressed him.

*“She was the head. I was not. She dominated me.” (436.26) (John)*

John and Neo also seemed to feel helpless. They appeared to know their socio-gendered and cultural roles as family men but did not seem to know how to regain their place and stop their wives from robbing them of roles they perceived themselves to be socially entitled.

*“I felt weak and ROBBED! I’m supposed to be the leader. I’m supposed to love my wife and keep her and my kids safe.” (436.30) (John)*

Some participants seemed to be infuriated by being insulted and disrespected by their partners/wives which resulted in them employing violence to perhaps extort respect and assert their sense of manhood.

*“She said that she thought it was better for her to return home and leave me with this house and my aunt’s daughter so that I can make her my wife, that is what she said. That is what made me fight with her and tell her that you are now swearing at me, or you are using offensive language especially since – you know very well that these children whom we are talking about are family, how can I be sexually intimate with my family or how can I sleep with my aunt’s child? How can you say that I should make her my wife? She asserted that she can see that she does not have a place in the house. This girl is my wife and she is no longer my wife. So, we ended up fighting.”*  
(391.21) (Joe)

Joe seemed to interpret his wife’s statement in which she referred to his cousin as his wife in a sexual manner, and therefore felt disrespected which appeared to trigger feelings of anger. The participant seemed to fail to understand that perhaps his wife felt insecure and perceived his cousin as robbing her of her wife role. The couple appeared to use violence to protect their identities and forcefully try to obtain respect.

Some participants also seemed to use other manipulative tactics which were non-violent in an attempt to regain and assert their masculinity.

*“I controlled the money but did not have control over her work. When I wanted to ADDRESS her, she swore at me and I walked away.”* (436.33) (John)

John appeared to feel disappointed by being unable to obtain full control over his wife, particularly her work, which resulted in the perpetuation of his feelings of emasculation especially since he was still unable to confront her during conflict.

The sub-theme, *Failing to be the man I am expected to be*, captured some participants' feelings of anger which seemed to emanate from the power struggle with their partners/wives. The participants appeared to draw on dominant socio-gendered and cultural roles to assume how they and their partners/wives should behave and interact with each other. Perceiving themselves not being a man they expected and perceiving their partners/wives not treating them as the head of the family seemed to provoke feelings of anger in most participants which led to violent and non-violent tactics in an attempt to regain their sense of manhood and extort respect. However, as in John's case, failing to obtain a sense of full power over their partners/wives appeared to perpetuate the feelings of emasculation.

### **3.3 Sensing a Volcano about to Erupt**

The theme explores the participants' sense of being unable to cope with intimate/marital relationship problems. Most participants appeared to no longer be able to avoid issues and inhibit feelings of frustration. They seemed to experience a loss of control in which they became aggressive leading to a volcanic eruption of violence. Although some participants accepted help, others rejected it and did not see family intervention as helpful. The sub-themes, *Feeling frustrated and overwhelmed* and *Welcoming and rejecting help*, are explored.

**3.3.1 Feeling frustrated and overwhelmed.** This sub-theme focuses on the participants' experience of being frustrated and overwhelmed by irresolvable issues. Most participants appeared to feel tired and affected by intimate/marital relationship problems.

*"I started feeling that this whole situation – was beginning to seriously affect me"*

*(390.26) (Joe)*

Some participants seemed to be desperate to escape the anger-provoking and persistent problems but seemed to be concerned about their children. Therefore, they appeared to be confused because they seemed to want to get out of the situation but felt trapped because of the children.

*"She lied. She worked late again. I apparently confronted her. I sat in the braai<sup>11</sup> room and thought, Ag! Divorce her. You know what John, hang yourself. However, I did not want to leave my children behind ((hitting the table)). Don't carry on like this ((hitting the table))." (435.9) (John)*

The emphasis on "lied" and "again" and the South African emotional expression of "Ag!" appears to indicate John's feelings of annoyance. His experience of increasing frustrations during his marriage seemed to be expressed by him hitting the table during the interview. The violent act also appeared to indicate that he was perhaps eager to end his marital problems in which he explored divorce and suicide as possible solutions. However, he seemed unable to make a decision because he did not want to leave his children which is similar to Neo's experience although he only explored divorce.

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<sup>11</sup> Braai is a South African word for barbecue.

Some participants seemed unable to tolerate contact with their partners/wives anymore. The sight of their partners/wives appeared to trigger overwhelming thoughts which provoked feelings of anger which led to the participants spending less time with their partners/wives.

*“The time that I was able to spend – at home, I limited it. I was not able to spend a lot of time at home because I had a lot of different thoughts WHEN I sometimes looked at her. I realised that the BEST thing was to leave. Because I felt THAT even when it was the weekend – although I was there and she was also there, I did not stay at home.” (408.4) (Neo)*

Most participants appeared to experience their lives as falling apart which led to them feeling like they were no longer in control. They seemed to see their chaotic lives as useless which appeared to leave them feeling deeply sad.

*“My life was meaningless. I thought I was in charge of my life but I was not. My work life was in shambles ((crying)). My marriage life was in shambles” (435.49) (John)*

Most participants seemed to feel concerned about intimate/marital problems changing their behaviour and leading them to be easily irritable and violent.

*“It made me be AGGRESSIVE – AT WORK. When we are ATTACKING a situation or whatever, I BECAME excessively AGGRESSIVE whereby I realised ... they were already warning me that ‘they will end up opening a case against you.’ Because when*

*we were at work, maybe we have arrested somebody, maybe he did something, I was fast to use my hands” (411.12) (Neo)*

Neo’s aggression appeared to be more apparent at work. He seemed to be unable to control his aggression and appeared to be worried about its effects on his role at work.

In contrast, Joe’s and John’s violence seemed to be directed towards their wives.

*“That was the first time I swore at her. I said you may be an angel at work but you are a fuckin bitch at home. That is how I see you. I think this – life of yours is nonsense. Your legs are like an elephant and they will stay like that forever. I was trying to hurt her.” (433.15) (John)*

The three participants seemed to feel hurt and disappointed in themselves for now becoming violent people.

*“I was very hurt, it really did hurt me especially – we ended up ... it was the first time we fought. It really disappointed me that a person like me ... because where I was working ... I was dealing mostly with women and children. I mean we were dealing mostly with people that are transported to the hospital or are being transported from the clinic to the hospital or other institutions. So, I was very disappointed after we fought and then – I had to go and maybe explain the cause of the fight.” (395.19) (Joe)*

Domestic violence seemed to induce feelings of embarrassment in Joe especially because of his profession. He appeared to be worried about people seeing him as abusive.

Most participants appeared no longer able to inhibit their feelings of frustration which seemed to become intolerable resulting in them feeling immensely overwhelmed. They also appeared unable to avoid problems anymore.

*“Where I was – always withdrawing, keeping closed, always walking away, I started to retaliate. I started to attack back – verbally. The anger became ... **THE BUILD UP** of frustrations over the years – became like a pressure cooker. It built up and then – it started to explode. It was like a volcano that started to erupt ((snapping fingers)) over small things.” (430.37) (John)*

John’s emphasis on the loudly uttered and emphasised utterances in which he appeared to perceive himself becoming a “*pressure cooker*” seems to indicate that the marital situation became extremely unbearable. He appeared to have reached his inhibition limit resulting in him feeling easily irritable, and therefore violently erupting like a “*volcano*”.

Three participants appeared to blame their partners/wives for provoking them into losing control and becoming extremely violent.

*“She said ‘what will you do to me?’ She was saying things like that with her voice still loud. We fought again and they tried to stop us. Right there – I decided that this thing is getting worse and then I went to the bedroom to look for the car keys so that I could leave. I did not find them. She was still busy swearing. I ended up talking to her ... giving her a*

*warning. I told her to stop talking about this matter and to stop talking to me. However, she continued shouting and raising her voice. I warned her again and told her that I am speaking for the last time – please don't make me lose control and make a decision which I will regret maybe for the rest of my life, or make a bad decision. She continued to provoke me saying that I must hit her. She said 'hit me so that I can get you arrested.' Right there ... I took out my gun then I shot her." (396.28) (Joe)*

Joe and similarly John appeared to be enraged by their wives following them when they walked away and provoking them. The participants seemed to see their violence as justifiable because it was what their wives evoked. Joe spoke of having “*warned*” his wife various times which suggests that he appeared to sense that he was losing control of his anger, and therefore becoming dangerous. He seemed to foresee that the conflict was leading him to use extreme violence, and therefore appeared to attempt to avoid it.

The sub-theme, *Feeling frustrated and overwhelmed*, captured most participants' sense of no longer being able to tolerate intimate/marital issues. They seemed to easily erupt in violence because their ability to avoid problems and inhibit emotions was exceeded. This resulted in some participants appearing to experience being with their partners/wives as extremely unbearable and escalating their feelings of anger. Some participants seemed desperately wanting to escape their unbearable realities but felt trapped.

**3.3.2 Welcoming and rejecting help.** The sub-theme explores the participants' experience of welcoming and rejecting the extended families' involvement in their intimate/marital relationship problems. Most participants seemed to reject the families-in-law's help because they perceived them as controlling them.

*“My brother-in-law when he left his bicycle at our place before going to work he said that I should choose between my aunt’s children and my family. I asked him why he was asking me such a question because it seems as if you are now controlling me because maybe it appears as if I am not a responsible man in my own home, because I don’t think I need your permission to tell me what I should do.” (391.6) (Joe)*

Joe and similarly John and Neo seemed to feel angered by perceiving the in-laws undermining them and making them feel incompetent by dictating to them how to deal with their nuclear family issues.

Most participants appeared to perceive the in-laws as posing a threat on their nuclear families and threatening their sense of manhood which resulted in them being violent.

*“I went to my mother-in-law and said please give me Joy. As I reached for Joy my father-in-law intervened. I grabbed him and said I want to hit you. We had a scuffle, and Lucy came out and started shouting at me. I saw that things are becoming BAD so I locked them outside. John Junior and Anna were in the house with me. My father-in-law and I were still fighting. He told me “YES you are a sissy, you are that, COME OUT.” I told him you are a BASTARD MAN. Just F~~UCK~~ OFF my property. I was their villain. I said fuck off here from my place. I said – Lucy can STAY, Joy can stay, they are my family. YOU’RE NOT MY FAMILY. YOU’RE NOT MY HOUSEHOLD. You want to interfere – GO. If you GO, I’ll open the door. If you don’t GO, I won’t open the door. That is it, but I’m not letting you in my house – you are not welcome.” (433.34) (John)*

John seems to be describing an intensely violent altercation between himself and his father-in-law. The word “*villain*” shows that John appeared to perceive his parents-in-law as seeing him as the cause of problems which suggests that he perhaps felt blamed and not supported by them. The word “*sissy*”, which is an informal word for a coward, suggests that John appeared to perceive his father-in-law as not seeing him as man enough to deal with problems. The altercation seemed to provoke extreme feelings of anger which erupted into violence. The participant seemed to use violence to assert and protect his sense of manhood by perhaps stopping his father-in-law from interfering in his marital issues. John’s experience appeared to echo Joe’s and Neo’s experiences with their in-laws.

Some participants appeared to perceive the in-laws not helping to de-escalate conflict with their partners/wives, but instead aggravating the situation.

*“The way that he also approached us ... I think that it was one of the things that made my relationship with his sister to be sour. It was like – he is taking his sister’s side, and he was not maybe giving advice or a solution that me and my wife could use.”*  
(394.50) (Joe)

Although most participants rejected the in-laws’ help, they appeared to be willing to welcome their extended families’ assistance.

*“My family knew this matter when it was already sour, when the matter was already worse. From the start when I thought that maybe I cannot deal with this thing – I thought I should call my mother or uncles so that they can see what to do with this situation because I was not able to resolve it, then you find that my wife was the one*

*stopping me because she did not want my family to see her as a bad person towards my aunt's children. So I also left it.” (392.42) (Joe)*

Joe spoke of wanting to involve his extended family when he saw himself as incapable of solving issues. However, he seemed to blame his wife for discouraging him to consult his family because he perceived her as concerned about being seen as resenting the children. The participant appeared to regret involving his extended family when problems had spiralled out of control.

Neo seemed to echo Joe's feelings of regretting not informing his extended family about marital problems.

*“I had a problem of consultation because those things happened, but – I don't remember telling any of my family members those things.” (407.20) (Neo)*

However, some participants' extended families who intervened also seemed unable to de-escalate and resolve the couple's problems. For instance, Joe's grandmother appeared to be drawn into the spousal conflict which resulted in the escalation of the fight.

*“She asked ‘WHAT IS HAPPENING?’ My wife replied ... she was talking loud because she was angry. She said ‘YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT IS HAPPENING’. I told her that she must not involve my grandmother and disrespect her when we disagree about something.” (396.22) (Joe)*

Joe appeared to feel angered by his wife disrespecting his grandmother by perceiving her directing her feelings of anger towards him onto her which led to him defending his grandmother.

The sub-theme, *Welcoming and rejecting help*, reflected that most participants appeared to prefer their extended families' intervention while strongly rejecting their in-laws' involvement whom they seemed to perceive as posing a threat to their marriage and sense of manhood. Therefore, they became violent towards them. Although most participants seemed to perceive the in-laws as incapable of solving their intimate/marital problems, the in-laws and the extended families of some participants were both unable to effectively intervene. Instead, their intervention only seemed to aggravate the couple's conflict.

### **3.4 Creating a "Disaster"**

The theme explores the participants' experience of killing. Filicide in this dissertation also co-occurred with the killing of the wife in the case of Joe. It was also concomitant with attempted suicide in the case of Joe and John. Although most participants spoke of thinking that killing was a solution to what they perceived as 'solutionless' problems, they saw the extreme act of violence as having created a disaster. The sub-themes, *Turning into a 'monster'*, *I did a "big mistake"*, and *Regretting killing*, are discussed.

**3.4.1 Turning into a 'monster'**. This sub-theme speaks of the participants' experience of losing control and feeling attacked by the thought of killing. All the participants spoke about the killing not being premeditated.

*“It was not intentional and it was not planned. It just happened. I did not plan to commit it, IT JUST HAPPENED.” (444.1) (Sly)*

Although Sly vehemently asserted not intentionally committing filicide, three participants spoke about intending to kill and commit suicide.

*“I concluded that it is better if there is nobody in the family. That is what I ended up doing. Unfortunately ... or let me say fortunately – God did not want that to happen the way it was supposed to happen. He did not want ... maybe if it happened like that I am sure that – maybe there was not going to be anybody who is alive, including me.” (416.40) (Neo)*

Some participants appeared to be concerned about the well-being of their children, and therefore seemed to decide to commit filicide to protect them. For instance, John appeared to kill his children to protect them from his allegedly abusive wife.

*“I wanted to commit suicide about three, four times in that year, but I did not want to leave my children behind. I think I wanted to take them with me to protect them from Lucy. That evening when I decided to kill myself, that is when I decided to kill them too.” (435.39) (John)*

Similarly, Joe seemed to commit filicide to protect his children from suffering by being parentless as the result of having a dead mother and an incarcerated father.

*“What got to me was my realisation that the mother of my children was dead. I thought maybe – that they were still young, so there was no option. I thought there was no option ... because I thought – if maybe I spare their lives and mine, I am still going to be imprisoned and they will still not have parents. So, according to me ... maybe under the influence of SATAN was that the other option ... these children were going to suffer, so I decided to kill them and myself, and that was my solution.”*

*(397.26) (Joe)*

The utterance, *“I thought there was no option”*, indicates that the participant appeared to feel confused and trapped. He did not seem to see alternatives to ensure his children’s well-being after killing their mother, and therefore decided that filicide was the only option to prevent suffering.

Some participants seemed to attempt suicide to prevent themselves from suffering. For instance, Joe spoke of predicting incarceration consequent killing and did not appear to be prepared to go to prison.

*“I had this thought that, this thing has happened, it is above my powers. I realised that obviously, this thing has happened, I don’t have another alternative, besides the one of coming to prison. I just told myself that I am not going to prison.”* (396.40)

*(Joe)*

Joe perhaps attempted suicide to avoid prison. Since, the participants seemed to feel that he had no control over the consequences of committing filicide-homicide, he perhaps saw suicide as a way of having a sense of control over what happens to him.

Some participants seemed to see suicide as a way out of a meaningless life. For instance, John appeared to deeply feel saddened by perceiving his life as purposeless in which he did not seem to see a reason for living.

*“I just wanted to die. I didn’t have a zest for life ((crying)) ... My life stopped”  
(435.48) (John)*

Most participants seemed to feel infuriated by the irresolvable problems which appeared to be uncontrollable. They seemed to be desperate to end the annoying and ‘solutionless’ problems, and therefore appeared to think that extreme violence was a solution.

*“I thought that this situation is out of control, it is better if there is a SOLUTION. And also something that got to me was the way she was busy SHOUTING at me. Well, I tried to get her to be calm, and this side people were everywhere trying to ... However, now I felt this is a family which did not have order because people were everywhere. It seemed like a family which did not have discipline. So, I told myself that I don’t want this thing to happen again and it is better for me to end it today. That is when I went to fetch the gun ... I am really ANNOYED by this situation, so the best way was to end it” (398.26) (Joe)*

The emphasis on the loudly uttered “ANNOYED” indicates that Joe perhaps felt engulfed by extreme feelings of anger which were instigated by the ongoing problems which he seemed to see as ruining his family’s reputation. Joe appeared to feel annoyed by his family becoming a centre of negative attention, and therefore seemed to see killing as a way of protecting his family’s image.

The participants seemed to see themselves as having lacked control over the killing. They appeared to be overwhelmed by questions about the killing but seemed to struggle to make sense of the traumatic event.

*“It is an issue which ATTACKED ME. It seriously attacked me. That is why even now I sometimes sit and think – what exactly happened that there was such a thing? What is the thing that came?” (418.23) (Neo)*

Neo and similarly Joe and John appeared to feel confused by what led them to suddenly decide to kill their children, including the wife in Joe’s case. Neo’s use of “ATTACKED ME” appears to lessen his sense of responsibility in the act by alluding to that he was not in control at the time of the killing, and therefore perhaps implicitly suggesting that he would not have shot his family and killed his child if he had control.

Some participants appeared to be unaware of what they were doing during the killing which seemed to make them sad. They appeared not to recall the act of shooting but seemed to remember that they were overwhelmed by extreme feelings of anger.

*“I don’t remember the whole shooting. I took my gun and went to Anna’s bedroom and shot her first. I cannot remember a shot going off. I cannot remember my hand doing that ((pulling the trigger)) – the jerk of the pistol. I don’t remember shooting her. I apparently shot Joy and John Junior ((crying)). It was like I was in an air conditioner room – and outside here it was 50 degree Celsius. During this whole process, this blank process, the process of shooting them, it felt like my body was exploding with – extreme heat.” (435.14) (John)*

John seemed to be describing a state of dissociative rage in which he appeared to be engulfed by rage, which is indicated by his experience that his body felt like it was exploding with extreme heat. He seemed to dissociate to be able to execute and cope with the traumatic act of killing. The dissociative rage appeared to have led to the participant not seeing what was happening and unable to recall the traumatic incident.

Most participants seemed to feel shocked and hurt by the realisation that they killed their children.

*“I stood up and went to the bedroom. I found the child on the floor when I opened the bedroom door ((teary eyes)). Eish, I saw that ah, I did this thing straight and then I cried.” (417.20) (Neo)*

Neo perhaps hoped that the family shooting which resulted in the death of his child was unreal. The emotional expression, *eish*”, indicates that he seemed to feel disappointed when he realised that the shooting and killing was real after he saw his dead child.

In summary, in *Turning into a ‘monster’*, while two participants appeared to commit filicide to protect their children, most participants seemed to kill including attempting suicide, as in Joe’s and John’s cases, to end infuriating and unsolvable problems. Most participants’ sense of lack of control during the killing seemed to result in them feeling confused, in which some participants appeared unable to make sense of their behaviour and remember what they did during the traumatic incident.

**3.4.2 I did a “big mistake”.** The sub-theme focuses on the participants’ experience of the killing as a “*mistake*”, which seemed to minimise the seriousness of the crime and lessen the participants’ responsibility in the incident.

Some participants appeared to be shocked of their role in killing their children. For instance, Sly seemed to think that filicide is committed by unloving fathers who are evil.

*“I expected that this kind of thing would happen to evil people like – SATANISTS. The way I love him, it would NEVER happen to me, and then I did this kind of thing to him. I did not help him. I did not care for him. I did not expect that it would happen, this thing. Not to me, the way I loved my child.” (447.24) (Sly)*

The loudly uttered “*NEVER*” highlights that Sly appeared to strongly believe that he was incapable of killing his child because he loved him and did not seem to perceive himself as a Satanist. Therefore, the killing appeared to discredit the participant’s self-perception which seemed to induce a sense of disbelief and disappointment. Perhaps the participant could not tolerate the fact that he is capable of killing.

Most participants appeared to deal with the feelings of shame by perceiving people as seeing them as committing a “*mistake*” instead of killing, and therefore lessening the seriousness of the offence.

*“Almost everybody that I was close to knew that Tom was my child. Most of them when they heard this – they were surprised, it was like “the way Sly was close to his son, how could he have done this, unless it was a mistake” (444.35) (Sly)*

Perhaps Sly could not tolerate seeing people whom he appeared to perceive as seeing him as a caring father now seeing him as a killer. Therefore, to avoid feeling ashamed, the participant seemed to see people as seeing him as making a “*mistake*”.

Furthermore, most participants referring to the killing as a “*mistake*” seemed to give them the basis to feel disappointed in people for judging them and no longer recognising the good they did for their nuclear families because of a minor incident.

*“Most of the time you can try to build something good, but a slight mistake can erase all of that.” (399.13) (Joe)*

Therefore, “*mistake*” as used by Joe and similarly Neo and Sly appeared to minimise the nature of the crime.

Some participants considering the killing as a “*mistake*” also seemed to give them a sense of hope of regaining people’s trust.

*“I FEEL THAT THEY COULD SAY “you can go outside tomorrow” so that I can RECTIFY things and people can TRUST ME AGAIN. People can say “no at least this person can see that he did – a big mistake.” (418.49) (Neo)*

Neo’s use of “*mistake*” seemed to allow him to feel confident about someday being able to restore his relationship with people in which they trust and forgive him, and are lenient towards him since he made a “*mistake*” instead of killed.

In summary, in *I did a “big mistake”*, most participants seemed to minimise the seriousness of killing to cope with their unbearable and incompatible experience of being a loving father who committed what might be seen as an evil filicidal act. Lessening the severity of the filicide seemed to reduce their sense of shame, while also helping them maintain their experienced identity as a ‘good father’ and ‘good man’. It also seemed to instil a sense of hope in some participants of someday being trusted by society.

**3.4.3 Regretting killing.** The sub-theme focuses on the participants’ feelings of regret, disappointment, and blame as the result of killing. Most participants seemed to regret making the decision to kill. They appeared to see the killing as causing more problems instead of ending chaos as they had expected.

*“Even with my problem, I tried to tell myself that I am solving the situation, but NO at the end it only created a DISASTER ... It did not work AT ALL.” (398.6) (Joe)*

Joe’s emphasis on “DISASTER” is powerful because it seems to highlight his experience of killing as causing a catastrophe. Therefore, he appeared to be disappointed by his decision because it aggravated his problems instead of solving them.

All the participants seemed to strongly speak about violence against women not being a part of their identities. They did not even appear to want it to be a part of who they are.

*“I never thought about lifting my hand against a woman. It is not me.” (427.4) (John)*

Therefore, the participants appeared to regret committing filicide-homicide because it was not who they felt they were.

*“It also painted all fathers badly, you see, that why are fathers the ones doing this? Even now I don’t feel well that we are talking about this. I feel ashamed that I also form PART of the men that hurt or I have hurt my family or women. So, I don’t think it is a right thing. My plan did not work for me.” (397.36) (Joe)*

Joe seemed to feel ashamed of men who commit domestic violence. He appeared not to be proud of now becoming part of this group of men. Furthermore, he seemed to be ashamed of ruining the identity of fatherhood by painting fathers as killers. Therefore, killing appeared to result in Joe and similarly the other participants losing their preferred identity of not being a killer.

Some participants, therefore, seemed to regret choosing violence to solve problems instead of divorcing which they appeared to see to might have been an appropriate choice because they would still have their sense of self.

*“If I took the right steps – right now it would still be me. Although I would not be with this person, maybe we would have divorced, but it would still be me.” (418.25) (Neo)*

In contrast, Sly appeared to regret undermining his child’s injuries, and therefore not finding him appropriate assistance. He seemed to blame Nyaope for his impulsive decision which led to his irresponsible behaviour.

*“After he became sick I should have immediately looked for help. Nyaope made me think slowly about things that could have helped him. I just made a decision that ah it is a small thing – he will recover.” (447.35) (Sly)*

The participants appeared to be engulfed by feelings of loneliness as the result of being rejected. They seemed to feel saddened by seeing people they once had a relationship with not wanting anything to do with them anymore.

*“A lot of people who maybe – I had a good communication relationship with before the incident have turned their backs on me by distancing themselves ... You end up – seeing yourself as alone.” (399.36) (Joe)*

Most participants appeared to feel sad that they hurt people by committing filicide-homicide. They seemed to blame themselves for robbing people of loved ones.

*“It becomes painful just because I am the one – to be blamed because right now my child feels that she would have a sister, she would have a mother, then – **EVEN ME** maybe I would be involved in – the whole situation.” (414.9) (Neo)*

Neo appeared to feel hurt and guilty of depriving his daughter who survived the killing of having a family.

Some participants seemed unable to bear the immense feelings of guilt. For instance, John appeared to yearn to return everything back to normal in which his children are alive.

*“((Crying)) It’s painful. I just want my kids alive, then I can tell Lucy here are the kids, they are alive! However, I can’t.” (435.42) (John)*

John appeared to feel guilty of robbing his wife of motherhood. He seemed to yearn to bring back his children to life so that his wife can become a mother again. However, he appeared to feel intensely hurt by the filicide being irreversible.

Some participants seemed to feel disappointed in themselves for failing as family men. For instance, Neo appeared to view the filicide and attempted killing as an indication of his incompetence.

*“EISH I feel – disappointed in myself. I feel ashamed. I feel you know what – it means I was not responsible. That is what I feel right now. The way the situation happened, I feel that uish – no, it means that I could not handle my problems.” (418.39) (Neo)*

The loudly uttered “EISH” appears to indicate Neo’s deep feelings of self-disappointment in which he seemed to see himself as having failed to behave like a responsible family man who is capable of managing family affairs.

Furthermore, some participants seemed to feel ashamed of disappointing their extended families by killing. For instance, Neo appeared to feel disappointed in himself for letting his extended family down by shattering their hopes of seeing him successful instead of a killer.

*“I EVEN disappointed my family because I don’t think that they also expected that – one of the good days they would be coming to visit me in prison. They thought that MAYBE – in the future they would hear that man has a top position at work. So, I feel ashamed and a lot.” (418.44) (Neo)*

In summary, in *Regretting killing*, most participants appeared to experience killing having disastrous results to what they perhaps envisaged. The participants seemed to regret killing because it led to them losing their experienced identity as a non-violent man, destroying the image of fatherhood, being rejected by society, while one participant felt he disappointed his extended family. Some participants appeared to see killing as showing that they failed as men.

In conclusion, all the participants appeared to experience failing communication as the core of their intimate/marital problems which led to most participants unable to address issues with their partners/wives, and therefore experiencing problems as accumulating. While some participants appeared to attempt to solve problems by confronting their partners/wives and oscillating between confrontation and avoidance-withdrawal, some participants completely avoided confrontation, but issues remained unresolved. Most participants’ ability to inhibit and avoid issues seemed to diminish resulting in them erupting with violence.

Most participants who seemed to draw on dominant socio-gendered and cultural constructions to assume their roles as men in relation to their partners/wives appeared to employ violence and non-violent tactics when experiencing a threat to their masculinity. They seemed to use violent and non-violent tactics to restore and protect their sense of manhood and eliminate the threat, while some participants also extorted respect. Although

most participants' feelings of threat seemed to be perpetuated by perceiving their partners/wives as wanting to separate with them, the experience of threat appeared to be extremely escalated in one participant who appeared to see his wife as his 'possession'.

Although most participants seemed to reject their in-laws' help in relation to their extended families, none of the family members seemed able to solve the couples' issues. Most participants seemed to feel annoyed by the irresolvable problems. They appeared to perceive extreme violence as a last resort to solving issues. However, the participants appeared to be greatly shocked by the disastrous effects of killing. They seemed to regret the permanent and irreversible nature of the killing, the relational impact on those who survived and their relationships with them, and most importantly the identity implications of trying to incorporate their actions into an acceptable sense of self. The participants appeared to reduce the seriousness of the filicide-homicide to cope and preserve their perceived identity as a good father.

### Family Participants: The Mothers

A heterogeneous sample of the family members made it impossible to obtain homogeneity which is required by Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) (Smith, Flowers, & Larkin, 2009). Therefore, this section reports the findings of two mothers, Mary and June, of two filicidal participants, Joe and Sly, respectively. It presents the themes and sub-themes which were analysed during the analysis of the two mothers' experiences of the filicide and the events leading to the filicide, and also their interpretations of their filicidal sons' experiences of the killing. However, the interpretations and conclusions of the participants' experiences should be drawn with caution. Table 9 presents the master and superordinate themes which are explored.

Table 9: *Master and superordinate themes of the family participants: The mothers*

| <b>MASTER THEMES</b>                             | <b>SUPERORDINATE THEMES</b>                  |
|--|--|
| <b>EXPERIENCING THEIR LOVE AS CONFUSING</b>      | Discovering their love to be a façade        |
|  | Feeling undisturbed vs disappointed          |
| <b>FEELING DEFENSIVE</b>                         | Perceiving us parenting amidst chaos         |
|  | Suspecting us seen as rejecting the children |
| <b>SHARING FEELINGS OF BEING TRAPPED</b>         | Sharing feelings of disapproval              |
|  | Seeing us not having a way out               |
| <b>CAUGHT UNPREPARED BY A "POWERFUL TORNADO"</b> | Never expecting him to kill                  |
|  | Worrying about son being rejected            |

### 3.5 Experiencing their Love as Confusing

This theme explores the two mothers' feelings of confusion about their filicidal sons' intimate/marital relationships. The participants seemed to have an impression of their filicidal

sons not having relationship problems. Mary and June appeared to feel hurt by their filicidal sons not confiding in them. Although Mary seemed to feel disappointed by the couple's relationship failing, June did not seem to be shocked because she appeared to see her filicidal son as not committed to his then partner. The sub-themes, *Discovering their love to be a façade*, and *Feeling disappointed by shattered love*, are discussed.

**3.5.1 Discovering their love to be a façade.** This sub-theme explores the participants' experience of confusion and disappointment when discovering their filicidal sons' intimate/marital relationship problems. The two mothers seemed to lack knowledge of the couples' issues. For instance, Mary appeared to feel certain that the couple were happy.

*"I don't know. They did not tell me. They were always happy whenever I visited them. They were always happy and laughing even when they visited me this side, and they did not tell me anything." (456.5) (Mary)*

Mary's emphasis on "always happy" indicates that she did not seem to perceive any issues of concern between her filicidal son and his wife, but instead she appeared to see them enjoying each other's company. The underlined utterance also suggests that Mary did not seem to perceive deception if the couple had problems which they were perhaps concealing.

The participants appeared to feel confused when discovering that their filicidal sons and their partners/wives were not getting along.

*"I kept on bringing them stuff for the baby. In the meantime, Sly removed himself from them, even though he did not show me. There was a way that he removed*

*himself from – this girl. BUT I DID not see that. He removed himself, there was no relationship between them.” (511.39) (June)*

Among most Black South Africans, when a couple is unmarried and they have a child, and the woman stays with her parents, the child also lives with the maternal family. Therefore, the term “*them*” seems to refer to the child’s maternal family. June appeared to help support the child by giving the maternal family things for the baby because she seemed to think that Sly and his partner were romantically involved. She loudly uttered, “*BUT I DID not see that*”, appears to indicate June’s experience of confusion and shock when discovering that the couple had separated. She seemed to be confused about how her filicidal son ended the relationship without her knowledge.

The two mothers appeared to be confused and hurt by their filicidal sons not telling them their problems especially since they seemed to think that they had a close mother-son relationship.

*“Joe and I have a good and open relationship, but he did not tell me anything.”  
(456.13) (Mary)*

June seemed to be aware of the couple only having minor issues.

*“There were no issues – it’s like DEEP ISSUES that these people are fighting, no. There were no issues. They were not there ... The small issues were like – maybe they – had some disagreements.” (510.13) (June)*

By referring to problems as not “*DEEP ISSUES*” but “*small issues*” and emphasising them as “*disagreements*” appears to suggest that June perhaps did not take the couple’s fights seriously. Perhaps she considered the perceived problems as normal issues couples might experience.

In summary, in *Discovering their love to be a façade*, the two mothers did not seem to be entirely without awareness of the couples’ problems. Although they spoke of being unaware of any problems, June appeared to be aware of some concerns which she did not seem to judge to be of a serious nature.

**3.5.2 Feeling undisturbed vs disappointed.** This sub-theme focuses on the differences in the participants’ experiences of their filicidal sons’ intimate/marital relationships. Although the participants appeared to have similarities in their meanings, there seemed to be some differences in their perceptions and expectations of the couples. For instance, June seemed to confidently perceive her filicidal son as not committed to his then partner.

*“I did not see him being committed to her. That is how I observed their relationship. The child was born but even after the birth Sly never ... He was never – INTERESTED in having a relationship with this lady.” (511.13) (June)*

The emphasis on “*observed*” and the loudly uttered “*INTERESTED*” appeared to highlight June’s feelings of certainty about not seeing love. Referring to her son’s then partner as “*this lady*” instead of using her name also seemed to indicate June’s lack of

interest in the woman whom she appeared not to want her son to be romantically involved with her. Therefore, June perhaps expected the relationship not to last long.

In contrast, Mary seemed to have high hopes and appeared to expect the couple to have a lifelong marriage. She seemed to expect her filicidal son and daughter-in-law to have a supportive marital relationship.

*“I was hoping that they would be together until I die so that they could bury me. I wished only the best and goodness for their marriage. I thought that they would take good care of each other.” (453.8) (Mary)*

Furthermore, Mary seemed to confidently perceive her daughter-in-law as committed to her marriage in which she did not appear to intend to separate from her husband.

*“I thought Sue told herself ‘This is where I am staying until – I become a grandmother. I thought she had that kind of commitment.’ (458.5) (Mary)*

Mary appeared to be shocked and disappointed by her filicidal son’s failing marital relationship.

*“I am really shocked because I expected – that he would build a good family with his wife and they would grow old together, raise their grandchildren together, and also care for me. I thought they would be together. However, now he did this thing ((crying)).” (458.37) (Mary)*

The participant seemed to be deeply saddened by the discredited expectations of her filicidal son having a successful marriage. Mary's sense of shock by the couple's shattered marital relationship appeared to be precipitated by her only making positive expectancies about the couple's relationship in which she did not seem to expect them to experience problems.

The sub-theme, *Feeling undisturbed vs disappointed*, captured the two mothers' different expectancies of their filicidal sons' intimate/marital relationships. While Mary seemed to feel deeply disappointed and shocked by her filicidal son's marriage failing because it disconfirmed her expectancies of his marital relationship, June appeared to feel undisturbed because the perceived failing relationship confirmed her expectancies of her filicidal son's relationship.

### **3.6 Feeling Defensive**

This theme discusses the participants' experience of defending their parenting roles and that of their filicidal sons. Feelings of frustration about unshared parental responsibilities and feeling blamed and judged appeared to precipitate the discord between the participants and the families-in-law. The participants seemed to feel annoyed by the in-laws interfering in their filicidal sons' relationship with their children. The participants seemed to feel saddened by the perceived feelings of resentment towards the children who appeared to be seen as the centre of the family conflict. The sub-themes, *Perceiving us parenting amidst chaos* and *Sensing us seen as rejecting the children*, are explored.

**3.6.1 Perceiving us parenting amidst chaos.** This sub-theme speaks of the discord between the participants and the in-laws concerning parenting roles. Some of the issues between the participants and the in-laws appeared to involve unshared parental responsibilities. For instance, June seemed to feel infuriated by the child's maternal family not helping her care for her filicidal son's child before the killing.

*“Those people the way I saw them, me, they are DEMANDING people, even when it is not necessary. They will say that they took the child to the doctor and wanted me to pay them back ... I fought with them a lot over the issue of demanding. I was taking care of that child.” (511.22) (June)*

The emphasis on the loudly uttered “DEMANDING” seems to highlight June's feelings of anger towards the child's maternal family. The participant appeared to feel pressured to look after the child before the killing which seemed to result in her perceiving the maternal family making her be an uncaring grandmother. June perhaps fought with the family to defend her identity as a responsible grandmother. Referring to the family as “*those people*” seems to indicate her feelings of resentment towards them.

The two mothers appeared to feel judged by the in-laws and they seemed to sense being perceived as incompetent parents who did not care about their filicidal sons' relationships problems.

*“I remember this other time which made me angry when Jack [Mary's son-in-law] phoned and said, “You are sitting there at your home while Joe and Sue are*

*fighting.” He told me “You will see!” He said that Sue opened a case against Joe. It was the first time I heard that she filed a case against him.” (458.10) (Mary)*

Based on Mary’s interpretation, her son-in-law seemed to inform her of the seriousness of the couple’s problems which he appeared to see as likely to have dangerous consequences. However, this seemed to provoke Mary’s feelings of anger<sup>12</sup> in which she appeared to perceive her son-in-law as seeing her as disinterested in remedying the couple’s conflict, and therefore being an irresponsible mother. The participant seemed to defend her role as a caring mother by highlighting her lack of awareness of the conflict, which she appeared to allude contributed to her not intervening.

The participants’ feelings of anger seemed to be perpetuated by perceiving the children’s maternal families accusing their filicidal sons of failing to care for their children.

*“They once came here and claimed to have seen – WOUNDS on the child. Yes, he was HURT. The dashboard hurt him. He hit the dashboard of the car. They came and said that “No, we saw that the child was not alright.” I told them that Sly said he was injured by the dashboard. That is the only time they came here. And then they said that they saw the child ... The buttocks ... I don’t know how they said the buttocks looked ... It is like that, that my son is hurting the child. That is what they said.” (510.30) (June)*

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<sup>12</sup> Constructs of transition (Kelly, 1955), anger, hostility, fear, and threat, in this section are not used terms of personal construct theory.

The loudly uttered “*WOUNDS*” and “*HURT*” seems to accentuate June’s feelings of anger of the child’s maternal family accusing her filicidal son of negligence and allegedly harming the child. June seemed to be aware of some of the child’s injuries to which she defended her filicidal son not to have caused intentionally.

Although the participants repeatedly reported that they did not know anything, the two quotes above are significant as they reinforce that they appeared to have some awareness of the seriousness of the couples’ situation because the in-laws informed and warned them, and they also seemed to notice alarming issues. However, Mary and June described not being aware of the couples’ serious conflict and also their filicidal sons being allegedly a danger to their children, respectively, and therefore they reacted with anger to the complaints and warnings.

The two mothers seemed to feel defensive of their filicidal sons’ parenting roles.

*“I asked them that ‘If you say that you saw something wrong don’t ever give Sly the child since you are saying that Sly hit the child against the dashboard.” (510.38)*

*(June)*

June’s feelings of anger seemed to escalate to verbal violence in which she prohibited the child’s maternal family from giving the filicidal father the child. The violence appeared to be used to protect the offender by stopping the accusations and preventing further allegations.

Furthermore, the offenders’ fatherhood identities seemed to be defended by the participants portraying them as better childcare givers compared to the in-laws. For instance,

June appeared to see her filicidal son as concerned about the well-being of his child while staying with the child's maternal family.

*“Sly also said “you know what mom – I want this child to come stay with us. It seems he is not well cared for there ... He does not appear to be alright when I fetch him from there. It's like he is always dirty. Look I have to bath and make him presentable every time we get home.”” (509.31) (June)*

June seemed to see the filicidal father as worried about the maternal family neglecting his child. The participant appeared to perceive her filicidal son seeing himself and her as more capable of caring for the child compared to the child's maternal family.

In summary, in *Perceiving us parenting amidst chaos*, although the two mothers reported not having knowledge of the issues, they seemed to be informed and warned about the danger involved in their filicidal sons' relationships with their partners/wives and children. The participants appeared to be angered by the complaints which they perhaps interpreted as disconfirming their experienced roles as good parents and perceived roles of their filicidal sons as responsible fathers. Therefore, the participants defended their identities as responsible parents and that of their filicidal sons in which June also used violence.

**3.6.2 Sensing us seen as rejecting the children.** This sub-theme explores the participants' sense that they, their filicidal sons, and extended families were perhaps seen as rejecting the children. There seemed to be a sense that the participants attempted to defend their feelings of acceptance of the children by repeatedly stating, *“We never had a problem” (509.16) (June).*

The two mothers appeared to show that they and their extended families welcomed the grandchildren whom they regarded to be part of the family.

*“I accepted it and said that it was fine the baby will be my grandchild especially since I only have one child. We never had a problem with that ... We considered him to be part of our family.” (509.14) (June)*

June seemed to indicate that she and her extended family accepted her filicidal son's child even though he was born out of wedlock.

Mary seemed to defend her feelings and perceived filicidal son's and extended family's feelings of acceptance of the children by speaking about the paid lobola, which is a South African cultural practice in which the groom offers money to the bride's family to unite the two families (Galván, 2014).

*“Joe had a good relationship with Dan [Mary's step-grandson]. He did everything for him and cared for him like he was his son. Joe loved Dan, and we also loved him, and that is why we took him with his mother when we paid lobola. Dan stopped staying with his mother and Joe because of Sue's parents. They did not want Dan to stay with Joe and Sue. The problem started after Sue received grant money for Dan, but all this time he was staying with them, and her parents did not have a problem.” (454.28) (Mary)*

The participant appeared to defend her filicidal son's feelings of love for his stepson whom she seemed to see her filicidal son treating like he was his biological child. Mary

seemed to allude to that her step-grandchild did not leave because her filicidal son resented him. Instead, she appeared to be angered by the in-laws destroying her filicidal son's nuclear family by taking her step-grandchild. By referring to lobola, Mary appeared to explicitly highlight that while she and her extended family wanted to unite the two families, the in-laws were destroying the families.

Furthermore, the participants appeared to defend their perceived filicidal sons' loving relationship with the children by portraying the in-laws as resenting the non-biological children. For instance, Mary seemed to be feel confused by perceiving her daughter-in-law resenting her filicidal son's cousin.

*"They were fighting over pocket money. Sue did not want Joe to give his cousin pocket money. That is all I know. I don't know why she had issues with Joe giving his cousin pocket money ... The problem was that Sue did not want the girl in the house."*  
(454.24) (Mary)

Although Mary seemed to have insufficient information on the couple's situation, she appeared to have an awareness of her filicidal son and his wife fighting over the care of the non-biological children. She seemed to be confused about why her daughter-in-law did not want her filicidal son to support his cousin. The participant perhaps perceived her filicidal son as 'caught in the middle' of a bitter parental rejection.

The sub-theme, *Sensing us seen as rejecting the children*, reflected the participants' perception of the children as the core conflict of the two families in which Mary also seemed to see the fight between her filicidal son and daughter-in-law to involve their inability to

agree on issues concerning the children's well-being. While the participants appeared to defend that they, their filicidal sons, and extended families accepted the children irrespective of their backgrounds, Mary seemed to blame the in-laws including daughter-in-law for causing problems by having issues with her filicidal son caring for his non-biological children.

### **3.7 Sharing Feelings of being Trapped**

The theme explores the participants' sense of sharing similar feelings of disapproval and experience of being trapped with their filicidal sons in a relationship with the families-in-law in which they seemed to feel helpless. The two mothers appeared to see themselves and their filicidal sons having a different world to that of the in-laws. The sub-themes, *Sharing feelings of disapproval* and *Seeing us not having a way out*, are explored.

**3.7.1 Sharing feelings of disapproval.** This sub-theme considers that the participants perceived themselves and their filicidal sons trapped in a relationship with the in-laws whom they disapproved of their views and ways of doing things. The participants seemed to see themselves and their filicidal sons struggling to understand and relate to the in-laws.

*"I just thought 'EISH, Sly likes acquainting us with people that I don't quite understand.' In the meantime, Sly also did not like – the lady ... However, he never told me that he does not like her, he just said "EISH, those people are somehow, and I don't understand them. They are somehow ... Eish, that family. Eish, those people are not right, no mom." (511.31) (June)*

The repeated and loudly uttered, “*EISH*”, indicates that June seemed to perceive herself and filicidal son feeling irritated by the child’s maternal family. June appeared to feel annoyed with her son for acquainting her to people whom she could not make sense of their views. The term “*somehow*” indicates that she seemed to perceive her filicidal son as also unable to make sense of his child’s maternal family.

The participants appeared to feel shocked by the in-laws’ way of life. For instance, June seemed unable to tolerate her grandson’s maternal family and did not appear to want to have a family relationship with them.

*“I – saw them when they came here that ‘Oh! This family is like this.’ They are not people that I can have a relationship with.” (511.35) (June)*

Perhaps the participants’ feelings of disapproval of the in-laws was perpetuated by the perceived difference in their ways of doing things. For instance, Mary appeared to be concerned about her son-in-law interfering in her filicidal son’s marital relationship.

*“Jack [Mary’s son-in-law] became jealous of Joe because he also wanted Joe’s car ... Jack became jealous because Joe and Sue were very close. They had a good marriage. Joe and Sue were very close, too much. I don’t really know what Jack was doing to them. I don’t really know what he did to them. I don’t know what he was doing to his sister, Sue. I don’t know if he was maybe shouting at them or what.” (457.15) (Mary)*

Although Mary seemed to be confused about how her son-in-law destroyed a relationship which she appeared to see as strong, as indicated by the emphasis on “*close too much*”, she suspected that he perhaps abused them. She seemed to see his motives of destroying their marriage fuelled by intense feelings of jealousy.

Additionally, Mary appeared to be shocked to learn that her son-in-law allegedly abused her filicidal son.

*“Joe testified in Court that Jack hit him and took his money to support his family. That is what I heard in Court. That was the first time I heard such news. Joe has never told me that Jack was doing those things to him. You could also see that he was scared of Jack.” (458.22) (Mary)*

The participants seemed to see the in-laws as intimidating. For instance, Mary appeared to feel frightened of the in-laws.

*“When Jack looked at us ijoo – I am scared of those people.” (458.26) (Mary)*

The South African emotional expression, “*ijoo*”, seems to highlight Mary’s feelings of fear of the in-laws. However, drawing on her two quotes above, the participant appeared to see herself and filicidal son sharing similar feelings of fear of the in-laws.

The in-laws also seemed to be perceived as intimidating the filicidal offenders’ partners/wives. For instance, Mary appeared to be shocked by realising that her son-in-law intimidated her daughter-in-law by threatening her so that she gets out of her marriage.

*“Sue told me that her brother is fighting with her. That is what she told me. She also told me that her brother said that he did not think that she would live very long if she stayed with my son, Joe. That is what I know and I was shocked. This thing happened after Jack said those things, so I don’t know.” (456.36) (Mary)*

Although Mary’s son-in-law’s threats appeared to be aimed at protecting his sister by forcing her to get out of what he perhaps saw as a dangerous marriage, his approach seemed to be perceived as threatening and led to Mary feeling frightened and failing to see his warning as serious. Instead, she appeared to perceive her son-in-law as a threat to her filicidal son’s marriage, rather than her son being a danger to his wife and children. Therefore, Mary’s sense of fear of her son-in-law seemed to result in her failing to work with him to intervene in the couple’s problems and perhaps prevent the killing.

Mary’s three quotes above are significant because they indicate that she appeared to perceive herself, filicidal son, and daughter-in-law as sharing an experience of being intimidated by her son-in-law whom they were scared of and felt defenceless towards.

In summary, in *Sharing feelings of disapproval*, the two mothers seemed to see themselves and their filicidal sons as in a relationship with a family they did not have anything in common with regarding their ways of making meaning and behaviour. Mary’s inability to make sense of the in-laws appeared to result in her failing to intervene with them in her filicidal son’s marital problems, especially since she seemed to see them as the instigators of problems.

**3.7.2 Seeing us not having a way out.** This sub-theme explores the participants' sense of being trapped with their filicidal sons in an incompatible and conflict-ridden relationship with the in-laws. For instance, June appeared to see her filicidal son as trapped in a relationship with a woman whom he did not seem to love because of his child.

*“He did not have a problem with being a father. However, he was not in love with his partner.” (511.47) (June)*

The incompatible situation involving the in-laws, and the offenders' partners/wives and children appeared to trigger a sense of confusion. For instance, June seemed to perceive her filicidal son as in a dilemma of loving his child and despising the child's maternal family.

*“He told himself that he was going to be a father to his child. He was going to care for his child, and he was going to be with his child. However, on the other side, he was looking at his ex-girlfriend's family and found that it is not a family that he would like to have a relationship with.” (512.7) (June)*

June seemed to see her filicidal son determined to be a responsible father. However, she appeared to perceive him feeling confused about how to be a father to his child without having to have a relationship with his child's maternal family.

Similar to perceiving their filicidal sons as trapped, the two mothers also appeared to see themselves as not having a way out. For instance, June seemed to see her filicidal son impregnating his then partner as forcing her to have a relationship with people whom she did not know and have an understanding of.

*“That is why I am saying that I DON’T KNOW THEIR RELATIONSHIP. I just saw them coming to tell me that Mpho was pregnant. I was even SURPRISED I was like ‘Aah, I don’t know this girl – I have never seen her.’ However, there is nothing I can do when a girl is pregnant, and he also accepts that he is responsible for it.” (509.5)  
(June)*

June seemed unable to find a way out of the relationship especially since her filicidal son accepted responsibility of the pregnancy which appeared to result in her feeling helpless and frustrated. The emphasis on the loudly uttered utterances in which the participant reported not having knowledge of the relationship or her filicidal son’s then partner appears to highlight her strong feelings of resentment of being indefinitely related to the child’s maternal family.

The participants seemed to justify hostile experiences with the in-laws in which they appeared to feel defenceless. For instance, Mary seemed to see the in-laws verbally attacking her as justifiable because her son killed.

*“Sue’s family swore at me, they used all the offensive words they could think of. What could I say because my child did a bad thing? ... My child did this bad thing, and I cannot excuse his behaviour. Sue’s family were – somehow towards me during the funeral, but I did not fight with them because – my child did this terrible thing.”  
(456.35) (Mary)*

The emphasis on “bad thing” appears to indicate Mary’s sense of deserving to be insulted and punished as a consequence for her son committing filicide-homicide. Therefore,

she seemed to surrender to the justified hostility. Mary's experience appears to be significant because it highlights that although the offenders are usually the ones punished for their crimes, some family members also seem to be subject to societal punishment.

The participants seemed to feel overwhelmed by the intrafamilial fighting and appeared to experience the violence as intolerable.

*"I was just sitting there, and they were fighting me. I could not take it anymore."*  
(457.16) (Mary).

The sub-theme, *Seeing us not having a way out*, captured the two mothers' sense of wanting to get out of an unbearable relationship with the in-laws but not seeing a way out, and hence they felt helpless. June seemed to see herself and filicidal son as forced to remain in the relationship because of her grandchild, while Mary appeared to succumb to the experienced attacks by the in-laws because of the paternal filicide.

### **3.8 Caught Unprepared by a "Powerful Tornado"**

The theme discusses the two mothers' experience of being caught unprepared by the killing which appeared to strike them like a powerful and destructive force especially since no parent expects her child to take another person's life. There were some similarities and differences in the two mothers' lived experience of filicide. For instance, Mary's son, Joe, committed filicide-homicide and attempted suicide, while June's son, Sly, only committed filicide. However, the participants seemed to feel overwhelmed, devastated, and confused by the painful reality of their sons killing. They appeared to be concerned about their filicidal

sons being rejected. The sub-themes, *Never expecting him to kill* and *Worrying about son being rejected*, are discussed.

**3.8.1 Never expecting him to kill.** This sub-theme explores the participants' powerful feelings of shock by the unexpected filicide-homicide. Associating the killing with a strong and violent storm seems to suggest that the participants were caught unprepared by the killing in which they appeared to lack control.

*"This thing that happened like a powerful tornado." (453.7) (Mary)*

The emphasis on a "powerful tornado" indicates that Mary seemed to experience the traumatic incident as abrupt and intense.

The two mothers seemed to be shaken and traumatised by the killing because they did not appear to expect their filicidal sons to be capable of killing.

*"My mother then told me that Joe had killed them. I was very shocked when she told me the news because I did not know that Joe could commit something like this."*

*(454.6) (Mary)*

Mary's experience appears to be understandable because most mothers do not expect their children to one day kill people and more so their family members, and hence that is why she seemed to be in disbelief.

The participants seemed to strongly expect intimate/marital relationship problems to contribute to the filicide-homicide.

*“THERE ARE SERIOUS ISSUES which can even make you commit suicide.”*

*(512.39) (June)*

June’s quote is powerful because she seems to indicate that overwhelming problems can lead some people to perceive extreme violence as the only solution.

Therefore, the filicide-homicide occurring in a perceived absence of relationship problems appeared to induce feelings of confusion.

*“But they wanted serious issues that he and Mpho had. However, they could not find any issues which could have led Sly to kill his child. They were saying “what was it?” And even Mpho said “Sly and I did not have problems.” They wanted to know what he and Mpho were fighting over which could have led to the child ... Sly ... That things became like this for him. However, we could not understand it and find – serious issues.” (512.39) (June)*

The term “*But*” and the emphasis on the underlined utterances indicated that June seemed to see herself and other people as desperately looking for “*serious issues*” that led to the killing, and therefore appeared to be puzzled by the failure to find the issues. However, June seemed to fail to consider that her filicidal son perhaps experienced her previously perceived “*small issues*” as big. Therefore, they perhaps failed to find the “*serious issues*”

because they were looking for them based on their expectations and not the experience of her filicidal son.

Furthermore, the discredited expectations of filicide-homicide occurring in troubled relationships seemed to provoke a sense of shock. For instance, Mary appeared to be devastated by her filicidal son killing his happy nuclear family.

*“They hardly fought with each other. I was really shocked when I was called and told that this thing has happened – because I always found them happy and laughing whenever I visited them. They had a good marriage.” (453.12) (Mary)*

The utterance *“hardly fought”* is important because it supports the above argument of Mary and June perhaps judging the couples’ problems and conflict as minor, and therefore feeling confused and shocked by the killing occurring in a happy and problem-free family environment. Perceiving the couples’ issues as minor suggests that the participants perhaps did not expect the situation to end ‘bloody’, and therefore did not take it seriously.

In a desperate search for answers, the participants appeared to explore various factors. For instance, Mary seemed to consider evil forces to make sense of the filicide-homicide.

*“I don’t know – what darkness came over him which – made my child do this thing because they had good communication.” (455.31) (Mary)*

Since Mary appeared to expect the couple to be able to talk through issues because of her perception of their good communication relationship, she seemed to try to understand the

killing by blaming an evil force, as suggested by “*darkness*”, which she appeared to see as possessing her son and leading him to kill.

In contrast, June seemed to blame Nyaope for leading her filicidal son to neglect his child which resulted in the child’s death.

*“That is what led Sly to make this mistake which resulted in his child not being here today. This Nyaope that he was smoking. IT came FIRST, and in the meantime, he forgot that he was responsible for a child.” (513.45) (June)*

The emphasis on, “*IT came FIRST*”, appears to highlight June’s feelings of anger with her son for prioritising Nyaope over his child.

The participants seemed to feel frustrated by their inability to find answers despite being overwhelmed by questions about the killing.

*“I am still shocked even now because I don’t know what made him to do this thing. I am still asking myself different questions even now ... Eish! I don’t know. I don’t find answers to my questions. I am always asking myself questions – but I don’t have the answers to what happened which led him to kill his family ((tearful)).” (455.17)*  
*(Mary)*

Mary seems to be describing a painful process of being caught in a state of confusion in which she is constantly ruminating and rethinking about the traumatic incident, but is

unable to make sense of it. The emotional expression, “*Eish!*”, seems to highlight her feelings of frustration.

The participants seemed to experience the reality of their sons killing their children including the wife, in Joe’s case, Mary’s filicidal son, as unbearable. Therefore, June appeared to cope by minimising the seriousness of the killing.

*“I know that the thing that made him commit this mistake – is smoking. He smoked this thing that you find on the street – NYAOPE when this thing happened.” (513.35)*  
*(June)*

The term “*mistake*” appears to indicate June’s attempt to minimise the nature of the filicide. Perhaps June could not bear to think of her son as having killed, and therefore preferred to think about him as having committed a “*mistake*”. She also seemed to protect her filicidal son’s identity so that he is perhaps not seen as a killer.

Furthermore, the participants appeared to attempt to protect their filicidal sons by painting them as not having had control over the situation.

*“I think that it is something that just suddenly happened, just like that.” (454.48)*  
*(Mary)*

The participants seemed to experience the filicide-homicide as robbing them of loved ones.

*“Eish! It is everything. I lost my son, my daughter-in-law, and my grandchildren.”*

*(455.27) (Mary)*

The emotional expression, “*Eish!*”, seems to accentuate Mary’s deep feelings of sadness and disappointment of her whole world being shattered. It is interesting that Mary appears to experience the killing as also taking her son because although he survived the attempted suicide, she perhaps feels that she lost him because he is now incarcerated. Furthermore, the significant part of her perception of him as incapable of killing is now gone forever.

The sub-theme, *Never expecting him to kill*, captured the participants’ tremendous sense of shock. Although the participants appeared to be puzzled by the filicide-homicide not triggered by intimate/marital problems, they seemed to be aware of some issues in their filicidal sons’ intimate/marital relationships which they appeared to underestimate and perhaps did not expect to lead to their sons killing. The participants seemed to struggle to make sense of the traumatic incident, and therefore June appeared to make meaning by perceiving her son as committing a mistake which lessened the seriousness of the filicide while preserving her perceived identity of her son as not a killer.

**3.8.2 Worrying about son being rejected.** This sub-theme explores the participants’ sense of worry about their filicidal sons losing their identities as good fathers and being judged and outcast by a society which condemns domestic violence.

The two mothers appeared to express concern about their filicidal sons becoming socio-culturally unacceptable fathers because of the filicide-homicide.

*“Eish! I don’t know what to say. He did something that is wrong. He did something that is against my culture. My culture does not encourage men to kill their wives and children. I don’t know maybe the Xhosa<sup>13</sup> people would see him as a bad person.”*  
(458.34) (Mary)

The participants seemed to be immensely worried about their filicidal sons losing their identities as good fathers and being seen as killers.

*“Eish! It is tough because they are seeing him as a killer. I don’t think they will ever see him as a loving and caring father. He was a good father, but this thing is making people see him as a killer, eish. They are obviously going to see him as bad because my culture does not encourage men to kill their children. No, this thing is not supported by my culture.”* (519.15) (June)

June’s experience of *“It is tough”* seems to echo Mary’s experience in which they appeared to struggle to accept the reality of their filicidal sons no longer seen as loving fathers but now bad people and killers. The participants seemed to show an interesting distinction between their cultures and those which appear to support violence particularly against women in a patriarchal society, e.g., honour killings. Therefore, they appeared to be frustrated, as indicated by the emotional expression of *“Eish!”*, by the people of their culture judging and rejecting their filicidal sons as punishment for wronging and deviating from their cultural beliefs.

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<sup>13</sup> Xhosa people are one of the ethnic subgroups in South Africa who adhere to Xhosa cultural beliefs.

However, the participants seemed to perceive themselves as responding differently to the killing in comparison to society. For instance, Mary appeared to accept her filicidal son even though she did not condone the offence.

*“But I still see him as a good person – even though I am shocked by this thing which he did.” (458.36) (Mary)*

In summary, in *Worrying about son being rejected*, the participants seemed to perceive the filicide-homicide as defying their cultural values, and therefore they appeared to be seriously worried about their filicidal sons being judged and rejected. The expected and perceived loss of their filicidal sons’ identities in which the participants seemed to see them being seen as killers appeared to be frustrating and painful, in which Mary seemed to cope by refusing to reject her filicidal son.

In conclusion, this study explored the two mothers’ experiences of the killing and their interpretations of their filicidal sons’ experiences of the filicide-homicide. The participants seemed unable to tolerate the perceived evidence and the complaints about their filicidal sons having serious problems with their partners/wives and also being a danger to their children, as in the case of June. The two mothers did not seem to take the perceived problems and the issues they were informed about seriously because they did not appear to think that the situation would result in their children killing.

Mary and June seemed to see the in-laws as a threat to them and their filicidal sons. Therefore, instead of attending to the in-laws’ warnings, the participants appeared to become angry and defensive. The tense situation between the participants and the in-laws, in which

June reported not to understand her grandson's maternal family, also seemed to contribute to the participants failing to work with the in-laws to address their filicidal sons' intimate/marital issues.

Other factors which seemed to contribute to the participants not intervening involved a sense of having insufficient insight into the issues seen as perpetuating the couples' fights. Mary appeared to be aware that the couple were fighting over childcare, but seemed not to have a full understanding of the fight. This perhaps prevented her from developing intervention measures to de-escalate the perceived parental conflict.

Although the two mothers did not seem to condone the filicide-homicide, they appeared to be deeply worried about the predicted relational and relationship effects including an experience of rejection which their filicidal sons perhaps might experience consequent killing. However, Mary also appeared to experience the filicide-homicide affecting her relationship with the in-laws who became violent towards her to which she succumbed as perhaps punishment for her son killing.

### Family Participants: The Sisters

As mentioned previously, homogeneity could not be obtained because of a heterogeneous sample of the family members. Therefore, this section reports the analysed experiences of the two sisters, April and May, of Joe and Neo, respectively. However, the interpretations and conclusions of the two sisters' experiences of the killing and their interpretations of the offenders' experiences of filicide-homicide should be drawn with caution. Table 10 presents analysed master and superordinate themes which are discussed.

Table 10: *Master and superordinate themes of the family participants: The sisters*

| MASTER THEMES                          | SUPERORDINATE THEMES                    |
|--|---|
| <b>PERCEIVING A MARRIAGE FAILING</b>   | Feeling worried                         |
|  | Feeling excluded                        |
| <b>DISCOVERING THEIR DECEPTION</b>     | Seeing them acting happy amidst chaos   |
|  | Gradually feeling disappointed          |
| <b>FEELING CAUGHT IN THE MIDDLE</b>    | Feeling blamed                          |
|  | Experiencing helplessness               |
| <b>THE KILLING AN ACT OF 'MADNESS'</b> | Struggling to make sense of the killing |
|  | Feeling sympathy                        |

### 3.9 Perceiving a Marriage Failing

This theme explores the participants' sense of concern before the killing about their filicidal brothers' intimate/marital relationships failing. While May seemed to be worried about the couple's problems involving anger<sup>14</sup> related issues, April appeared to be deeply

<sup>14</sup> Constructs of transition (Kelly, 1955), anger and anxiety, in this section are not used in terms of personal construct theory.

concerned about the couple's intimate partner violence. The participants seemed to feel angered and disappointed by the couples not informing them about their problems. The sub-themes, *Feeling worried* and *Feeling excluded*, are discussed.

**3.9.1 Feeling worried.** The sub-theme explores the participants' sense of worry about their filicidal brothers' intimate/marital relationships. Issues concerning anger appeared to be expected to contribute to the couples' problems. For instance, May seemed to strongly expect the couple's inability to manage their feelings of anger to instigate their fights.

*"I thought because of – their anger they would maybe have problems in their marriage."* (498.36) (May)

There appeared to be a feeling of doubt about the couples' intimate/marital relationships being successful. For instance, May seemed to perceive her filicidal brother and sister-in-law as incapable of dealing with problems which induce feelings of anger.

*"When a person is not yet matured you will find that even small things make them angry, and then they take their things and leave. Both of them left, she left with her husband. You see how this thing is like? It means that there is immaturity somewhere."* (498.25) (May)

The participant appeared to see the couple as easily angered and unable to make decisions without being influenced by their feelings of anger. May seemed to be shocked by their immaturity in which she perceived them as unable to guide each other to avoid making impulsive decisions when feeling angry.

The participants seemed to expect the couples to be united in which they see them together most of the time. Therefore, May appeared to feel worried about her filicidal brother and sister-in-law attending functions separately.

*“People tend to come to functions together when they are staying in the same house, especially when they are newly married. However, I realised that – they were ... There was ... How can I put it? I could say almost a slight friction because sometimes they did not attend family functions together, they came separately. It is like you could see that they are not ((holding hands)), so we did not know what was happening.”*  
(496.40) (May)

Although May seemed to feel confused about the nature of the couple’s issues, she appeared to suspect that they were having problems because she seemed to see them as drifting apart. However, the term “*slight friction*” suggests that May appeared to underestimate the extent of their situation.

Similarly, although April appeared to be concerned about witnessing a fight between her filicidal brother and sister-in-law, she also seemed not take the conflict seriously.

*“They fought in the past. I clearly remember that day because I was visiting my grandmother and they started fighting. Sis<sup>15</sup> Sue liked shouting during a fight which only made it worse and my brother was cool and soft-spoken. They fought verbally*

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<sup>15</sup> “Sis” is an abbreviation for ‘sisi’ which means sister and it is often used by Black South Africans to address a female family member who is older than them.

*not physically. My brother told her, "Go to your parents' house, and you will come back when you are feeling better.""* (464.47) (April)

The participant appeared to be defensive of her filicidal brother in which she seemed to perceive him as non-violent and being provoked by his violent wife. April appeared to blame her sister-in-law for aggravating spousal conflict.

Additionally, although April appeared to be concerned about hearing about the couple's extreme violence, she seemed not to experience these problems as particularly concerning.

*"They have physically fought in the past, but I cannot say much about that incident because I was not there. I just heard that they fought and sis Sue wanted to stab him with a knife. I heard that sis Sue also burnt my brother with cooking oil. I don't want to talk about that because I was not there. I don't know what happened."* (465.8) (April)

April appeared to be describing a deeply worrying situation in which the couple seemed to have serious issues before the killing which involved a vicious cycle of violence in which her filicidal brother appeared to be allegedly severely abused. Although the participant reported not knowing the problems which triggered the extreme violence, she seemed to have noticed some issues of concern.

In summary, in *Feeling worried*, April did not seem to be entirely without awareness of her filicidal brother's intimate/marital relationship problems. The participants appeared to

be aware of some concerning issues in the couples' intimate/marital relationships which they seemed to underestimate.

**3.9.2 Feeling excluded.** This sub-theme explores the participants' feelings of anger with the couples for not involving the extended families in their intimate/marital relationship problems. The participants appeared to be angered by the couples disregarding family and cultural practices by not discussing their issues with the extended families.

*“My brother and sis Sue did things the modern way. They did not follow culture. No, they did not practice culture. They were living the modern life. You see the way things are done today, like not talking about their problems. According to my culture and also my family practice, we talk about our issues. We always discuss our issues with the family members so that they can offer guidance. So now they kept their problems private!” (466.4) (April)*

April's experience seems to echo May's account in which they appeared to realise tension in their filicidal brothers' intimate/marital relationships, but seemed not to know the nature of the problems because the couples did not discuss their problems with them. Therefore, April appeared to strongly disapprove of the couple's decision to exclude the extended family. The participant seemed to perceive the couple's problems as perpetuated by their failure to adhere to collectivistic principles in which the extended family traditionally plays a role in the affairs of the couple's nuclear family.

The two sisters appeared to perceive their filicidal brothers' intimate/marital relationship issues as solvable, and therefore seemed to strongly wish that the couples involved the extended families.

*“If they had certain challenges which were ruining their marriage, I wish they had an idea to look for somebody to talk with. You know you will not tell each and every person your problems, but there are some people, even in the family, whom you can see that you can share your problems with so that they could help them. They could have found assistance if they spoke out.” (498.48) (May)*

Although May seemed to acknowledge that some problems are sensitive and cannot be discussed with everybody, she appeared to wish that the couple identified and confided in a trusted family member. The emphasis on “they could help them” seems to highlight May's feelings of confidence that the family member would have been able to assist.

The participants appeared to strongly regret their filicidal brothers and sisters-in-law not consulting the extended families when they saw that they were unable to solve their issues.

*“They should have tried to solve their problems together and consulted the elders in our family when they failed to reach a solution.” (466.12) (April)*

The couples appeared to be seen preferring the families-in-law over the grooms' extended families. For instance, May seemed to be hurt by her filicidal brother and sister-in-

law seeking help from the in-laws even though she and her extended family were willing to assist.

*“His wife’s aunt arrived to care for him when I was there. However, according to our culture ... Firstly, we were not told that Neo was back from the hospital. Can you see that if there was good communication, she could have called and informed us that “Neo is back, but I am going to the hospital, and then Neo does not have anybody who will care for him, but my aunt will assist him since they get along.”” (497.37)*  
*(May)*

May seemed to have a serious problem with the couple not discussing their issues with the groom’s extended family as according to her culture, but instead informing the in-laws. She appeared to be angered and saddened by her filicidal brother and sister-in-law excluding her and her extended family while asking the in-laws for assistance.

The participants seemed to see the couples as not wanting them to know their problems. For instance, May appeared to feel restricted by her filicidal brother from openly talking to him about his nuclear family issues.

*“I could see that we were not communicating. It is like I was not able to talk to him about – his wife. There was no open space to ask how he was doing and what was happening?” (497.33) (May)*

May appeared to be concerned by the lack of communication between herself and filicidal brother. The emphasis on “his wife” seemed to indicate the participant’s sense of her

brother seeing her as intruding in his marital affairs. Therefore, May appeared to feel uncomfortable discussing with her filicidal brother his marital issues.

The participants seemed not to have a sense that their extended families had knowledge about the couples' problems.

*“Definitely, my family did not know the issues that my brother and sis Sue were having with my cousins – because they were private people who did not talk about their problems.” (464.13) (April)*

April's experience seemed to echo May's account in which they experienced their extended families not having insight into the couples' issues, and therefore did not want them implicated in problems they were excluded from. The emphasis on “*definitely*” seems to indicate April's strong sense of wanting to defend her extended family not intervening because they were excluded from the situation.

In summary, in *Feeling excluded*, the participants appeared to be interested in understanding their filicidal brothers' intimate/marital relationship problems which they seemed to notice and April also witnessed. However, they appeared to sense that the couples did not want them involved in which May seemed to feel prevented from helping. Therefore, April appeared to strongly feel that there was nothing that her extended family could have done to help since they were not informed and involved in the situation.

### 3.10 Discovering their Deception

This theme examines the participants' sense of shock and confusion by realising that their filicidal brothers and sisters-in-law seemed to conceal their problems by appearing to be happy. The two sisters' feelings of pride about the couples' parenting seemed to gradually change to disappointment. The sub-themes, *Seeing them acting happy amidst chaos* and *Gradually feeling disappointed*, are discussed.

**3.10.1 Seeing them acting happy amidst chaos.** This sub-theme explores the participants' experience of being deceived by the couples when discovering that they pretended to be a 'perfect' family when with them. April appeared to feel angry when realising the couple's façade of happiness.

*“They were secretive people who did not talk about their problems. They did not want people to know what was going on in their house. So, the way I see things, I think they were pretending to be happy and displaying a good marital image to my family because they did not tell us what was happening ... They wanted people to see them as a good family which was free of problems. They wanted to appear as a good family. They wanted people to say ‘Eish, that family they have a good life. They are getting along very well. You can easily see that.’” (465.18) (April)*

The emphasis on “what was going on in their house” indicates that April seemed to be angered by the couple not talking about their problems because of the need to want to be admired. The South African emotional expression, “*Eish*”, which is used to express various

emotions, appears to highlight April's interpretation of the feelings of admiration which she thought the couple wanted people to feel about their nuclear family.

The participants seemed to sense that something was wrong with the couples. Therefore, May appeared to be confused by not seeing the tension between her filicidal brother and sister-in-law when she visited them.

*“When I went to their house to visit them, I found them just fine. They did not raise any issues. You can sometimes hear from the way people are talking with each other that they are not happy, but I did not see anything like that.” (497.1) (May)*

May's feelings of confusion seemed to be perpetuated by the couple not complaining, but instead acting to be “fine”. However, despite May and similarly April reporting not having awareness of problems, there were times when the two sisters appeared to notice some alarming issues.

The perceived ability of the couples to hide their problems seemed to trigger feelings of shock. For instance, April appeared to be very surprised by the couple's ability to play a role of being happy amidst chaos.

*“Even you, if you visited them, you would say ‘Ijoo! These people do not have problems because they are so happy.’ However, you would find that they do have problems at that time except they are just keeping everything inside. They were just always quiet and not talking about their problems. So, they were always hiding their problems.” (464.15) (April)*

The statement, “*Even you, if you visited them, you would say ‘Ijoo! These people do not have problems because they are so happy’*”, seems to indicate April’s attempt to defend her perception of a problem-free marriage. She appeared to allude to that the couple’s deception would have deceived anyone.

Furthermore, the perceived deception appeared to provoke feelings of anxiety. For instance, May seemed to feel anxious by being unable to predict the outcome of the couple’s problems.

*“If you are quiet and do not discuss your issues with us, and you always appear to be happy while you are carrying problems inside, then we do not know what will happen in the future.” (499.2) (May)*

The sub-theme, *Seeing them acting happy amidst chaos*, captured the participants’ experience of being deceived by the couples in which May appeared to be puzzled. However, the participants did not seem to be entirely deceived because there were moments where they appeared to notice issues, although they did not report experiencing them as particularly serious.

**3.10.2 Gradually feeling disappointed.** This sub-theme explores the participants’ changing feelings about the couples’ parenting. The participants’ feelings of admiration seemed to gradually change to disappointment. The two sisters appeared to feel proud of their filicidal brothers’ close relationship with their children.

*“This older one, he was too close to her. The younger one also ... I also often met him with the younger one too. He was close with his children. Even his wife, you would often find her ... They loved their children.” (499.26) (May)*

May seems to be describing a loving parents-children relationship in which she appeared to see her filicidal brother as inseparable with his children, particularly his older daughter whom he killed during the family shooting, as indicated by the emphasis on “too close”.

The participants seemed to see their filicidal brothers as very protective of their children. For instance, April appeared to feel surprised by her filicidal brother’s protectiveness towards his children.

*“He treated his children very well. Ijoo! He got very sad if sis Sue hit the younger child. Ijoo! My brother did not want a child to be beaten. He did not want that. Even the older one, he did not want her to be beaten even if she did a mistake. He wanted his daughter to be properly disciplined by telling her what is wrong and right. He did not want anybody to raise a hand to his children. He was very protective of his children.” (462.22) (April)*

The South African emotional expression, “*Ijoo!*”, seems to indicate April’s feelings of amazement about her filicidal brother’s care about his children. She appeared to perceive him as not wanting his children to be hurt and becoming deeply saddened when he saw them in pain.

The participants seemed to feel pleased by the couples' parenting.

*"I did not see them as bad parents. They were responsible parents who took care of their children. They only wanted the best for their children. I think there is nothing wrong that they did in the way they parented their children." (499.48) (May)*

May appeared to approve of the couple's parenting in which she seemed to describe them as caring parents. She appeared to attempt to defend their ability to parent by portraying them as responsible parents.

However, the participants' perception of the couples parenting well seemed to change to perceiving them failing in their role as responsible parents by involving their children in their fights. For instance, May appeared to feel angry with the parents for failing to control their conflict and allowing it to escalate to a point where the children were involved.

*"This one should not argue, and then you argue, and then you start fighting with words, and then suddenly your conflict goes outside your bedroom, and the children are involved. So, now they involved their children." (504.13) (May)*

There appeared to be a sense of disappointment about the fight being over the children. For instance, April seemed to be disappointed by perceiving her sister-in-law resenting her filicidal brother's aunt's children.

*"The problems involved issues concerning the aunt's children. They sometimes wanted pocket money for school – and sis Sue did not want my brother to give them*

*money and support them. Things like that caused problems in their relationship – and my brother is a quiet person. He would never say bad things to sis Sue.” (461.30)*  
*(April)*

April appeared to be concerned about her sister-in-law not wanting her filicidal brother to support his aunt’s children but instead seeming to want him to abandon them. As indicated elsewhere in the report, April seemed to be once again defensive of her filicidal brother whom she saw as non-violent and provoked by his violent wife to fight.

The participant seemed to feel confused by her sister-in-law’s sudden resentment of her filicidal brother’s aunt’s children.

*“Nomsa [April’s cousin] said that sis Sue ill-treated her in the house. She shouted at her even though she cleaned the house and washed the dishes. You know she did all the housework. Sis Sue started to be bad towards Nomsa, but she treated her fine at the beginning. I did not understand. Nomsa told me that sis Sue was not treating her right.” (463.20) (April)*

April appeared to speak about a saddening experience of learning about her cousin’s painful experience of the alleged abuse. She seemed to feel deeply hurt by her sister-in-law allegedly abusing her cousin.

In summary, in *Gradually feeling disappointed*, the participants’ feelings of admiration of the couples’ parenting seemed to change to feelings of disappointment as they discovered the couples’ fights to involve the children. While May appeared to be angered by

the couple failing to exclude the children from their conflict, April seemed to be deeply hurt by an alleged child abuse and a perceived bitter parental rejection which led to spousal conflict.

### 3.11 Feeling Caught in the Middle

This theme explores the participants' sense of being caught in a painful mess which was not their own doing. The participants appeared to feel blamed by the families-in-law for the killing in which May's experience seemed to be more painful and overt in comparison to April. The filicide-homicide incident appeared to be experienced tearing apart the two families. The sub-themes, *Feeling blamed* and *Experiencing helplessness*, are discussed.

**3.11.1 Feeling blamed.** The sub-theme examines the changing relationship between the two sisters and their in-laws following the killing. There seemed to be a sense of a once perceived as close family relationships changing in which the participants appeared to feel blamed even though they strongly felt that the killing was not their fault. For instance, April spoke of an intimate and happy relationship between her extended family and the in-laws before the killing.

*"The two families, my family and sis Sue's family, were very close because my grandmother was friends with sis Sue's grandmother ... We were very happy together." (465.3) (April)*

The terms “*were*” and “*was*” seems to implicitly indicate April’s perception of the close family relationship changing in which she appeared to allude to her experience of them not getting along anymore after the killing. This seemed to trigger feelings of sadness.

There seemed to be a sense of being blamed by most members of the families-in-law. For instance, May spoke of her father-in-law being the only one who appeared to be supportive of her extended family.

*“The father of – this woman ... I have never seen someone – with such a heart – and I am not sure that I will even ever see such a person. We were able to organise the funeral because of him. You know that person took it – the way it was. He took it the way it was – that we were ALL not there, we don’t know what happened. He was supportive of us throughout the whole process of organising for the funeral until the end. He was the one who helped us to move forward, that man.” (501.35) (May)*

Although May appeared to appreciate her father-in-law’s support, the emphasis on “heart” seems to suggest that she was deeply surprised by his kindness following the painful killing. Perhaps she expected that all the family-in-law members would resent her and her extended family. Furthermore, the emphasis on “ALL not there” seems to highlight May’s sense of relief that her father-in-law appeared to recognise that similar to him and his extended family, the participant and her extended family were also not involved in the killing, and therefore are also not to blame. The participant seemed to strongly feel that they cannot be implicated in the killing because they also don’t know what happened.

The perceived family tension which ensued from the killing appeared to induce feelings of concern. For instance, May seemed to be anxious about how they would have made the funeral arrangements if her father-in-law did not support them.

*“If it was not for him ((hitting the table)) I do not know what would have happened because the situation was bad.” (501.46) (May)*

Hitting the table during the interview appeared to accentuate May’s intense feelings of anxiety during the funeral arrangements in which she seemed to have been immensely worried about the funeral proceedings because of the bitter family situation. She appeared to feel intensely blamed by the family-in-law members in which she seemed to see them as not wanting anything to do with her and her extended family including discussing the funeral arrangements.

The participants appeared to be infuriated with the couples whom they blamed for the killing which got them caught in a bitter fight with the in-laws.

*“None of this would have happened if they spoke about their problems.” (465.17)  
(April)*

Although the term “*none*” seems to be vague, April appeared to allude to that killing which bitterly tore the two families apart would not have happened if the couples did not keep their problems private. Therefore, she seemed to be angry with the couple for getting her and her extended family in an unwanted mess.

In summary, in *Feeling blamed*, the participants seemed to experience the filicide-homicide as having painfully destroyed the relationship between their extended families and the in-laws during which they saw themselves and their extended families blamed and implicated in the killing that they were not part of. Therefore, the participants seemed to be bitterly angry with the couples for implicating them in a 'bloody' mess.

**3.11.2 Experiencing helplessness.** This sub-theme explores a sense of helplessness amidst a chaotic conflict with the in-laws following the filicide-homicide. May spoke of a shocking experience of being allegedly verbally attacked by the in-laws after the killing.

*“His wife’s family – JESUS! You could clearly see that those people wanted a fight. They were rude to us.” (501.40) (May)*

The participant appeared to be greatly astounded by the disrespectful and offensive behaviour of the in-laws towards her and her extended family in which she seemed to feel defenceless. The emphasis on the loudly uttered “JESUS!” seems to capture her sense of shock by the intense feelings of resentment which she appeared to see as almost escalating to violence.

The perceived conflict between the in-laws and the filicidal offenders seemed to induce feelings of confusion. For instance, May appeared to be frustratingly confused by the custody battle between her filicidal brother and the in-laws after the death of her sister-in-law.

*“Eish! The situation with the in-laws is so confusing because Neo phoned his wife the weekend of the funeral and she said, “let us forgive each other.” She also visited him in prison with their child on Family Day. She was visiting him in prison. So, when something like this custody thing happens, you end up being surprised and confused. However, in any case she is no longer alive now, so what will we do?” (502.34)*

*(May)*

In comparison to April whose brother killed his wife and children, May’s brother shot his nuclear family during which he killed his older daughter. His wife died later, but not as the result of the shooting. The custody battle which May is speaking about involves her filicidal brother’s younger daughter who survived the shooting. The participant, therefore, seemed to be puzzled and surprised by the in-laws fighting for the child, because she appeared to have an impression that the couple resolved issues before her sister-in-law died. May seemed to feel helpless in which she appeared not to know how to deal with the custody battle especially since her sister-in-law is not alive to mediate.

Despite the two sisters’ immense feelings of anger with their filicidal brothers, the participants appeared to be desperately wanting to protect them after the killing. For instance, April seemed to attempt to protect her filicidal brother’s reputation by describing him as a person who likes encouraging others.

*“He is a person who likes motivating others. He motivated me a lot.” (465.40) (April)*

April appeared to be eagerly attempting to preserve her perception of her filicidal brother’s identity as a good person after the killing.

Similarly, May seemed to be desperately wishing to protect her filicidal brother from overwhelmingly stressful events.

*“I wish that the issues concerning the child could be resolved. You know when a person is in prison and you are busy telling him unpleasant NEWS, eish! You know the child this, the child that. Eish! You find yourself not knowing what to do.”*

*(502.31) (May)*

May appeared to be very concerned about the effects of the custody battle on her filicidal brother. Although she seemed to detest burdening him with information about the custody battle, she appeared to feel frustratingly helpless and seemed not to know how to protect him.

In summary, in *Experiencing helplessness*, the participants appeared to be desperately wanting to protect their filicidal brothers, whom they seemed to see as vulnerable, from the chaos consequential the killing. Although April appeared to try to safeguard her filicidal brother's identity as a good man, there was a sense of the participants not knowing how to protect their brothers especially since May also seemed to perceive herself and extended family caught in the middle of a bitter family conflict.

### **3.12 The Killing an Act of ‘Madness’**

This theme explores the participants' attempt to make meaning of the filicide-homicide. The two sisters seemed to be greatly confused by the traumatic killing. They appeared to feel shocked and frightened by their brothers, whom they seemed to have

perceived as incapable of killing, committing a traumatic filicide-homicide. Their feelings of shock appear to be understandable especially since most people would most likely not expect their siblings to be capable of taking another person's life. There was a sense of the participants feeling sympathy for their filicidal brothers. The sub-themes, *Struggling to make sense of the killing* and *Feeling sympathy*, are discussed.

**3.12.1 Struggling to make sense of the killing.** This sub-theme discusses the participants' experience of desperately attempting to make sense of their brothers committing a traumatic act of filicide-homicide. April and May seemed to be tremendously shocked by the killing because they did not appear to expect their filicidal brothers to be capable of killing.

*"That day, ijoo! I was also scared, and I could not believe that my brother committed such a thing. I could not believe it because he is a quiet person. He is not a person who does bad things. Ag shame! I could not believe it. It was the first time he became violent. Ijoo! I was so scared." (464.29) (April)*

The South African emotional expression of "Ag shame!" which is used to express feelings of pity and sympathy, indicates that April seemed to experience great sorrow when dealing with the painful reality of her brother killing. She appeared to be in disbelief and seemed to struggle to accept that he killed because she perceived him as a reserved person who complied with the law. Therefore, the filicide-homicide appeared to result in April feeling deeply frightened, as indicated by the repeated emotional expression, "ijoo!".

Furthermore, the killing seemed to perpetuate the intense feelings of shock because the members of the extended families appeared to be perceived as religious. For instance, May did not seem to expect any of her extended family members to kill because she appeared to see them as strongly adhering to religious principles.

*“What surprised me was ... Is it possible that ... We grew up in a family that is religious. Our family religiously attended church. You could say that we slept and woke up in the church. We never ... It is like I never thought that something of this nature could happen to us. We never even paid attention to such things **WHEN THEY WERE DISCUSSED** on the radio. It was something that really **HIT** us.” (500.50)*  
*(May)*

The loudly uttered “*HIT*” appears to capture May’s immense feelings of shock by her brother’s actions, who seemed to be raised in a strictly religious family, committing what she perhaps saw as an ‘evil’ act of shooting his nuclear family and killing his child. The loudly uttered “*WHEN THEY WERE DISCUSSED*” seems to highlight the participant’s lack of interest in issues about traumatic family killings because she did not appear to expect her religious family to be involved in what she perhaps perceived as an act of ‘evil’.

The participants also spoke of feeling intensely shocked by the filicide-homicide because they saw the couples getting along and not having problems.

*“Ah! It was a shock. You know we would have expected this thing to happen if we heard that they were in conflict. However, now we have never heard that they had a*

*fight or problems. We have never heard that one of them left the house or what. We just know that they were happy at their home.” (500.5) (May)*

May’s feelings of being astounded by the killing occurring in the absence of intimate/marital relationship problems appeared to echo April’s experience. Although the participants reported an unawareness of issues in which they spoke about seeing the couples happy and not having problems, they seemed to have minimised the severity of suspected and noticed problems. The two sisters seemed not to expect the perceived problems to escalate to ‘deadly’ violence.

In support of the above mentioned, marital/family problems appeared to be perceived as contributing to the killing. For instance, April seemed to blame the couple’s fight over the children to cause the filicide-homicide.

*“The problem between sis Sue and Nomsa caused this thing. It caused a fight between my brother and sis Sue.” (436.30) (April)*

The extreme violence seemed to be suspected to be used as a solution to persistent problems. For instance, April appeared to be shocked by perceiving her filicidal brother using violence to end problems.

*“I think he just told himself that he was ending the conflict by committing this incident. I don’t know. Ijoo! He shot everybody including himself.” (465.13) (April)*

The emotional expression, “*Ijoo!*”, appears to capture April’s feelings of shock in which she seemed unable to believe that her filicidal brother took drastic measures of killing and attempting suicide to solve problems.

There appeared to be a sense of uncertainty about what the filicidal brothers were capable of doing when overwhelmed by anger.

*“I don’t know the extent of which he can become angry.” (500.22) (May)*

However, the participants seemed to suspect that their filicidal brothers killed as the result of being engulfed by extreme feelings of anger.

*“Maybe he had anger. People that have anger can do dangerous things sometimes.” (464.24) (April)*

The inhibited feelings of anger appeared to be seen as leading to the traumatic killing. For instance, May seemed to feel disappointed that her filicidal brother suppressed problems and emotions of anger which led to an eruption of violence.

*“He must not keep his problems to himself because the problems will eventually EXPLODE ... When the situation is like that things end up exploding in some way or another.” (503.11) (May)*

May appeared to strongly regret her filicidal brother not talking about his problems which she seemed to perceive diminishing his ability to withhold feelings of frustration, and therefore resulting in an explosion of excessive violence.

There was a sense of concern about the avoided problems having affected their filicidal brothers' reasoning ability. For instance, May appeared to see her filicidal brother having been overwhelmed by problems which resulted in him failing to reason.

*"It is like those things make you somehow when they continuously occupy your mind.*

*You can even act like a mad person or something." (503.14) (May)*

The utterance "*those things make you somehow*" suggests that May seemed to allude to perceiving the inhibited problems as leading her filicidal brother to behave out of character and 'abnormally'.

May appeared to struggle to believe that someone in their 'normal' state of mind would kill people. Therefore, she seemed to perceive the killing as confirming her perception of 'abnormality'.

*"This crime shows you that there was a period in which – he was mad for some time.*

*How can a person just SUDDENLY DECIDE to take a gun and shoot people?"*

*(503.16) (May)*

The participant appeared to attempt to preserve her perception of her filicidal brother as not a killer by seeing him as having been “*mad*”, and therefore killing impulsively. She seemed to allude to that he would not have killed if he was his ‘normal’ self.

The two sisters seemed to attempt to defend their filicidal brothers by vehemently describing the killing as not premeditated.

*“Ah! No! It is definitely something that he did not plan ... He did not plan to commit this thing.” (464.38) (April)*

April’s strong feelings of defending her brother appeared to echo May’s experience who seemed to consider the killing as “*something that just suddenly happened*” (500.21). This appears to suggest that the participants could not tolerate the thought of their filicidal brothers planning the killing of their nuclear families. Therefore, they seemed to attempt to maintain their perception of their brothers as non-violent people by perceiving the traumatic killing as impulsive.

The sub-theme, *Struggling to make sense of the killing*, captured the two sisters’ experience of being terribly shocked by the traumatic filicide-homicide incident. The participants’ sense of not having known about the problems and minimising perceived issues of concern appeared to contribute to their feelings of intense shock by the unexpected killing. The extreme feelings of anger, which May appeared to see as having been inhibited, seemed to be suspected to have exploded in excessive violence which April appeared to shockingly see as having been used as a solution to problems. The participants seemed to defensively perceive the killing as impulsive.

**3.12.2 Feeling sympathy.** This sub-theme explores the participants' feelings of sympathy for their filicidal brothers after the killing. Although the participants appeared to feel angry with their brothers after the filicide-homicide, they now seemed to feel sympathy. For instance, April's feelings of sympathy seemed to be triggered by imagining her filicidal brother feeling overwhelmingly ashamed of killing.

*“Ah! He is very regretful. Ag shame! He is feeling very guilty because now he is facing the consequences of his actions. He is maybe saying, ‘Ah, why did I commit this thing? He is regretful. He is not happy that he did this THING. Right now he is regretting committing this crime.” (465.30) (April)*

The emotional expression, “Ag shame!”, seems to highlight April's feelings of sympathy. Imagining her filicidal brother engulfed by deep feelings of regret appears to indicate April's wish to preserve her original perception of him as a good person.

However, May only seemed to feel sympathy for her filicidal brother once her intense feelings of anger towards him had subsided.

*“We were angry with him for what he did. It's like we did not ... There was nobody who was prepared to visit him because of this situation. Have you seen how the other family treats you when a situation like this occurs? You guys don't know anything. You don't know what happened because you were not there.” (501.28) (May)*

May appeared to see herself and extended family as having lacked sympathy because they seemed to be bitterly angry with her filicidal brother for getting them caught in a bitter conflict with the in-laws as the result of the killing.

May's feelings of sympathy appeared to become apparent through supporting her filicidal brother and avoiding asking him questions about the killing out of concern about perpetuating his sense of pain.

*"We started visiting him when we felt better, and the situation calmed down. I advised my family not to ask him questions about what happened. You know when a person is still somehow... he does not want to be asked about what happened. I have never asked him – WHY?" (502.15) (May)*

The utterance "*still somehow*" seems to highlight May's feelings of concern about her filicidal brother still being traumatised by the killing. Therefore, she appeared to be unwilling to talk to him about the painful event to avoid re-traumatising him by making him relive the incident.

In contrast, April seemed to feel free to discuss the traumatic killing with her filicidal brother.

*"He told me when I visited him, "Eish! I do not like committing this crime." (465.36) (April)*

In summary, in *Feeling sympathy*, while the feelings of sympathy seemed to enable April to continue to perceive her filicidal brother as a good person whom she saw feeling deeply remorseful about the impulsive killing, May seemed to feel protective of her filicidal brother. However, May did not appear to instantly feel sympathy because of her intense feelings of anger with her brother for madly shooting his nuclear family and killing his child and consequentially implicating them in the 'bloody' situation.

In conclusion, this study explored the two sisters', April and May, of Joe and Neo, respectively, experiences of the filicide-homicide, and examined their interpretations of their filicidal brothers' experiences of the killing. April seemed to perceive the couple's intimate/marital relationship problems contributing to the filicide-homicide which was perhaps an end product of a perceived vicious cycle of violence. The participant appeared to suspect that the extreme violence was used as a solution to the ongoing problems. Although the participants seemed to notice issues in the couples' intimate/marital relationships, they appeared to feel that they lacked an understanding of the nature of the situation which resulted in them not intervening. Instead, April and May appeared to describe not noticing any problems and viewed the perceived problems as not very serious, and therefore did not seem to expect the perceived problems to lead to the traumatic killing. The filicide-homicide incident seemed to disconfirm the participants' expectations of their filicidal brothers as incapable of killing.

The killing appeared to be perceived as an impulsive act which was not premeditated. May seemed to suspect that the avoided problems and the inhibited and extreme feelings of anger might have led to the traumatic filicide-homicide.

The killing appeared to be experienced as destroying the relationship between the two families which resulted in May feeling caught and increasingly helpless in a hostile predicament involving the in-laws.

The participants seemed to be protective of their filicidal brothers after the filicide-homicide and wanted to maintain their reputations and perceived identities of them as good people. April's feelings of sympathy also appeared to enable her to continue seeing her filicidal brother the same way she saw him before the killing, as a non-harmful person.

## Personal Construct Analysis Report

### Filicidal Participants

This section presents some of the themes and sub-themes which were analysed during the personal construct analysis, which examined the constructions and processes of construing of four paternal filicidal offenders. The research explored three domains, engaging in an intimate/marital relationship, constructions of fatherhood, and the killing of the child/children. The themes are presented and structured according to the domains. Of the analysed themes the following are discussed:

#### 1. Engaging in an intimate/marital relationship

- Central dimensions of meaning: superordinate and core constructs
- Sharing expectations and commonality
- Anticipations of love
- Anger
  - Failing love expectations and constructions
  - Feeling blamed
- Hostility
  - Violence as an act of hostility
  - Violence as extortion of respect
- Violence as an outcome of threat
- Encountering problems as unconstruable
- Feeling dislodged from manhood role
- Construing in a chaotic, delimited or broadened field
- Feeling frustrated by ruminating

## 2. Constructions of fatherhood

- Anticipations of being a father
- Fighting over the children
- Feeling trapped

## 3. The killing of the child/children

- Killing as a constrictive act
- Encountering challenges in decision-making
  - Violence as foreshortening of the circumspection-preemption-control cycle
  - Regretting choices
- “My plan did not work”
  - Feeling guilty
  - Feeling shame

### **3.13 Engaging in an Intimate/Marital Relationship**

**3.13.1 Central dimensions of meaning: Superordinate and core constructs.** This theme focuses on superordinate and core constructs, which are a central aspect of a person's being and govern their predictions and choices (Kelly, 1991). The participants seemed to use these constructs to self-construe, anticipate events, and construe their world. Success appeared to be a core construct of most participants in which they seemed to tightly construe failure as not a part of the self.

*“I could ALWAYS achieve whatever I wanted to do. I was able to achieve whatever I wanted to do. I never failed at anything that I wanted to do.” (408.33) (Neo)*

Loyalty constructions appeared to be superordinate in some participants’ construct systems. For instance, Joe and John seemed to place loyalty constructions at the top hierarchy of their systems which perhaps led to their deep sense of loyalty to their families.

*“As long as I am still alive, it will not be possible because I will never neglect these children, they are my family.” (392.5) (Joe)*

Joe appeared unable to abandon his aunt’s children because of the superordinate loyalty constructions. Perhaps he construed rejection as disloyal, and therefore not a part of his core role.

Respect, as proposed by this dissertation, also appeared to be a superordinate construction. The participants seemed to self-construe as entitled to respect which suggests that they might have construed their partners’/wives’ offensive behaviour as disrespectful, in a sense proposed by the dissertation.

*“A father is somebody who is supposed to be respected – he is the one who makes decisions at home most of the time. He is a person that you should never lie to no matter what. You can tell other people lies, BUT you have to be HONEST WITH HIM.” (449.15) (Sly)*

Sly and similarly the other participants appeared to draw on the dominant manhood constructions to construe their role relationships with their nuclear families. The emphasis on the loudly uttered “HONEST” seems to highlight Sly’s construing of how greatly important it was for his partner to treat him with respect, which also appeared to echo the other participants’ construing.

Some participants seemed to avoid addressing problems because they appeared to lack the constructions to deal with confrontation.

*“I kept things – inside. I don’t easily share my problems. I try to work it out – on my own. I think it is because – my parents never fought in front of me. There were never any marital problems between them. They never swore at each other. So, I learnt from small to work things out on my own.” (430.20) (John)*

The emphasis on the underlined words appears to indicate John’s choice to address issues on his own because of a lack of constructions to manage marital problems as he reported not being raised in a violent home. Perhaps he did not know how to engage in conflict resolution discussions with his wife.

In summary, in *Central dimensions of meaning: superordinate and core constructs*, constructions of success, loyalty, and respect appeared to be core constructs and superordinate in the participants’ construct systems. Therefore, construing failure, disloyalty, and disrespect might have induced threat. Some participants who lacked conflict management constructions seemed to avoid confrontation.

**3.13.2 Sharing expectations and commonality.** This theme explores the participants' experience of commonality. Most participants seemed to tightly construe themselves and their partners/wives as sharing similar expectations of a successful intimate/marital relationship.

*"I expected that just because I knew she was a person who loves nice things, I knew that she also expected that her future is that we are people who are living well and at least have everything that we need in life which will make us a happy family."*

*(404.20) (Neo)*

However, Neo and similarly Joe and John seemed to be susceptible to experiencing invalidations of predictions because of tight construing. They did not seem to consider that their wives' marriage constructions might be different to theirs. This suggests that the participants seemed to be likely to experience disgust, in which someone's core role is construed as different to one's own (McCoy, 1977).

In contrast, Sly seemed to construe himself and his then partner as having had contrasting intimate relationship expectations.

*"She expected that maybe I would be in a long-term relationship with her and that I would get married to her. She expected a lot of things from me. I told her not to expect much from me before we continued with our relationship. She expected a lot of things, TOO MUCH." (441.10) (Sly)*

The utterance “*TOO MUCH*” highlights that Sly perhaps felt pressured by the construed expectations of marriage which he might have construed as likely to comprehensively change his identity.

In summary, in *Sharing expectations and commonality*, while most participants seemed likely to experience intimate/marital relationship problems because of their inability to consider the notion of individuality, in Kellyan terms, Sly appeared likely to experience problems because of lacking commonality with his partner. The participants who tightly construed sharing commonality with their partners/wives appeared vulnerable to experiencing invalidations and disgust.

**3.13.3 Anticipations of love.** This theme explores the participants’ anticipations of their intimate/marital relationships. Most participants seemed to anticipate a lifelong and successful marriage.

*“When anybody gets in a relationship, they expect that maybe they will take their relationship to a level where somehow ... maybe where you will be separated by death if maybe that is by God’s will. And maybe where you grow old together and achieve in life – and see your children grow and prosper.” (386.14) (Joe)*

Three participants did not seem to anticipate encountering problems in their intimate/marital relationships.

*“I told myself one thing that in the future maybe – we will grow up together and have grandchildren. That is what I told myself. I did not tell myself that in life there would be a situation which would disturb us.” (418.29) (Neo)*

The two quotes indicate that Joe and Neo and similarly John appeared only to have positive anticipations for their marital relationships. They seemed to submerge the negative construct pole which might have also enabled them to anticipate negatively. Making only positive anticipations appeared to expose the participants to experience invalidations as the result of encountering unexpected problems which they perhaps did not know how to deal with because of a lack of constructions. The invalidated anticipations might lead to Cummins’ (2003) or McCoy’s (1977) anger.

In contrast, Sly appeared to tightly predict his relationship to be short and anticipated it not to bear fruits.

*“I knew that she was not a person – that I wanted to be with for a long time ... like we date for some time until I marry her.” (441.16) (Sly)*

Sly seemed to lose interest in his then partner as the result of self-construing negatively while construing her in a positive light.

*“I thought I was not doing the right things because she was a good person.” (442.14) (Sly)*

Furthermore, Sly appeared to lose interest in his then partner to avoid validating his construal of her family's negative anticipations of him.

*“Eish I thought they would see me as a bad person. The things they thought about me and knew about me. The reason that I did not want to be with her, I thought they would say “of course we knew it, we TOLD YOU.” I expected this kind of thing.”*  
(443.18) (Sly)

The emphasis on the South African emotional expression of “Eish” seems to highlight Sly's intense sense of worry of being judged by his then partner's family. Since the participant self-construed negatively he appeared to therefore tightly anticipate his then partner's family to construe him negatively. There seemed to be a strong sense of the participant construing his then partner's family not wanting him because of the negative things they knew about.

The theme, *Anticipations of love*, indicated that most participants seemed to idealise and only positively anticipate their intimate/marital relationships in which they did not expect problems. Therefore, they appeared vulnerable to experiencing anger. In contrast, Sly seemed to anticipate and self-construe negatively which resulted in him distancing himself from his then partner to avoid validating his constructions and anticipations.

**3.13.4 Anger.** This theme explores Cummins' (2003) anger, an emotional response to invalidations. The theme draws on Procter's (2014) dyadic interpersonal construing to explore the relationship between the participants and their partners/wives. Triadic interpersonal construing (Procter, 2014) is considered to explore the relationship between the

participants, their partners/wives, and extended families. The sub-themes, *Failing love expectations and constructions*, and *Feeling blamed*, are discussed.

**3.13.4.1 *Failing love expectations and constructions.*** This sub-theme focuses on encountered intimate/marital relationship problems which appeared to invalidate the participants' expectations and constructions of love. Incompatibilities which were not previously construed by most participants seemed to destroy their communication relationship with their partners/wives, and therefore instigated problems.

*“We were people that if I feel that I have a problem ... I MEAN I feel that she has a problem, I could tell her that no I feel that you have such and such a problem.*

*Likewise, she also did this thing. If she felt that she sees a problem in me she told me that “I see that you have a problem which is like this and that.” But as time went we started having a breakdown.” (405.9) (Neo)*

Neo and similarly Joe and John perhaps had a good relationship with their wives in which they seemed to be able to address issues because they construed from similar positions, in terms used by Procter (1985), and had sociality in which they appeared to have an understanding of each other. The experienced communication breakdown suggests that the participants and their wives might have later adopted opposing positions.

The intimate/marital problems appeared to be perpetuated by most participants and their partners/wives construing problems from contrasting construct poles.

*“I tried maybe to confront my wife and told her that the child is complaining that she does not dish up for her after she cooked. I wanted to hear her side of the story, exactly what is happening ... what happened? So, you find that she had a way of responding ... she would respond maybe in an inappropriate way, she would say maybe that I cannot interrogate her in her house over children that are not hers.”*  
(387.10) (Joe)

Joe’s experience seemed to echo Neo’s account in which they appeared to construe having two-way communication relationship involving wanting to mutually discuss issues with their wives. However, their approach seemed to be forceful, as indicated by “confront”. The participants perhaps forced their wives to construe from a similar pole as them which angered their spouses. For instance, the term “interrogate” seems to strongly indicate that Joe’s wife perhaps resented his aunt’s children whom she might have felt forced to accept which made her angry.

The difference in construing appeared to result in some participants’ partners/wives feeling silenced, and therefore making preemptive decisions. For instance, Joe’s wife seemed to construe the participant as not valuing her views as his wife, and therefore preemptively decided to leave perhaps out of anger.

*“She said that “today I am taking the children and I’m leaving. I am returning home because obviously I do not have a saying since I tried to advise you not to build the house but still you built it, so I think it is best if I leave.” That was the thing maybe that made me lose control.”* (395.48) (Joe)

Joe's wife's decision to leave seemed to invalidate his marriage constructions, hence provoked anger, which also echoed John's case. As in Joe's account, Neo and John and their wives appeared to invalidate each other's constructions which seemed to create a spiral reaction of anger.

Some participants did not seem to explore solutions with their partners/wives, but instead appeared to impose decisions which seemed to perpetuate problems.

*"I ended up telling her that she must please leave her work and she said "she will not leave her work – because – she is not sure what she is going to do if she stops working and at the end we separate."” (410.39) (Neo)*

Failing to mutually discuss issues and make dual decisions seemed to result in Neo's and similarly Joe's wives disagreeing with the participants which appeared to perpetuate the participants' anger. The emphasis on "*not sure*" seemed to indicate Neo's failure to construe his wife's sense of anxiety. The participants' failure to listen to their wives appeared to contribute to their inability to address issues.

Intimate/marital relationship problems seemed to affect some participants' sense of manhood. For instance, John and Joe appeared to construe their wives as construing them as unmanly which seemed to evoke feelings of anger.

*"She said she wanted a soft and loving person who does not lose his temper. That is ... That was who I WAS. I wanted to be in PEACE with everybody. However, later she*

*saw me as weak and a coward because of being soft-spoken and non-confrontational. That is how I felt.” (430.4) (John)*

John’s quote seems to demonstrate the conventional constructions of masculinity in which a man in a patriarchal society appears to be construed as ‘tough’ which is different to his core role. John seemed to think that he understood his wife’s construction processes and validated her constructions of her ideal man. The participant appeared to be angered by an awareness of a change in his wife’s construing of him in which he construed her as construing him as not man enough, and therefore not enacting a role of a man as according to her revised personal constructions and dominant social constructions of manhood.

Some participants did not only seem to be angry but also deeply disappointed by the sense of being made to feel that they were failing in their manhood role even though they appeared to perceive themselves as playing their role as responsible husbands.

*“I felt disappointed anyway because deep inside I knew that I was fulfilling all the requirements that were set in the house and I also tried to fulfil my wife’s needs.” (394.49) (Joe)*

Although Joe and similarly John had personal constructions of manhood, they seemed to substantially draw on the conventional socio-cultural constructions of manhood to also construe their role as men. Construing their wives as construing them as men appeared to be important. Therefore, their wives’ invalidations of their construed role of being competent family men seemed to trigger anger.

Work seemed to be perceived as one of the instigators of intimate/marital problems. For instance, some participants appeared to blame demanding and unpredictable work schedules as instigating tension in their intimate/marital relationships.

*“I sometimes left her and went to work in Johannesburg ... Sometimes the shift would change and I would start work in the morning maybe at 10 and knock off at 6. So, most of the time – we did not get time to sit and talk.” (405.22) (Neo)*

Neo seemed to construe his work as also contributing to the communication breakdown. The participant appeared to feel concerned about him and his wife not having had time to discuss marital affairs.

Incompatibilities between work and family roles also seemed to precipitate intimate/marital conflict. For instance, some participants appeared to feel angry with their partners/wives for prioritising work over family.

*“I think she wanted acknowledgement from her Supervisor. She even did private jobs that were not on her – job description. She drove around in her boss’s car to do private jobs for her boss – during OFFICIAL TIME. And then after four she would stay at work – to do her own work. So, her loyalty was – with her boss – and not her family.” (431.41) (John)*

The emphasis on the underlined and loudly uttered words seems to indicate John’s intense feelings of anger which also echoes Neo’s experience. Family constructions seemed to be superordinate to work constructions in these participants’ construct systems which

appeared to be different to their wives. John and Neo and their wives did not seem willing to negotiate constructions and make choices within their construct systems to maintain common constructions which governed their family systems.

There seemed to be a sense of most participants feeling overwhelmed by problems.

*“I started feeling that this whole situation – was beginning to seriously affect me.”*

*(390.26) (Joe)*

The emphasis on “seriously affect me” highlights Joe’s and similarly Neo’s and John’s strong sense of being unable to cope with problems especially since they did not appear to have anticipated encountering issues that might invalidate their anticipations and constructions. Perhaps construing invalidations and incompatibilities seemed to become unbearable.

The irresolvable problems and constant invalidations seemed to induce feelings of hopelessness.

*“I saw that all my efforts were unsuccessful. I did not have hope anymore, especially after – the way things went in the morning. I thought to myself that whatever I have tried to do was unsuccessful.” (397.20) (Joe)*

In summary, in *Failing love expectations and constructions*, most participants’ anger seemed to be provoked by unanticipated intimate/marital problems. The anger appeared to escalate in some participants who seemed to construe their partners/wives invalidating their

personal and socio-cultural constructions of manhood in which they appeared to construe their wives construing them as inadequate and failing their roles as men. John's anger seemed to be perpetuated by the invalidations of his construed ROLE relationship and sociality with his wife. While construing from opposing construct poles appeared to precipitate most participants' intimate/marital problems, the difference in the hierarchical organisation of family and work constructions seemed to perpetuate some participants' intimate/marital discord. Repeated invalidations appeared to result in most participants feeling hopeless and overwhelmed.

**3.13.4.2 Feeling blamed.** The sub-theme considers the dyadic and triadic interpersonal levels. Most participants seemed to feel annoyed by being blamed by their wives and in-laws for marital problems.

*“They didn't want to see her mistakes. EVERYTIME that we had problems, she ran to them – and told them her story – which was half the truth. They then confronted me with half the truth.” (433.32) (John)*

The loudly uttered “EVERYTIME” seems to highlight John's feelings of annoyance which appeared to echo Neo's and Joe's feelings towards their wives for always involving their in-laws in their issues. The participants' sense of annoyance seemed to be perpetuated by construing the in-laws siding with their wives and disinterested in listening to their views. Furthermore, the feelings of annoyance appeared to be perpetuated by the sense of being undermined by the in-laws confronting them over their nuclear family affairs.

Most participants appeared to perceive their manhood constructions and sense of power being at risk by construing the in-laws dictating to them how to manage issues. The participants seemed to be angered by the construal of their manhood being undermined.

*“It seems as if you are now controlling me maybe, because maybe it appears as if I am not a responsible man in my own home, because I don’t think I need your permission to tell me what I should do ... I felt that he was very much in charge of my family.” (391.8) (Joe)*

Similar to Joe, John and Neo also appeared to engage in a power struggle with the in-laws to avoid assuming the submissive role. While the participants seemed to perceive the in-laws as construing them as failing in their manhood role, they appeared to perceive the in-laws as construing themselves as competent in managing family issues in relation to them.

Therefore, the three participants seemed to strongly resent the in-laws’ intervention in their marital conflict.

*“I told myself that there is nobody who is going to tell me anything inside my house, who was going to tell me how I – should manage my family, how I should interact with my family ... There is no one who is going to tell me how to treat my family” (417.48) (Neo)*

As evident in Neo’s account, Joe and John also appeared to construe the in-laws’ advice as an indication of them failing as men. Therefore, they rejected the in-laws’ assistance to perhaps assert their masculinity and prove that they were competent family men.

However, some participants appeared to perceive the in-laws fighting for power. For instance, Joe seemed to construe his brother-in-law as construing him as not man enough to deal with marital affairs and undeserving of his sister, and therefore wanted her to return home.

*“He decided that since I was not able to deal with the situation it was better for his sister to return home.” (389.46) (Joe)*

The sub-theme, *Feeling blamed*, indicated the power struggle which most participants engaged in with their in-laws which involved power-submission and domineering-submissive, competent-fail construct poles which led to the participants feeling angered by and resenting the in-laws' role in their marital affairs. The participants' anger appeared to be perpetuated by the sense of being blamed for the marital problems.

**3.13.5 Hostility.** This theme explores the use of violence to extort evidence to validate invalidated constructions and predictions, and forcefully obtain respect, which is proposed to be a validation of a construing of someone's core role towards the perceiver. Hostility and anger in McCoy's (1977) sense are in some instances entwined. The anger resulting from invalidated constructions seemed to escalate into hostile violent acts. The sub-themes, *Violence as an act of hostility* and *Violence as extortion of respect*, are explored.

**3.13.5.1 Violence as an act of hostility.** The sub-theme explores the eruption of hostility and violence phase (Doster, 1985). For instance, some participants seemed to perform activities which they perhaps could predict might anger their partners/wives, and which their constructions were already invalidated.

*“WHAT MADE US FIGHT was after I spoke to my wife about my awareness of the conflict or a misunderstanding between her and the children. I told her that I will take the money and build a small house in the same yard were these children could live. My wife disagreed with my decision and said that “there will be no children who will have a house built for them in this yard.” I remember very well that I told her that you don’t want to accommodate these children, but I want you to know that I will no longer listen to you and I will build this house whether you like it or not. I built the house.” (395.33) (Joe)*

Joe seemed to be aware that his wife resented his aunt’s children but yet was hostile in aggressively building a house for them despite her disapproval. The participant appeared to be forcefully attempting to validate invalidated constructions of his aunt’s children as family, and therefore should be accepted regardless of his wife’s construing of them.

Most participants and their partners/wives seemed to equally partake in hostile violence, perhaps to force each other to validate their constructions.

*“I wanted to know where she went, because she was supposed to tell me where she went, if she did not go to work. I did not get a response. So, we ended up not being happy at home.” (406.48) (Neo)*

“We ended up not being happy at home” suggests that Neo and his wife perhaps fought over the issue of work. As in the case of Neo, John and Joe also seemed to fight with their wives over their problems which indicated a power struggle in which neither of the couples appeared to be willing to surrender to and validate each other’s constructions which,

therefore, seemed to result in an irresolvable conflict. The use of violence also appeared to indicate that the couples lacked commonality and sociality.

Some participants' withdrawal from conflict seemed to escalate the hostile violence. For instance, although John appeared to avoid conflict to validate self-constructions of not being a fighting person, the avoidance seemed to result in his wife verbally attacking the children to perhaps force him into a confrontation.

*"I was never a guy of verbal conflict. It is not me ... When she wanted to fight with me, I walked away or ignored her, she then took out her frustrations on Anna. After Joy was born, she took out her frustrations on John Junior." (492.3) (John)*

John's wife appeared to be angered by his avoidance which perhaps invalidated her expectations of them to address issues. Her anger seemed to escalate to hostility.

Some participants' partners/wives appeared to participate in playing a violent role. For instance, Joe and John seemed to construe their wives' hostile violence as provocative and leading them to be violent.

*"I warned her again and told her that I am speaking for the last time – please don't make me lose control and make a decision which I will regret maybe for the rest of my life, or make a bad decision. She continued to provoke me saying that I must hit her, things like that. She said "hit me so that I can get you arrested." Right there ... she did not see it ... I took out my gun. They just saw me taking out my gun and then I shot her." (396.34) (Joe)*

The word “*warned*” suggests that Joe seemed to construe that the situation was becoming dangerous and leading him to lose control of anger. Therefore, Joe and similarly John appeared to be desperately wanting to escape a hostile fight to avoid perhaps validating the predicted extreme violence. However, the construed provocation seemed to trigger anger which led to an eruption of violence which appeared to serve as a double-edged sword used to stop the provocation while validating the victims’ expectations.

During the hostile violence most participants seemed to construe themselves as slot rattling into people they were not.

*“Where I was usually very patient, I was – edgy. YOU tell me something wrong, I would go for you.” (432.31) (John)*

John seemed to perceive himself as switching roles from being avoidant to violent and easily irritable.

Some participants appeared to construe the avoided problems and inhibited feelings of anger and frustrations as contributing to them slot rattling into a violent role.

*“Where I was – always withdrawing, keeping closed, always walking away, I started to retaliate. I started to attack back – verbally. The anger became ... THE BUILD UP of frustrations over the years – became like a pressure cooker. It built up and then – it started to explode. It was like a volcano that started to erupt ((snapping fingers)) over small things.” (430.37) (John)*

John seems to be describing an encounter in which the avoided problems and inhibited emotions of anger exhausted his inhibition ability which resulted in him no longer able to tolerate problems, and therefore dangerously erupting in violence, as indicated by “*volcano*”. John’s encounter appears to echo Neo’s experience. John snapping his fingers during the interview seemed to highlight his construing of himself as becoming provoked easily before the killing.

The violent role slot rattling also seemed to be precipitated and perpetuated by the participants’ partners’/wives’ violence. For instance, Joe and John appeared to physically attack their wives for the first time in reaction to their wives’ hostile violence and provocation.

*“Then the OUTBURSTS came when she hit me when I was shaving and then hitting me with the bonnet. I then hit her with a fist. It was the first time I hit her, I hit a woman with a fist or EVEN slapped a woman. HOWEVER, I HIT HER WITH A FIST. I never thought about lifting my hand against a woman. It is not me. That moment I ... with the pain and everything ... with the ANGER, I just hit her.” (427.1) (John)*

John’s physical violence seemed to be concomitant of anger as highlighted by the emphasis on the loudly uttered “ANGER” which also appears to echo Joe’s encounter. The slot rattled violence seemed to be used to assert manhood and stop the wives’ violent behaviour. However, it also appeared to induce guilt, in Kelly’s (1955) sense.

The sub-theme, *Violence as an act of hostility*, indicated that most participants’ conflict with their partners/wives appeared to be precipitated and perpetuated by their

unwillingness to surrender to each others' constructions. Instead, three participants and their wives seemed to violently force each other to validate their invalidated constructions which escalated anger. Some participants' construal of their partners'/wives' hostile violence appeared to lead them to switch roles in which the inhibited anger erupted in reactive violence which resulted in them construing themselves as dislodged from their core roles.

**3.13.5.2 Violence as extortion of respect.** This dissertation proposes that respect, viewed as a validation of a construction of someone's core role towards oneself, and disrespect, viewed as an invalidation of a construction of someone's core role towards oneself, were fundamental issues for the participants. The author argues that disrespect might provoke feelings of anger and insult, which is considered to be an emotional experience that is associated with construed disrespect. Although anger is not necessarily associated with hostility (Cummins, 2003), in this dissertation disrespect seems to be concomitant with anger and hostility. For instance, some participants' feelings of anger and insult appeared to be instigated by the construal of being disrespected by their partners/wives. The anger erupted in violence, which seemed to be used to extort respect.

*“She said that she thought it was better for her to return home and leave me with this house and my aunt's daughter so that I can make her my wife, that is what she said. So that is what made me fight with her and tell her that you are now swearing at me, or you are using offensive language especially since – you know very well that these children whom we are talking about they are family, how can I be sexually intimate with my family or how can I sleep with my aunt's child? How can you say that I should make her my wife?” (391.21) (Joe)*

Some participants appeared to avoid construing disrespect during which they perhaps inhibited feelings of anger and insult. However, their constriction seemed to be unsustainable as they responded with anger which led to hostility.

*“I TURN AROUND and walked away, so she AGAIN took out her frustrations on Anna. I withdrew for about three weeks when she lost her temper. Then she would come to me and FOLLOW ME. I would walk away, she would follow me. She would stand aggressively in front of me and say “no don’t be a moffie, DON’T RUN AWAY, TALK – NOW!” She was aggressive and wanted me to react to what she was saying. But I ran– because I didn’t want to fight. So, eventually I could not take that anymore. I just started to snap.” (430.48) (John)*

John perhaps verbally attacked his wife to stop her from calling him a “moffie”, a derogatory South African word for homosexual, and to show that he is not a “moffie” and a coward. Therefore, John and similarly Joe seemed to use violence to eliminate disrespect by asserting their manhood and invalidating their wives’ construal of them. However, the participants appeared to misconstrue their wives in that perhaps they intended to express their anger and the sense of loss of role instead of disrespecting them. Additionally, the wives perhaps wanted to provoke feelings of anger to force the participants to engage in the conflict and fix issues.

The anger emanating from construed disrespect seemed to lead some participants to make preemptive decisions and behave impulsively in which other manipulative tactics besides violence appeared to be used to extort respect and obtain a sense of power.

*“I started behaving irrationally. But she always put her work first. So, one morning I locked my car and took the keys. She called me and I knew she was late for work. I said hello and she said “yes I want the car.” I said which car? “The car is locked.” The car is locked because it’s my car, it’s not your car. What does our contract say? It’s my car. I said you can walk to work or ask your boss to come and fetch you. But you are not using my car because you disrespect me. She started pleading and I said ok fine – THERE, the key is there go to work.” So, things were bad between us. Nothing was – acceptable to me – or her.” (434.14) (John)*

Although manipulation perhaps enabled John to get respect and a sense of power, it seemed to aggravate conflict.

Although Joe and John appeared to blame their wives’ disrespect for provoking feelings of anger which escalated to violence, they seemed to regret their reactive violence because it triggered a vicious spiral of violence.

*“I don’t like saying this, but she liked using it – that “she is leaving and I am staying with my wife.” This thing disturbed me. I remember that day it was in the morning and I was drinking water and she repeated it again and I threw her with water. That became the worst mistake of my life because we ended up having a second physical fight – we fought, fought and fought. Then the workmen heard the loud screaming and tried to intervene by stopping the fight. The conflict slightly settled and started again when I went back to the house. She had this kitchen knife, the one you find on top of the counter, she took that knife and chased me with it.” (396.8) (Joe)*

However, some participants were not only victims of disrespect but also perpetrators. For instance, Sly's disrespect appeared to trigger his partner's disrespectful reaction which was concomitant with verbal violence intended to discourage future disrespect.

*“When we were fighting over the phone, like when I asked her ... I also have anger, so I insulted her and in return maybe she also wanted to hurt me, she said “you are a killer”.” (448.24) (Sly)*

In summary, in *Violence as extortion of respect*, respect appeared to be superordinate in the participants' construct systems. Disrespect seemed to trigger feelings of anger and insult which led to an impulsive and sometimes hostile violence employed to forcefully obtain respect. Hostility also appeared to manifest through non-violent manipulative tactics used to extort respect and a sense of power.

**3.13.6 Violence as an outcome of threat.** This theme explores threat, in Kelly's (1955) sense. Most participants seemed to feel threatened by accumulating problems in which they construed their partners/wives becoming distant which appeared to trigger a sense that they were losing them.

*“It felt to me like Lucy is slipping through my hands.” (436.1) (John)*

The feelings of threat in some participants appeared to be perpetuated by the construal of their partners'/wives' loss of interest in sexual intimacy which seemed to induce suspicions of infidelity.

*“At – HOME things started accumulating as well. Problems piled up. Lucy’s behaviour changed. She spent hours making herself beautiful. But she was ice-cold towards me – when it comes to sex. For the last – seven months – having sex ones a week was too much for her. Her phone always rang at night and she answered it out of hearing distance. I could hear that she was talking to a man. When I confronted her about him, she said he’s just a colleague. I thought how can a colleague call at like 2 o’clock in the morning? So, our problems got worse.” (432.22) (John)*

The constant fights seemed to diminish most participants’ feelings of hope of the situation improving.

*“A week does not EVEN pass without us fighting in the house. That is where my hope started to slowly finish.” (408.42) (Neo)*

The ongoing conflict appeared to result in most participants feeling unappreciated as husbands in which they seemed to preemptively conclude that their partners/wives were falling out of love with them.

*“The way I saw things happening – and the way there were fights in the house without happiness, and the way she treated me – not treating me like her husband anymore. I felt that no, this woman there is something which she is busy with WHICH up to so far ... it means that she has decided that with regard to me ... she is no longer interested in me. So, I slowly and slowly developed anger.” (415.22) (Neo)*

Neo's quote seems to indicate a sense of threat being entwined with a gradually developing feelings of anger because of the constant invalidation of marriage constructions, which also echoed Joe's and John's experiences.

The sense of threat seemed to emanate from the participants investing highly in their marriages.

*"I was committed to our marriage." (429.43) (John)*

Therefore, some participants perhaps felt threatened by the construal of their partners'/wives' intention to leave in which the threat of losing them seemed to be intolerable.

*"We had a problem and maybe exchanged words. She said that she was going to leave me with this house and my aunt's children but that I would not stay long in it. She said she will take the house. She said that she will fight for her rights and ensure that we are out of the house. That did not go down well with me." (396.4) (Joe)*

Joe's quote seems to support his reaction with anger to his wife's decision to separate with him in the sub-theme, *Failing love expectations and constructions*. Joe and similarly John and Neo perhaps anticipated the threat of losing their wives as likely to lead to a comprehensive change in their core structures. Therefore, violence was perhaps employed to eliminate the threat by stopping their wives from leaving.

The in-laws also seemed to pose a threat to the participants' intimate/marital relationships and fatherhood.

*“I went to my mother-in-law and said please give me Joy. As I reached for Joy my father-in-law intervened. I grabbed him and said I want to hit you ((raising his fist)). We had a scuffle and Lucy came out and started shouting at me. I saw that things are becoming BAD so I locked them outside. John Junior and Anna were in the house with me. My father-in-law and I were still fighting. He told me “YES you are a sissy, you are that, COME OUT.” I told him you are a BASTARD MAN. Just F~~UCK~~ OFF my property. I was their villain. I said fuck off here from my place. I said – Lucy can STAY, Joy can stay, they are my family. YOU'RE NOT MY FAMILY. YOU'RE NOT MY HOUSEHOLD. You want to interfere – GO ... You are not welcome.” (433.34)*

*(John)*

As described by John, the bitter fight between him and his in-laws appeared to involve power in which he perhaps used violence to guard his sense of power as a family man while challenging the in-laws' position of power. John's experience appears to be consistent with Joe's and Neo's accounts in which they seemed to construe the in-laws as undermining their competence as family men, and therefore threatening their sense of manhood. The violence appeared to be used to extinguish the source of threat and exert power by expressing the sense of authority.

In summary, in *Violence as an outcome of threat*, violence towards the partners/wives in most accounts seemed to be consequent of a construal of threat. Considering that most participants appeared to have highly invested in their intimate/marital relationships, the

possibility of losing their partners/wives seemed to be intolerable. The construed or anticipated threat of the partners/wives wanting separation appeared to be concomitant with anger in most accounts because it seemed to invalidate the participants' intimate/marital relationship constructions. The violence triggered by the threat appeared to serve various purposes in most accounts including extinguishing the source of the threat, and protecting and asserting the sense of manhood.

**3.13.7 Encountering problems as unconstructable.** This theme explores anxiety. Most participants appeared unable to construe how their intimate/marital relationships became engulfed by problems.

*“The way everything was messed up, the relationship having a problem inside ...  
Other things happened and I asked myself why are these things happening?” (416.35)  
(Neo)*

Similar to Neo, John and Joe perhaps felt anxious and frustrated by the occurrence of problems because of lack of constructions to construe the events. Neo appeared to be desperately wanting to make sense of the developing issues but seemed not to have constructions to apply to the situation.

Invalidations of constructions that some participants had about their intimate/marital relationships and their partners/wives seemed to induce anxiety because perhaps the participants realised they might have to revise their construct systems to reconstrue.

*“I don’t understand because – we were communicating – and she promised me. She promised me the things that I expected from her. I asked her if she would be able to fulfil those things – she told me that it is not a problem – she will stay with me. the fact that she has turned against me and had a baby with another man – I don’t understand that.” (449.4) (Sly).*

Sly seemed to construe sharing intimate relationship constructions with his new partner which was invalidated by her leaving him. The participant was perhaps “caught in the confusion of anxiety” (Kelly, 1955, p. 495) as he realised that he might have to abandon his constructions about his new partner and their relationship and change his construct system.

To reduce anxiety, some participants seemed to want to ask their extended families for guidance perhaps with an anticipation of revising their construct systems to construe an unconstruable intimate/marital relationship situation. For instance, Joe perhaps wanted to involve his extended family in his marital issues with the thought that they might help him to reconstrue problems and find alternative solutions.

*“From the start when I thought that maybe I cannot deal with this thing – I thought I should call my mother or uncles so that they can see what to do with this situation because I was not able to resolve it, then you find that my wife was the one stopping me because she did not want my family to see her as a bad person towards my aunt’s children. So, I also left it.” (392.43) (Joe)*

Although, Joe and similarly John and Neo, appeared to strongly resent the families-in-law’s intervention, Joe and Neo seemed to be willing to seek their extended families’

assistance. Joe's quote indicates that his construct system was perhaps open to modulation in which his superordinate constructs were maybe permeable. However, his wife discouraging him from seeking help probably left him "caught in the confusion of anxiety" (Kelly, 1955, p. 495) as he was perhaps unable to develop new constructions to deal with problems.

In summary, in *Encountering problems as unconstruable*, most participants seemed to become increasingly frustrated by their inability to construe intimate/marital relationship issues because of not having constructions to apply to the problems. The possibility of having to revise the construct system because of invalidations of constructions appeared to perpetuate some participants' anxiety. The desperate need to reduce anxiety seemed to result in the perpetuation of anxiety, as in Joe's case.

**3.13.8 Feeling dislodged from manhood role.** This theme discusses a construing of losing one's identity and core role. The participants seemed to draw on conventional socio-gendered and cultural constructions of masculinity and femininity to make personal anticipations and constructions of how they and their partners/wives should enact roles with each other, and also their partners'/wives' core role towards them.

While all the participants anticipated and construed themselves to be leaders of their nuclear families, invalidations of constructions seemed to induce feelings of emasculation and dislodgement from their core role. For instance, John and Neo appeared to construe their wives as depriving and robbing them of their manhood role.

*“A father is a head of the house and I was not the head of my house ... I felt weak and ROBBED! I’m supposed to be the leader. I’m supposed to love my wife and keep her and my kids safe.” (436.24) (John)*

John and Neo seemed to construe a switch in roles in which they became ‘women’ while their wives became ‘men’.

*“She was the head. I was not.” (436.26) (John)*

The dislodgement seemed to anger some participants. For instance, Neo appeared to be angered by performing what he seemed to construe as female-ascribed domestic duties because perhaps he did not expect to play a woman’s role when having a wife.

*“It did not take me well. I was often caught unprepared because you found that most of the time when I am at home I am the one who was always busy, it was almost like I have become a woman in the house.” (406.21) (Neo)*

One may predict Neo’s and John’s sense of being dislodged from the socio-gendered role might lead to domestic violence to avoid guilt by asserting a sense of manhood, and therefore restoring their identities of as men.

Although the participants seemed to construe themselves as fulfilling their roles as family men, “*My behaviour was ... I think it was normal. It was fine*” (449.28) (Sly), persistent problems appeared to lead to some participants self-construing to be incompetent which seemed to perpetuate feelings of guilt and disappointment.

*“I felt that maybe I am not man enough to them to maybe take charge of my own home.” (394.44) (Joe)*

The theme, *Feeling dislodged from manhood role*, captured intimate/marital relationship problems which seemed to result in some participants construing a loss of their manhood identity which might lead to violence as an absolution of guilt. Furthermore, relationship problems appeared to perpetuate guilt by inducing a self-construal of failing in manhood role.

**3.13.9 Construing in a chaotic, delimited or broadened field.** This theme considers the use of constriction or dilation to cope with chaos, and an oscillation between the strategies of construing. Some participants seemed to avoid construing incompatibilities by being hostile. For instance, Neo appeared to manipulate evidence by behaving normal perhaps to avoid construing issues presenting invalidations and incompatibilities.

*“I did not have thoughts of – just because the situation is like this ... let me ... you find that things are changing at home. Things were still normal although I started seeing other problems.” (407.6) (Neo)*

Although Neo and Joe appeared to confront their wives about issues, they seemed to change to avoidance-withdrawal to avoid escalating tension which might have present further invalidations and incompatibilities in construing.

*“I did not confront her just because we had ... we were people who were no longer happy in the house. I just looked and left it.” (409.18) (Neo)*

However, avoidance seemed to result in most participants not understanding their partners'/wives' feelings, which probably contributed to unresolved issues.

*“I think she felt that she is not worthy to be a woman. I never discussed these things with her but IF I WAS IN THAT POSITION, I would feel INSECURE and a failure as a man. I think those are the type of emotions that went through her. NOT that we ever discussed it. That was one of our other problems, proper communication. I kept things – inside.” (430.16) (John)*

Constriction in which the participants avoided confrontation seemed to be used to invalidate their partners'/wives' anticipations. For instance, Sly construed his then partner as behaving inappropriately with the anticipation that he would give her attention. He appeared to invalidate her expectation by not fighting with her.

*“Mpho behaved inappropriately after she had my child. She would come to the taxi rank drunk and say – “hey this CAR belongs to my baby’s father and I am getting in it.” I never fought with her. I saw that she expected me to take her so I just left her there.” (448.30) (Sly)*

Some participants seemed unable to tolerate being around their partners/wives because it triggered dilation in which they were consumed by incompatible construing about their failing intimate/marital relationships.

*“The time that I was able to spend – at home, I limited it. I was not able to spend a lot of time at home because I had a lot of different thoughts WHEN I sometimes looked at her. I realised that the BEST thing was to leave.” (408.4) (Neo)*

Neo appeared to reduce time spent at home to delimit his perceptual field by minimising construing incompatibilities.

John and Neo seemed to use alcohol as a constrictive agent to cope with intolerable incompatibilities.

*“I was – upset when I got home. I felt heart sore. I was disturbed. I had too many emotions – when I got home and saw her. A lot of emotions came to me. It was anger and sadness. It was heart sore. It’s oh fuck man! Then she came home late. It was always her work, work. I said to her please make an appointment with the Psychologist, we need an appointment URGENTLY. I didn’t even have supper that night. I drank Whisky not Brandy throughout the night to feel better.” (434.49) (John)*

Alcohol appeared to reduce excessive explorations and emotions resulting from a dilated field. John and similarly Neo seemed to drink to avoid the construing and negative emotions instigated by conflict.

However, alcohol seemed to have a loosening instead of a soothing effect in Sly which appeared to result in impulsivity compared to Nyaope.

*“When I was drunk – we ended up fighting – everything was messed up. I could not sit still. I had a lot of friends. I had different girls. I end up doing things which I regretted in the morning when I woke up ... I realised that I felt well after I smoked Nyaope. I was calm. I did not become angry. I did not hang around people in messed up places. So, I left alcohol and started smoking – Nyaope.” (444.46) (Sly)*

Some participants seemed to oscillate between constriction and dilation. The constriction effects of alcohol appeared to be short-term in that seeing their partners/wives seemed to throw them back into dilation.

*“When I was at the bar drinking beer, my mind stopped thinking about those things. The problems came when she came back from work. All those things came back to my mind, the things that were happening which I was thinking about ... they were still happening ... they came back – when I looked at her.” (415.47) (Neo)*

The flood of explorations seemed to outrun the reorganisation of some participants’ construct systems which perhaps resulted in chaos.

*“Eish a lot of things came to my mind – my sister. I imagined a lot of things. I – thought about a lot of things. I ... you know a lot of things came to my mind. They ended up making me angry.” (415.43) (Neo)*

“Eish” seems to indicate Neo’s feelings of being overwhelmed by excessive explorations, which also appeared to echo John’s experience. Perhaps the superordinate constructs could not subsume new constructions and organise the expanded field. Dilation

appeared to fail the participants leaving them faced with unavoidable construing of incompatibilities and invalidations resulting in anger.

The theme, *Construing in a chaotic, delimited or broadened field*, showed that the participants seemed to mostly use constriction to cope with issues and avoid aggravating problems which proved to be ineffective because it resulted in unaddressed problems. Some participants appeared to constantly oscillate between constriction and dilation which seemed to be problematic because it resulted in them being increasingly frustrated and overwhelmed with explorations in which they perhaps could not make sense of their problems. Although alcohol appeared to help some participants avoid construing invalidations and incompatibilities, its constriction effect seemed to be temporary in that the participants reverted to dilation which resulted in chaos.

**3.13.10 Feeling frustrated by ruminating.** This theme explores the challenges that the participants appeared to encounter in the Circumspection-Preemption-Control (C-P-C) Cycle in which their decision-making process did not seem to involve all the phases. For instance, some participants seemed to explore various solutions to problems but appeared to encounter incompatibilities in the divorce and suicide construct poles which probably led to rumination.

*“I sat in the braai room and thought, Ag! Divorce her. You know what John hang yourself. However, I did not want to leave my children behind. Don’t carry on like this.” (435.10) (John)*

The South African emotional expression, “Ag!” , appears to indicate John’s feelings of irritation with his wife in which he seemed to desperately explore ways to leave her. However, John and similarly Neo appeared to be confused by explorations of divorce and suicide because of their desire not to be separated from their children, which perhaps resulted in rumination which triggered feelings of frustration.

Some participants appeared to ruminate about leaving or staying in their intimate/marital relationships.

*“Another part of my heart said “I should go” and another part said “why are you going? Look at this person and see her exact intentions – today.” Another part said “eish, just go.”” (416.21) (Neo)*

“Eish” seems to indicate Neo’s feelings of frustration resulting from the excessive rumination between leaving versus staying in which leaving might have perhaps provoked anxiety because of an inability to construe his wife’s plans. The excessive rumination in Neo’s and John’s account appeared to suggest a dilated field.

The theme, *Feeling frustrated by ruminating*, captured the problems involved in excessive rumination in which John and Neo seemed unable to successively explore options in the C-P-C Cycle and make a choice. The problems encountered in the explored constructs appeared to prevent them to choose a construct and construct pole which resulted in them feeling confused and increasingly frustrated.

### 3.14 Constructions of Fatherhood

**3.14.1 Anticipations of being a father.** This theme examines the participants' fatherhood anticipations. The participants seemed to have tight and high anticipations of their children expanding their families.

*"I am the only child at home. I expected that at least he would add to my family."*

(443.40) (Sly)

Although the participants appeared to want to be in a committed intimate/marital relationship, having a loving mother for their children seemed to be important. They appeared to want their children to be raised in a secure home.

*"I hoped for a future with somebody else. I also had Anna with me, so I needed someone who could take care of her. I wanted stability in Anna's life" (427.9) (John)*

Their children's safety seemed to be superordinate in their construct systems, especially in the participants who were law enforcement agents. These participants appeared to construe their children trusting them to keep them safe.

*"Especially for me with my work they expected ... they knew that they are protected."*

(413.7) (Neo)

The participants also appeared to expect themselves to be protective.

*“If I hear Anna fall I would – run – expecting the worst.” (428.42) (John)*

Their children’s success seemed to be superordinate in the participants’ construct systems.

*“In the future you find that there is something that I could do for them – of which that person **EVEN THOUGH** – maybe she is married or whatsoever ... but she will always remember that “my parents were able to do this and that for me, and I was able to achieve because of them ... because they were able to give me ... they were able to be supportive.”” (412.50) (Neo)*

As in Neo’s case, perhaps the participants might have construed their children’s achievements as validation of their constructions of being responsible fathers.

Additionally, the participants appeared to expect their partners/wives to validate their constructions of being responsible fathers.

*“I remember this other time when she did not go to crèche I took her to the Mall and I bought her clothes, but I also wanted to surprise my wife, so I bought her clothes and other good stuff.” (390.30) (Joe)*

Perhaps Joe expected his wife to appreciate his efforts as a father and validate his playing of role as a good father.

In summary, in *Anticipations of being a father*, the constructions of being responsible fathers seemed to be at the top hierarchy of the participants' construct systems which was also demonstrated by the high investment in the fatherhood anticipations. The participants appeared to tightly expect their anticipations and constructions of fatherhood to be validated which suggests that they did not expect themselves to fail as fathers.

**3.14.2 Fighting over the children.** This theme explores anger (Cummins, 2003; McCoy, 1977) as experienced by the participants in which parental conflict appeared to invalidate their constructions and anticipations. For instance, the participants seemed to confidently self-construe enacting their fatherhood role well and fulfilling their anticipations and children's expectations of them.

*"I lived up my expectation of making them happy." (432.10) (John)*

Therefore, construing their partners/wives not recognising their efforts to be responsible fathers seemed to evoke anger in some participants.

*"My wife replied by saying that I bought her ugly clothes, "why did you buy her these things you should have just given me money, you just wasted money, so that I could buy her." This thing did not take me well ... I ended up tearing the clothes and the shoes. I tore the clothes and threw them in the bin." (390.34) (Joe)*

Joe's quote indicates a lack of sociality and commonality which appeared to precipitate and perpetuate the couple's problems in their parenting roles, as also echoed in John's account. The participants perhaps construed their wives as construing themselves as

better parents in comparison to them which led to anger which manifested through hostility in which Joe tore the clothes.

Considering Individuality Corollary (Kelly, 1955), the couple's different parenting constructions appeared to cause conflict. For instance, some participants' intimate/marital relationship issues seemed to involve contrasting views and expectations of parenting.

*"She wanted these children ... that I should abandon them and of which it was something that I was not going to be able to do." (390.1) (Joe)*

Joe and similarly John appeared to be angered by their wives invalidating their constructions of parenting. Joe's anger seemed to emanate from construing his wife wanting him to neglect his aunt's children whom he appeared to be deeply loyal and committed to ensuring their well-being. Likewise, John's anger seemed to be provoked by construing his wife wanting him to be less protective of Anna, her step-daughter.

Some participants appeared to be hurt and angered by their partners'/wives' resentment and ill-treatment of the children which they seemed to construe as invalidating their family and motherhood constructions, and constructions of their partners/wives.

*"When she was questioned in Court on why she abused Anna. She said "I did not carry her for nine months." ((Crying)) It hurts me – because I know what went on in the house. I was there. Anna was there, John was there. I was in that situation, daily. There was DAILY CONFLICT. There was – ABUSE – towards Anna, me, and John Junior. I had enough of the abuse. I had enough of been sworn at. I had enough of –*

*the children been hit, been sworn at. Every time that she acts like this – it feels like she is stabbing me in the heart.” (429.15) (John)*

Like most couples when they get married and start a family they do not seem to expect encountering abuse, therefore as evident in the quote, John appeared to be deeply angered by the unexpected alleged abuse which seemed to invalidate his expectations of his wife to play a caring mother role with her step-daughter and their children.

Although John and Joe seemed unable to tolerate the alleged ill-treatment of the children by their wives, they appeared to feel helpless in that they did not seem to know how to intervene.

*“With regard to protecting my children from the abuse, I did not act like a good father. I loved them but I did not protect them. Lucy swore at me when I INTERVENED, “ag, fuck off! Get fuckin out of here!” That made me go into myself. Keeping my emotions for myself.” (431.27) (John)*

Perhaps John and similarly Joe felt caught in a dilemma between constructions of fatherhood, in which a father is expected to protect, and of themselves, “*I am not a violent person*” (398.14) (Joe). The prediction of fighting their wives to stop the abuse seemed to be incompatible with self-construing. Therefore, John constricted by avoiding confrontation to perhaps avoid invalidating self-constructions, however, this consequently induced a sense of failing as a father.

In contrast, Sly and Neo seemed to have common expectations with their partners/wives regarding childcare in which they shared parental responsibilities.

*“Like the day the accident happened, she asked me to look after him because she was busy writing her tests. I never fetched him during the week, I took him during the weekend when my mother was present ... I took him even though IT WAS DURING THE WEEK and I was not WORKING because my car was broken. But Tom ... I interacted with him normally.” (444.17) (Sly)*

Sly appeared to feel defensive of his parenting role, as indicated by “*But*”, which echoed all the participants’ feelings. He seemed to blame his then partner of leading him to take the child on a day that his mother was not there to supervise him. However, there appeared to be a sense of him not wanting to be construed as perhaps having neglected the child as the result of providing sole childcare.

In summary, in *Fighting over the children*, while some participants and their partners/wives appeared to have common parenting expectations, other participants seemed to have contrasting constructions of being parents in which they lacked sociality and commonality which appeared to contribute to parental conflict. The use of competence-incompetence construct poles to compare parenting abilities seemed to trigger some participants’ anger which appeared to be perpetuated by their partners’/wives’ violence towards the children.

**3.14.3 Feeling trapped.** This dissertation proposes that feeling trapped be considered as an awareness of being unable to construe alternatives to an event. The preemptive

construing of problems seemed to prevent most participants to construe alternatives resulting in feeling trapped.

*“I couldn’t CHOOSE, I was a COWARD to CHOOSE between Lucy and the children. I couldn’t say stop this now Lucy, my children are more important to me. I knew from my first marriage that once you open a domestic violence order, your marriage is gone.” (431.23) (John)*

Although John emphasised that he was unable to protect his children because he could not make a choice, he implicitly seemed to choose his wife. Drawing on his first marriage, the participant appeared to tightly predict divorce by getting a Court order, and therefore perhaps made a preemptive decision not to get an interdict.

Furthermore, loyalty constructions seemed to prevent John and similarly Joe to use varying construction subsystems to choose between their wives and children, as described in Kelly’s (1955) Fragmentation Corollary, in which one uses different construction subsystems which are incompatible with each other, to construe. The inability to make a choice seemed to precipitate a sense of inadequacy.

The construing having no choice seemed to force some participants to make preemptive decisions in which they appeared to fail to explore different options which might have led to an elaborative choice, in which one chooses an alternative in a dichotomised construct that is predicted to expand the construct system (Kelly, 1955).

*“She had two children, my aunt, so after she died I was forced to or I decided to take her children so that we could care for them.” (386.29) (Joe)*

Some participants appeared to feel trapped in the intimate/marital relationship because of their children, and therefore seemed to preemptively decide to stay for the children’s sake.

*“I stayed for the sake of the children because I felt that there is nobody who will care for my children than the way I take care of them.” (408.17) (Neo)*

Neo and similarly John appeared to avoid or limit the construing of other alternatives which were perhaps construed as incompatible with their constructions concerning fatherhood and families, of ensuring their children’s well-being while separated/divorced.

In summary, in *Feeling trapped*, most participants seemed to fail to draw on various constructs and construct poles to construe issues concerning their relationships with their partners/wives and children. The preemptive construing of problems appeared to lead some participants to be unable to construe alternative options to deal with issues which resulted in them feeling trapped. The sense of being trapped seemed to be perpetuated by them delimiting their perceptual field to alternatives which perhaps presented incompatibilities and invalidations. A fragmented construct system and impermeable superordinate loyalty constructions seemed to also contribute to the sense of being unable to make a choice.

### 3.15 The Killing of the Child/Children

**3.15.1 Killing as a constrictive act.** This theme considers filicide-homicide as a strategy of constriction. Most participants perhaps construed killing as a solution to permanently remove ‘solutionless’ problems which invalidated constructions and triggered anger from their perceptual field.

*“I am really ANNOYED by this situation, so the best way was to end it ... I thought that this situation is out of control, it is better if there is a SOLUTION. ” (397.5) (Joe)*

The emphasis on the loudly uttered “ANNOYED” seems to indicate that Joe and similarly John and Neo could no longer tolerate invalidations and incompatibilities in construing. They appeared to be desperately wanting to eliminate uncontrollable problems from their perceptual field, and therefore seemed to construe killing as a solution to end the spiral of chaos.

Most participants appeared to blame their partners/wives for causing overwhelming problems which led to filicide-homicide.

*“My wife came to sit down and asked “but why did you shoot us? What is the reason of shooting us?” I told her that ‘you have made me tired in life that is why I did something like this. I was tired.’” (417.15) (Neo)*

Neo and likewise John and Joe perhaps played the victim role as a means of constriction to justify killing, and therefore avoid guilt.

The ongoing fights seemed to make constriction impossible resulting in most participants unable to avoid construing that the unbearable situation will never improve despite their efforts.

*“I saw that EISH, no here ... things are no longer right.” (408.44) (Neo)*

The emphasis on the loudly uttered “EISH” appears to highlight Neo’s sense of discouragement which echoed Joe’s and John’s feelings.

Furthermore, the continuous invalidations seemed to instigate feelings of hopelessness which perhaps contributed to the decision to kill.

*“All my efforts were unsuccessful. I did not have hope anymore, especially after – the way things went in the morning. I thought to myself that whatever I have tried to do was unsuccessful. It seemed to me that I was always blamed ... I was too tired. So, that is when I did that.” (397.20) (Joe)*

Joe and likewise John and Neo seemed unable to tolerate the incompatible construing of being blamed and failing to fix problems. Filicide-homicide was perhaps the last resort to end problems so as to avoid invalidations and incompatibilities in construing.

Killing appeared to be construed by most participants as a way of avoiding the invalidations and incompatibilities of separation/divorce.

*“I felt like my wife was slipping through my fingers. I don’t know THE WAY ... another person could take it like that and say “you did this thing because you did not love her.” They could say that, but it is not like that. I loved her – a lot, more than the word. So – ish I felt somehow.” (416.29) (Neo)*

The intense feelings of love described by Neo for his wife indicate that he perhaps could not bear the thought of her leaving him. Therefore, Neo and similarly Joe seemed to attempt and killed their wives, respectively, to remove them from their field of perception without bringing further invalidations.

Additionally, some participants appeared to attempt to delimit their perceptual field by attempting suicide. For instance, John seemed to attempt to permanently remove himself from chaos by attempting killing himself.

*“I told the police that I don’t want to live anymore. I’m fed-up. I can’t live anymore. I want out. I cocked my pistol and tried to shoot myself, but nothing happened. I realised that I put this thing on safety. So, I put it on fire and I shot myself but somehow I survived ... I just wanted to die. I didn’t have zest for life ((crying)). My life was meaningless.” (435.28) (John)*

John appeared to attempt indeterminacy/chaotic suicide, in which the outcome of events is unpredictable (Kelly, 1961). Perhaps he construed suicide as a way of bringing meaning and a sense of validation by ending chaos which was invalidating his constructions. Since other constriction tactics had failed, the suicide attempt was perhaps the last resort to delimit invalidation events from the perceptual field.

The theme, *Killing as a constrictive act*, captured that most participants seemed to use filicide-homicide including attempted suicide, as in the case of John, as means of constriction. The extreme violent acts appeared to be construed as the last resort to finally solve irresolvable and overwhelming problems which presented intolerable incompatibilities and invalidations. Filicide-homicide including attempted suicide, as in John's account, seemed to be preemptively construed as a preferred solution in comparison to separation/divorce which appeared to be construed by some participants as likely to bring further incompatibilities and invalidations.

**3.15.2 Encountering challenges in decision-making.** This theme focuses on the participants' failure to complete Circumspection-Preemption-Control Cycle. It explores the impulsive decision to commit filicide-homicide including attempting suicide in some accounts. The theme examines the participants' revision of their construct systems after killing in which they appeared to reconstrue issues resulting in feelings of regret. The sub-themes, *Violence as foreshortening of the circumspection-preemption-control cycle* and *Regretting choices*, are discussed.

**3.15.2.1 Violence as foreshortening of the circumspection-preemption-control cycle.** The sub-theme considers the killing as consequent of foreshortened Circumspection-Preemption-Control (C-P-C) Cycle. Most participants appeared not to engage in the circumspection phase but instead plunged into the preemption phase and chose to react with violence to provocation without exploring other solutions.

*"I warned her again and told her that I am speaking for the last time – please don't make me lose control and make a decision which I will regret maybe for the rest of my*

*life, or make a bad decision. She continued to provoke me saying that I must hit her, things like that. She said "hit me so that I can get you arrested." Right there ... she did not see it ... I took out my gun." (396.34) (Joe)*

Joe and similarly John and Neo perhaps exceeded their inhibition which resulted in them being unable to tolerate provocation, avoid conflict, and inhibit emotions of anger. Therefore, they perhaps impulsively reacted with excessive violence emanating from the explosion of the feelings of anger which was inhibited for an extended period.

Most participants reported that the decision to kill and also attempt suicide, as in Neo's case, was sudden.

*"It was something that happened in a short period of time. It attacked me FAST ... It is an issue which ATTACKED ME." (416.45) (Neo)*

The utterance "FAST" and "ATTACKED" suggests that Neo and similarly John and Joe perhaps lacked control of the impulsive behaviour which is indicative of a foreshortened C-P-C Cycle. However, construing in this manner appears to excuse the offenders' role in the killing.

All the participants vehemently denied the killing being premeditated.

*"I did not plan to commit it. It just happened. IT JUST HAPPENED." (444.1) (Sly)*

However, most participants appeared to have intended to kill their children including their wives in some accounts.

*“I concluded that – it is better if there is nobody in the family. That is what I ended up doing. Unfortunately ... or let me say fortunately – God did not want that to happen the way it was supposed to happen. He did not want ... maybe if it happened like that I am sure that – maybe there was not going to be anybody who is alive, including me.” (416.40) (Neo)*

Some participants who appeared to tightly predict that their children might suffer if they were alive seemed to impulsively decide to commit altruistic filicide to prevent suffering.

*“I wanted to commit suicide about three, four times in that year, but I did not want to leave my children behind. I think I wanted to take them with me to protect them from Lucy. So, that evening when I decided to kill myself, that is when I decided to kill them too.” (435.39) (John)*

Altruistic filicide appeared to co-occur with attempted suicide in some cases. Although, as previously discussed in relation to indeterminacy suicide which seemed to be attempted by John to escape chaos, Joe appeared to attempt deterministic suicide, in which one can predict the outcome of their life (Kelly, 1961).

*“I was aware that she was dead after I shot her. So, I had this thought that, this thing has happened, it is above my powers. I realised that obviously this thing has*

*happened, I don't have another alternative, besides the one of coming to prison. I just told myself that I am not going to prison.” (396.39) (Joe)*

The tightly predicted inevitable outcome of being imprisoned seemed to be construed by Joe as undesirable, and therefore he appeared to preemptively design the desired alternative of attempting deterministic suicide perhaps to have a sense of control and “power” over his life.

In contrast, one participant with a history of crime and substance abuse seemed to commit accidental filicide which was not concomitant with suicide.

*“I just made a decision that it is a small thing – he will recover.” (447.36) (Sly)*

Sly seemed to preemptively judge the injuries, minimised the seriousness of the situation, and tightly predicted recovery.

Sly appeared not to consider alternatives of helping his son but instead preemptively decided not to seek medical assistance.

*“Since I had just finished smoking outside, I thought the burns were minor and not major. I took toothpaste and smeared it on him – and I stayed with him without taking him to the hospital.” (446.8) (Sly)*

The participant seems to allude to that Nyaope delimited his perceptual field preventing him to propositionally construe, which involves construing a situation

multidimensionally (Kelly, 1955), the burns before making a decision. The word “*Since*” also appears to indicate Sly’s attempt to lessen his responsibility in the filicide by blaming Nyaope.

Anger stemming from invalidations seemed to lead some participants to impulsively commit filicide.

*“I spoke to her about our marriage, to get it right. She just said “AG, fuck you John! Just fuckin leave me alone. I want to fuckin sleep man!” I don’t remember the whole shooting. I took my gun and went to Anna’s bedroom and shot her first. I cannot remember a shot going off. I cannot remember my hand doing that ((pulling the trigger)) – the jerk of the pistol. I don’t remember shooting her. I apparently shot Joy and John Junior ((crying)).” (435.13) (John)*

John’s and similarly Neo’s inability to recall the shooting, which is indicative of foreshortened C-P-C Cycle, suggests that they perhaps construed the traumatic event as incompatible with their constructions, and therefore suspended, in which intolerable constructions are held in abeyance (Kelly, 1955). However, the fact that they could later recall the incident indicates that the constructions of the traumatic shooting/killing might have been temporarily under-elaborated in their construct systems.

The impulsive killing and attempted killing of the partners/wives appeared to be triggered by slot rattling in which some participants perhaps switched from positively to negatively construing their partners/wives as the result of invalidations of constructions.

*“When I looked at her – I felt you know eish something coming ... However, – I don’t know what came after ... another thing. Because I ended when ... you know what, I ended when things were messed up.” (416.17) (Neo)*

The participants perhaps were consumed with anxiety in which they were unable to make sense of their role in the killing which is indicative of impulsivity, a foreshortened C-P-C Cycle (Kelly,1955).

*“I was trying to understand how he died. But how did he die? WHY did I not bring him before?” (447.18) (Sly)*

The self-constructions of Sly and similarly Joe, Neo, and John were perhaps impermeable to and incompatible with the preemptively chosen constructions of killing resulting in the participants failing to understand their role in the killing.

In summary, in *Violence as foreshortening of the circumspection-preemption-control cycle*, the killing seemed to be impulsive in which the participants appeared to fail to multidimensionally construe problems and explore various options to deal with the situation. Instead, most participants seemed to preemptively choose reactive violence which appeared to manifest from an inability to inhibit feelings of frustration and anger as the result of an exceeded inhibition. Furthermore, the deadly violence seemed to be consequent of most participants reconstruing their partners/wives from the opposite construct pole to which they previously construed. A foreshortened C-P-C Cycle appeared to manifest through an inability to temporarily recall and construe the traumatic killing. Although altruistic filicide was

associated with attempted suicide in some accounts, it did not appear to be concomitant with the case of accidental filicide.

**3.15.2.2 Regretting choices.** The sub-theme explores the participants' sense of regretting the choice to kill in which they seemed to revise their construct systems. The findings from the ABC model (Tschudi & Winter, 2012), which explored how the participants construed their situation and made choices, appeared to indicate that the participants were likely to construe a similar situation differently which might result in no or reduced recidivism, and therefore suggesting a revised construct system after the killing.

*"I prefer not to kill my children because killing them at the end of the day separated me from them." (422.13) (Neo)*

The participants' approach to problems seemed to have changed after killing in which they appeared prepared to sequentially engage in the C-P-C Cycle, exploring all the issues involved in decision-making.

*"I learnt that when you are having problems we are supposed to sit down and advise each other about those problems. If we are not able to deal with the problems ... we cannot get maybe a concl ... I mean a conclusion about the problem, at least we have to inform other people who can assist us. It is then where maybe – I think we can find assistance. However, the problem which I realised ... I realised something that – I AM A FAILURE because I saw the situation slowly starting but I LEFT IT." (410.31) (Neo)*

Neo and similarly John, Joe, and Sly perhaps construed themselves as failures and felt guilty about killing because the old self is perhaps construed as dislodged from the new core role.

The feelings of regret seemed to be precipitated and perpetuated by the participants construing themselves as not having made elaborative choices before the revision of their construct systems.

*“After he became sick I should have immediately looked for help. Nyaope made me think slowly about things that could have helped him.” (447.35) (Sly)*

The reason for change appeared to be influenced by the experienced painful and irreversible consequences of killing one’s child/children.

*“The children we loved so much – are gone forever ((crying)). The children that I loved so much are gone forever.” (438.26) (John)*

The lack of findings of ‘C’ construct, which might prevent change (Tschudi & Winter, 2012), suggests that the participants are perhaps likely to choose not to kill if encountering a similar situation which perhaps led them to kill.

*“There are no disadvantages of not killing your child. You don’t lose anything.” (452.18) (Sly)*

In summary, in *Regretting choices*, the experienced painful consequences of killing one's child/children seemed to lead the participants to revise their construct systems after the filicide. They appeared likely to propositionally construe issues and successively complete the C-P-C Cycle before making decisions. The experienced guilt after a revised construct system indicates that the participants were perhaps unlikely to reoffend which was supported by a lack of 'C' construct, which might have prevented change.

**3.15.3 “My plan did not work”.** The theme considers that most participants perhaps committed filicide-homicide including attempted suicide in some cases with the anticipation of extinguishing problems. However, their anticipations appeared to be greatly invalidated by the consequences of killing which involved inflicting pain on others, losing their reputation as responsible fathers, losing their sense of self, and being rejected. The sub-themes, *Feeling guilty* and *Feeling shame* are discussed.

**3.15.3.1 *Feeling guilty*.** This sub-theme explores guilt as the result of killing. Most participants seemed to anticipate killing to solve problems.

*“I tried to tell myself that I am solving the situation, but NO at the end it only created a DISASTER.” (398.7) (Joe)*

However, the filicide-homicide appeared to have an unanticipated catastrophic effect in which it seemed to be construed as creating a bigger mess of problems, as emphasised by the loudly uttered “DISASTER”.

The participants seemed to reconstrue the act of killing as dislodged from their construing of their core role, i.e., sin in terms used by Kelly (1969), which resulted in them feeling guilty.

*“What I did to the KIDS as their father, is a shame ((crying)).” (436.5) (John)*

Some participants seemed to refer to constructions of evil to construe filicide. For instance, Sly appeared to tightly construe the sinful act of filicide as committed by evil fathers.

*“I expected that this kind of thing would happen to evil people like – SATANISTS. The way I love him, it would NEVER happen to me, and then I did this kind of thing to him. I did not help him. I did not care for him.” (447.24) (Sly)*

Sly did not seem to construe himself as evil which suggests that he did not perhaps expect himself to be capable of committing filicide. His filicidal role might have resulted in a dislodgement from his core role. The participant’s experience seems to indicate that filicide lies beyond the range of evil constructions.

The participants appeared to construe killing as indicating that they failed as men which suggest that they perhaps experienced a loss of their manhood role.

*“I feel disappointed, I feel ashamed and I feel you know what – it means I was not responsible. The way the situation happened, I feel that eish – no, it means that I could not handle my problems.” (418.39) (Neo)*

An experienced loss of the self seemed to be evident through the participants' self-construing of playing a role of harmful men.

*“Even now I don't feel well that we are talking about this. I feel ashamed that I also form PART of the men that hurt or I have hurt my family or women. I don't think it is a right thing. My plan did not work for me.” (397.37) (Joe)*

Similar to most people, Joe did not seem to want to be associated with men who kill. His filicidal-homicidal role perhaps induced immense guilt because it resulted in him construing himself assuming the role of people he appeared to detest.

The participants seemed to construe the consequences of killing superseding their efforts as good fathers, and therefore contributing to their sense of loss of identity.

*“Since I am already here – **OBVIOUSLY** most of the time you can try to build something good but a slight mistake can erase all of that.” (399.12) (Joe)*

“*Here*” seems to refer to prison in which Joe and likewise John and Neo appeared to perceive as leading them to lose their roles as good family men. The emphasis on “**OBVIOUSLY**” seems to signify Joe's tight prediction of the loss of identity as inevitable because of being incarcerated. Therefore, prison might be considered to be an institution of punishment which might induce guilt in the punished.

Although the quote below seems to indicate shame, it also appears to show most participants' feelings of desperation to re-establish their sense of self after punishment.

*“I feel ashamed and a lot – that – I am in such a situation which I am currently in, and I am NOT PROUD of the situation that I am currently in. I FEEL THAT THEY COULD SAY “you can go outside tomorrow” so that I can RECTIFY things and people can TRUST ME AGAIN. People can say “no at least this person can see that he did – a big mistake.” (418.48) (Neo)*

In contrast, although filicide seemed to induce guilt in Sly, he did not appear to feel guilty by being in prison perhaps because of reported history of crime and convictions.

*“IT IS HER who is hurting me the MOST – than other things, like being in prison. I know that I will finish my sentence – I will persevere.” (449.11) (Sly)*

Sly perhaps construed being an offender as part of his core role, and therefore being incarcerated did not threaten his identity and dislodge him from his construed role in society.

The sub-theme, *Feeling guilty*, captured the unexpected disastrous effect of filicide-homicide on the participants' sense of self. The act of killing seemed to be reconstrued as evil and sin, and therefore a dislodgement from the type of people the participants appeared to construe themselves to be. Although prison did not seem to provoke guilt in a participant who is a habitual offender, most participants appeared to be greatly worried by prison threatening their identities as good men which resulted in them desperately wanting to re-establish their construed role in society to reduce guilt.

**3.15.3.2 Feeling shame.** The sub-theme explores the participants' sense of being dislodged from other people's construing of core role after the killing. For instance, the

participants spoke of a sad experience of feeling rejected by people they had good role relationships.

*“A lot of people who maybe – I had a good communication relationship with before the incident ... obviously – they have turned their backs on me by distancing themselves.” (399.36) (Joe)*

Rejection seemed to be used as a form of punishment in which the punishers perhaps wanted to protect their core role by separating themselves from the filicidal participants.

Punishment also seemed to be evident in most participants’ experience of being judged in which some participants also spoke of being labelled killers.

*“They judged me ... A lot of people consider me to be a killer ... It is like – when I pass by – there are other people who you can see from their facial expression, they never tell me straight – I don’t know if they are scared of me or what, but I can see that this person is just acting – they are thinking this person is bad and he killed his child. Even the people who know me very well see me as bad.” (448.15) (Sly)*

Drawing on the two quotes above, Joe’s and Sly’s experience of rejection and being judged particularly by people they construed as having an understanding of their core role might have induced shame. Therefore, punishment in this dissertation is proposed to be linked to shame in which it does not just symbolise the destruction of the role played between the offender and punishing person, but might also indicate to the offender that they are dislodged from the punishing person’s construing of their core role.

Some participants seemed to construe the consequences of killing as partially invalidating role constructions in which they construed their extended families as not having expected them to offend.

*“I EVEN disappointed my family. I feel that I disappointed them, because I don’t think that they also expected that – one of the good days they will be coming to visit me inside prison. They thought that MAYBE – in the future they will hear that man has a top position at work.” (418.44) (Neo)*

Feelings of shame seemed to co-occur with anger. For instance, Sly appeared to feel ashamed and angered by being construed as perhaps having killed his child out of resentment.

*“She knew that I loved Tom. But she did not show that she knew ... it was as if I have never loved him, like I have never wanted him. Those are things which bother me right now.” (447.49) (Sly)*

Additionally, John’s sense of shame and anger seemed to be instigated by being construed as killing his children to hurt his wife.

*“The Court said that I shot them because I wanted to punish Lucy. However, if I wanted to punish Lucy why would I kill Anna? ((Crying)) Anna wasn’t hers and she was tormenting Anna.” (435.43) (John)*

The feelings of shame appeared to be perpetuated by the participants construing their behaviour as deviating from the cultural expectations of fatherhood.

*“I am seen as a failure. My culture does not condone this kind of thing. A father is not supposed to kill his children. He is supposed to protect them, give them what they need, and I did the opposite. I took care of my children and I loved them, but at the end I killed them ((crying)). They don’t see me as a good father.” (436.36) (John)*

Although John and similarly the other three participants appeared to have their own constructions of fatherhood, they also seemed to draw on socio-cultural constructions of being a father. Therefore, failing to behave according to the way they construed society expecting them to behave because of the killing appeared to trigger shame.

Some participants perhaps wanted to extinguish shame by a yearning to undo the killing. For instance, John seemed to have a strong desire to bring his children back to life perhaps to stop feeling dislodged from his wife’s construing of his role as a father.

*“It’s painful. I just want my kids alive, then I can tell Lucy here are the kids they are alive!” (435.42) (John)*

The sub-theme, *Feeling shame*, proposed that punishment might induce shame especially since most participants appeared to be punished by people they construed to have intimate role relationships. Therefore, these participants might have felt that they failed to behave according to other people’s expectations of them. Shame seemed to be concomitant with anger in cases where filicide was associated with feelings of hatred towards the child/children and spousal revenge. The participants’ sense of shame appeared to be perpetuated by a construed dislodgement from the construing of conventional socio-cultural constructions of fatherhood.

In conclusion, this study aimed to investigate the filicidal participants' construction processes, the choice to kill, and construing of the filicide-homicide. Persistent intimate/marital problems seemed to significantly contribute to the occurrence of filicide-homicide. Considering that most participants appeared to have had only anticipated and construed their partners/wives and intimate/marital relationships in terms of positive constructs, they seemed to lack constructions to make sense of the unanticipated problems. Therefore, were perhaps unable to develop constructions of solving issues.

The encountered problems which presented construing of invalidations and incompatibilities appeared to trigger threat and anger in most participants. The feelings of anger seemed to be exacerbated in some participants who construed their role relationships with their partners/wives in terms of also the conventional socio-gendered and cultural constructions of masculinity and femininity, and therefore construed their partners/wives not enacting their roles accordingly. Instead, they construed their partners/wives not treating them as anticipated, and their core role invalidating their manhood constructions and dislodging them from their core role of being a man.

While most participants appeared to attempt to cope through constriction, some participants also repeatedly oscillated between constriction and dilation. However, the construing strategies proved to be ineffective in that they resulted in unaddressed issues, a chaotic perceptual field, and a disorganised construct system.

Most participants seemed to employ violence in a hostile manner and to eliminate the threat, while reducing guilt by restoring a sense of manhood in some accounts. Violence and non-violent tactics appeared to be used in some cases as extortion of respect. Extreme

violence, filicide-homicide including attempted suicide in the case of John and Joe, seemed to be part of a vicious cycle of violence in most accounts in which the participants appeared to have slot rattled. Although all the participants seemed to kill impulsively in which Joe appeared to make a preemptive decision also to commit deterministic suicide, the filicide-homicide including chaotic suicide, as in John's case, seemed to be a means of constriction in most accounts. Foreshortened C-P-C Cycle appeared to manifest through anxiety in most cases including temporary loss of memory of the traumatic incident in the case of John and Neo.

Although the killing seemed not to be premeditated, it appeared to be intentional except in the case of the participant who committed accidental filicide which was also not associated with attempted suicide in comparison to altruistic filicide. The irreversible effects of the killing and its consequential effects on the self and relationships appeared to induce guilt and shame.

### **Family Participants**

This section presents the themes and sub-themes which were analysed during personal construct analysis of the paternal filicidal offenders' (Joe, Neo, and Sly) extended family members. As mentioned in Chapter 2, John's family members were excluded in the study because his father is dead, his mother and wife refused consent, and the contact details of his brother were not obtained because of their poor relationship. (See more information in Table 1, Chapter 2).

The analysis examined the extended family members' understanding of the killing by exploring their constructions and construing processes, and also their construing of the offenders' constructions and interpersonal relationships. The research explored three domains: construing of the offender's intimate/marital relationship; construing the couple's relationship with their child/children; construing the killing. The themes are reported and structured according to the domains. Below are some of the analysed themes which are discussed:

#### 1. Construing of the offender's intimate/marital relationship

- Construing the couple anticipating love
- Submerging to construe positively
- Constriction
  - Construing him avoiding
  - Minimising dealing with incompatibilities
- Anxiety
  - Experiencing the couple's problems as unconstruable

- Failing to construe the family-in-law

## 2. Construing the couple's relationship with their child/children

- Construing them not trusting him
- Construing us fighting over the children
- Perceiving a hostile parent/guardian-child fight
- Constricting to avoid invalidation

## 3. Construing the killing

- Construing the killing: Planned-unplanned poles
- Not anticipating him to kill
- Struggling to construe
- Construing a father killing as constriction
- Construing a father killing impulsively
- Construing the killing avoidable
- Perceiving a father dislodged from his role
- Anticipating the filicidal father to feel shame

### **3.16 Construing the Offender's Intimate/Marital Relationship**

**3.16.1 Construing the couple anticipating love.** The theme examines the participants' construing of the filicidal offenders and their partners/wives appearing to anticipate to love each other. For instance, most filicidal offenders seemed to be construed as expecting themselves to be loving family men.

*“He wanted to give his wife and children the love that they deserved.” (470.28)*

*(Dave)*

This suggests that most filicidal offenders perhaps were not construed as expecting problems which might also lead them to harm their nuclear families to engulf their intimate/marital relationships.

Instead, most filicidal offenders appeared to be construed as tightly anticipating having close relationships with their partners/wives.

*“Joe wanted to have a sense of togetherness with sis Sue. He wanted to have a good and tight marriage.” (470.34) (Dave)*

Likewise, most filicidal offenders’ partners/wives appeared to be tightly construed as showing commonality with their partners/husbands concerning commitment and wanting their nuclear families to grow.

*“I thought Sue told herself ‘This is where I am staying until – I become a grandmother. I thought she had that kind of commitment.’ (458.5) (Mary)*

Therefore, most couples seemed to be perceived as not expecting their intimate/marital relationships to fail but instead tightly anticipating respect, which as proposed in this dissertation involves one construing the other as treating them as expected.

*“They expected to be united, and in love. They expected to respect each other.”*

*(462.5) (April)*

In summary, in *Construing the couple anticipating love*, based on most participants’ construing of the filicidal offenders and their partners/wives, the couples appeared only to draw on the positive construct poles to make tight anticipations of their relationships. The couples’ tight predictions seemed to be risky and vulnerable to invalidations, especially since they appeared to be construed as not having anticipated problems. This suggests that they might not have known how to deal with the unexpected problems, and invalidations of their anticipations and constructions might have been unbearable.

**3.16.2 Submerging to construe positively.** This theme explores submergence, in which one construct pole is inaccessible for construing (Kelly, 1955). A construct presents one a choice in its dichotomised poles to choose where to assign an event (Kelly, 1955). Therefore, most participants seemed to choose a positive construct pole to construe the filicidal offenders’ intimate/marital relationships while submerging the negative construct pole. This appeared to lead them to always construe the couples as getting along.

*“I saw that they interacted well with each other whenever I visited them. They were always happy and interacted well with each other.” (461.46) (April)*

Continuing to construe on terms of the positive construct pole might have prevented the participants from perceiving problems, but instead perpetuated their construing of the filicidal offenders and their partners/wives being happy and inseparable.

*“Eish, mama you know I will never be able to explain it to you because when I arrived at their house ... I briefly stopped at their house and I saw that they were STILL happy. They did everything together even when they came here to the Mall to do their shopping. There was nothing that was alarming.” (483.41) (Jack)*

“Eish”, a South African emotional expression, seems to highlight Jack’s feelings of confusion of perhaps now becoming aware that his sister and filicidal brother-in-law had problems but yet appeared to be very close, as indicated by the emphasis on “they did everything together”. Perhaps Jack and similarly most of the other participants were unaware of their submergence and also their reluctance to uncover and test the submerged construct pole. They were perhaps ‘unconsciously’ concerned that drawing on the negative construct pole might lead to slot rattling. Therefore, they continued submerging perhaps to avoid invalidating their constructions of the couples.

For instance, slot rattling in which April and May perhaps reconstrued in terms of negative construct poles seemed to result in them becoming aware of problems.

*“Their relationship was good. They were happy – at the beginning. Even when they had their first child, everything was nice. They did not have problems. They got along well. And then my aunt died. After my aunt died that is when I can say sis Sue and my brother started having problems. Sis Sue did not want Nomsa [April’s cousin] and her brother to stay there ((pointing at Joe’s house)). She did not want my aunt’s children to stay there with her and Joe. However, you see initially my mother wanted to take Nomsa and sis Sue refused. That is when their problems started.” (461.21) (April)*

The two participants appeared to now construe their filicidal brothers and sisters-in-law drifting apart, “*It is like you could see that they are not ((holding hands))*” (496.44) (May).

The theme, *Submerging to construe positively*, indicated that some participants might have been unable to construe problems in the couples’ relationships and intervene to prevent the killing because of submergence of the negative construct poles. Perhaps some participants were ‘unconsciously’ unwilling to slot rattle to avoid invalidations of their constructions about the couples, such as was perhaps experienced by April and May, who after slot rattling now appeared to construe problems in their filicidal brothers’ marriages.

**3.16.3 Constriction.** This theme concerns minimisation of the perceptual field to avoid incompatibilities in construing. Some participants appeared to construe some filicidal offenders as limiting their views of situations and avoiding intolerable and incompatible issues to cope, which seemed to trigger a sense of concern in the participants. However, some participants also appeared to use constriction to cope with their construal of the couples’ problems. The sub-themes, *Construing him avoiding* and *Minimising to deal with incompatibilities*, are explored.

**3.16.3.1 Construing him avoiding.** This sub-theme explores some participants’ feelings of concern about the filicidal offenders and their partners/wives avoiding dealing with discord in their intimate/marital relationships. For instance, the participants appeared to prefer the couples to talk instead of avoiding issues.

*“They fought in the past. I clearly remember that day because I was visiting my grandmother and they started fighting. Sis Sue liked shouting during a fight which only made it worse and my brother was cool and soft-spoken. They fought verbally not physically. My brother told her, “Go to your parents’ house and you will come back when you are feeling better.”” (464.47) (April)*

While April seemed to construe her filicidal brother as avoiding issues arising from spousal discord to perhaps avoid further incompatibilities and invalidations, she appeared to construe her sister-in-law as playing a role in aggravating conflict. Perhaps the participant blamed her sister-in-law for provoking her filicidal brother to use violence in reaction to provocation.

Some participants appeared to disapprove of the filicidal offenders’ avoidance of problems in which they construed them as not talking about issues. They seemed to tightly predict that avoided problems might induce a variety of negative emotions including anger which might result in an impulsive and regrettable act.

*“He keeps quiet when he is hurt. He does not talk about issues that are hurting him. He keeps everything inside which is not good! You have to talk about things that are hurting you because they are going to hurt you more if you keep them inside and you will regret it tomorrow.” (483.25) (Jack)*

In summary, in *Construing him avoiding*, most participants appeared to construe avoidance of issues as an ineffective means of coping. There seemed to be a concern of inhibited feelings and avoided problems overwhelming the filicidal offenders leading them to

no longer be able to tolerate problems, and therefore impulsively employ violence when provoked.

**3.16.3.2 Minimising dealing with incompatibilities.** This sub-theme explores the participants' use of constriction to deal with the couples' problems. Most participants seemed to delimit their perceptual field to avoid construing invalidations and incompatibilities in the couples' intimate/marital relationships.

*"I DID NOT see those serious issues – even if maybe they had ... However, I did not see any serious issues. The child visited, and Mpho sometimes came to fetch him, and Sly most of the time went to take him. It was mostly Sly who came with him. There were no issues – it's like DEEP ISSUES that these people are fighting, no. There were no issues, they were not there ... The small issues were like – maybe they – had some disagreements." (510.11) (June)*

June perhaps vehemently denied construing problems, as indicated by the loudly uttered "I DID NOT", perhaps to avoid invalidating her constructions about the couple and their relationship. The participant's experience appears to echo most of the other participants' accounts. However, the participants seemed to be aware of some of the couples' issues, but appeared to reduce the seriousness of problems to perhaps minimise incompatibilities in construing, as indicated by June's utterance, "small issues" and not "DEEP ISSUES".

Some participants appeared to delimit their field of perception to avoid construing unwanted intimate/marital relationships.

*“I was not initially aware of their relationship because Mpho was not staying with me. She stayed with my mother. I don’t know anything. I knew nothing about their relationship. I only became aware of it when I visited. I knew about their relationship through my younger sibling. He said “Your child is dating this other guy, Sly, and he is not a good person. He is a thief.” Sly was a person who never came into the house when he visited. He always stood outside. I have never seen him. I don’t know anything about him.” (539.8) (Tumi)*

Tumi perhaps could not tolerate the construing of her daughter dating a “*thief*”. The participant might have denied knowledge of the filicidal offender and the intimate relationship, despite evidence suggesting that she seemed to have some knowledge of Sly and the love affair, perhaps to avoid talking about an intolerable issue which presented invalidations and incompatibilities.

Additionally, other participants who disapproved of the intimate/marital relationships appeared to cope by removing the couples from their perceptual field.

*“No, how their relationship was moving? How is it? I did not want him and so she met him out there. I told her that people are saying this person is doing bad things, and she just continued to go to him. Therefore, there was nothing that I was going to do to her. I was not interested in their relationship as long as she saw him out there far away from me.” (528.11) (Jude)*

The emphasis on the underlined words seemed to indicate Jude’s intense feelings of disapproval. Jude perhaps avoided seeing the couple together to avoid further invalidations

and incompatibilities. Avoiding seeing the couple together appeared to be another constriction strategy Jude employed after failing to permanently remove the intolerable relationship from her field of perception. Perhaps it was a way of avoiding feeling helpless.

However, playing a role of helplessness in a situation which seems to induce a sense of confusion also appeared to be a means of constriction.

*“There was nothing that I could do because – even the time when my uncle told me things about him, it seemed that he was of course trying to ruin his image because Sly was always quiet. There was never a time when he was – in a fight or was involved in a messed-up incident.” (552.30) (Mpho)*

Mpho perhaps preemptively construed that she could not act on her uncle’s warning especially since his constructions of her filicidal boyfriend appeared to be incompatible with her construing. The participant perhaps predicted that doing something might lead to the invalidation of her constructions of her partner, and therefore avoided invalidations by not doing anything and playing the role of helplessness.

In some instances, issues which seemed to be construed as incompatible with constructions of the filicidal offenders appeared not to be questioned further perhaps to avoid invalidations of constructions and anticipations.

*“My expectations were high because I saw him quiet. I asked him, ‘Eish, they say you have a gun?’ And he said “Ijoo! Where did I get a gun? Where would I find a gun? Where would I find money to buy a gun? Do you think that I would use the money that*

*my mother gives me to buy a gun? Is it possible?" I laughed and left the issue."*

*(551.32) (Mpho)*

Some participants and the couples appeared to avoid discussing relationship issues in which they seemed to lack sociality perhaps to avoid further incompatibilities in construing and invalidations.

*"I just told her 'Eish, I heard that you are dating someone who is involved in crime.'*

*She just laughed, and we left the topic like that. It is something that we never really discussed." (539.37) (Tumi)*

In summary, in *Minimising dealing with incompatibilities*, avoidance and minimisation of the severity of the couples' problems might have contributed to most participants not intervening to de-escalate the situation, and therefore possibly prevent the killing. Perhaps most participants construed the couples' problems as unbearable, and therefore avoided further invalidations and incompatibilities in construing by avoiding construing issues and minimising the construed problems, while other participants delimited their perceptual field by permanently removing the couple from their field of perception.

**3.16.4 Anxiety.** This theme explores the participants' inability to construe events. The feelings of anxiety seemed to emanate from the participants' inability to understand the couples' relationship difficulties. Furthermore, it appeared to be triggered by the participants' failure to construe the families-in-law's construction processes and perceived role in destroying the couples' relationships. The sub-themes, *Experiencing the couple's problems as unconstruable* and *Failing to construe the family-in-law*, are discussed.

**3.16.4.1 Experiencing the couple's problems as unconstruable.** The sub-theme explores the participants' construing of the couples' problems lying outside the range of convenience of their construct systems. The participants seemed to struggle to construe how problems might engulf intimate/marital relationships in which the couples appeared to have highly invested and seemed to be inseparable.

*"They did everything together! They came together to my house. They went everywhere together. And also another thing is that he was able to give his wife – access to his bank cards and say, "Go withdraw money." Those were some of the signs which showed that this person is – 100% committed to his marriage. They were also communicating very well. There was respect between them. They respected each other! So, I am not sure what happened or when their problems started because you will never know some of the things, you will never know what happens behind closed doors." (485.18) (Jack)*

Jack's and similarly the other participants' constructions of the couples' relationships seemed to no longer be applicable. The participants perhaps realised that they might have to abandon their constructions and possibly revise their construct systems which triggered anxiety.

Most participants appeared to have inadequate information about the filicidal offenders' intimate/marital relationship problems. The insufficient constructions of the couples' issues might have provoked a sense of anxiety.

*“He said that Sue opened a case against Joe. It was the first time I heard that she filed a case against him ... I don’t really know what the charges were about but Jack told me that they had a fight, but I don’t know over what.” (458.12) (Mary)*

Although some participants seemed to expect couples to encounter problems, their lack of constructions of the nature and cause of the problems appeared to lead to them being “caught in the confusion of anxiety” (Kelly, 1955, p. 495).

*“When people are together ... You do not know maybe ... You will sometimes have arguments when you are staying together – as a couple, but you will not know what is making them argue. However, I have never heard a complaint from – either one of them – a negative complaint.” (497.22) (May)*

Therefore, the participants appeared to explore the filicidal offenders’ dyadic interpersonal relationship with their partners/wives in an attempt to reduce anxiety. For instance, May seemed to suspect that the couple’s fight might have involved her filicidal brother’s excessive alcohol consumption.

*“What I realised was that – my brother sometimes drank too much alcohol. However, I did not know how his behaviour was like towards his wife and family after he drank alcohol. However, his wife never came to me when I visited them.” (497.3) (May)*

Meanwhile, April appeared to suspect that her filicidal brother’s conflict with his wife was perhaps a continuation of a vicious cycle of abuse in which she seemed to be aware of her sister-in-law as being violently abusive.

*“They have physically fought in the past but I cannot say much about that incident because I was not there. I just heard that they fought and sis Sue wanted to stab him with a knife. I heard that sis Sue also burnt my brother with cooking oil. I don’t want to talk about that because I was not there. I don’t know what really happened.”*

*(465.8) (April)*

However, their speculations seemed to perpetuate their feelings of anxiety because of the insufficient constructions of the couples’ conflict.

The sub-theme, *Experiencing the couple’s problems as unconstructable*, highlights that most participants were perhaps unable to intervene and develop effective intervention strategies because of an inability to construe the couples’ issues. The sense of anxiety seemed to be induced by inapplicable constructions which perhaps led to an awareness of possibly revising the construct system, and a lack of and insufficient constructions concerning the couples’ problems. Exploration of the couples’ dyadic interpersonal relationships perhaps to construe the unconstructable conflict appeared to perpetuate anxiety, as in April’s and May’s case.

**3.16.4.2 Failing to construe the family-in-law.** This sub-theme examines the dyadic, which involves the relationship between the filicidal offender and members of the in-laws, and triadic, which involves the relationship between the participants, couples, and in-laws, interpersonal levels to construe the participants’ anxiety about the filicidal offenders’ intimate/marital problems.

Although a few participants appeared to be unable to construe how the family-in-law might have destroyed the couples' intimate/marital relationships, they seemed to blame them for playing a role in causing problems.

*"They had a good marriage. Joe and Sue were very close, too much. I don't know what Jack was doing to them. I don't know what he did to them. I don't know what he was doing to his sister, Sue. I don't know if he was maybe shouting at them or what. They did not tell me."* (457.18) (Mary)

Mary appeared to lack construction of and felt uncertain about how her son-in-law might have destroyed her filicidal son's marriage. In an attempt to reduce anxiety by making sense of her son-in-law's role relationship with the couple, the participant seemed to loosely construe that he perhaps verbally abused them.

The lack of sociality and commonality between the two families about the constructions of lobola and marriage seemed to lead to the construing of some members of the in-laws interfering with the filicidal offenders' marital relationships.

*"She is getting married with the purpose of not doing business but building a family. So, they were treating Sue's marriage as an investment for them – because Sue told me "Jack is annoying me mama – because he did the same thing in my first marriage." So, I don't know. I am not sure if Jack destroys her marriages so that she could be married elsewhere, I don't know. Sue did not go into detail regarding what her brother did in her marriages. She just gave me a little bit of information. So, I don't know."* (457.45) (Mary)

Mary's feelings of anxiety appeared to precipitate from her inability to construe the in-laws' construction processes of lobola and marriage, especially since they seemed to differ from her constructions. Her anxiety appeared to be perpetuated by the lack of constructions of what her son-in-law might have done to seemingly destroy his sister's marriages. However, as evident in the quote, the filicidal offender's wife did not seem to share sociality with Jack in that Mary appeared to construe her as feeling annoyed by Jack's interference in her marital affairs.

Furthermore, the lack of sociality between the participants, the filicidal offenders, and the in-laws, also seemed to affect the couples' relationships. For instance, some participants appeared to construe themselves and the filicidal offenders sharing an inability to construe the construction processes of the in-laws. This appeared to be construed as resulting in some of the couples separating, as was Sly construed leaving his partner because of failure to understand her family's constructions.

*"I just thought 'EISH, Sly likes acquainting us with people that I don't quite understand.' In the meantime, Sly also did not like – the lady. That is the way it was but he loved his child. However, he never told me that he does not like her, he just said "EISH but those people ..." That is what he said that "EISH, those people are somehow and I don't understand them. They are somehow." But I – saw them when they came here that 'Oh! This family is like this.' They are not people that I can have a relationship with. In the meantime, Sly also left this girl a long time ago." (511.31)  
(June)*

June seemed to construe herself and her filicidal son as unprepared to negotiate constructions with her then son's partner's family to enhance their mutual sociality. They seemed to be uninterested in having a family construct system with the family and did not want to be related to them.

*“He was looking at his ex-girlfriend's family and found that it is not a family that he would like to have, a family that he would like to have a relationship with.” (512.8)*  
*(June)*

The sub-theme, *Failing to construe the family-in-law*, seemed to indicate the destructive effect that the lack of sociality and commonality between families might have on the couples' relationships and possibly lead to separation, as was construed in Sly's relationship. The families' differing constructions appeared to result in the families unable to work together to help the couples but instead one family suspecting the other of maliciously destroying the couples' relationships, as was the case in the son-in-law suspected of abusing the couple and particularly the filicidal offender. The construed destructive role of some of the in-laws seemed to provoke anxiety.

### **3.17 Construing the Couple's Relationship with their Child/Children**

**3.17.1 Construing them not trusting him.** This theme draws on the triadic (participant-filicidal father-children and filicidal father-children-children's maternal family) interpersonal level to explore how the all the parties interacted with each other regarding ensuring the well-being of the children.

A few participants who were the children's maternal family members seemed to feel distrustful of some filicidal fathers. For instance, Jude and Tumi, based on events from previous encounters, appeared to tightly anticipate Sly to harm his child.

*"I did not trust him because I once gave them the child and he came back with a broken arm and injuries on his buttocks. Sly did not say anything when he returned the child. The child cried and I saw the injuries when I picked him up." (529.18)*  
*(Jude)*

As the result Jude and Tumi seemed to tightly construe the child at risk when under Sly's care.

*"The child was not safe when he was with him." (542.7) (Tumi)*

Jude's and Tumi's feelings of distrust of Sly appeared to be perpetuated by the construal of the filicidal father's involvement in crime, and therefore they seemed to tightly anticipate him to be an irresponsible father.

*"A person who is involved in crime and living by the gun will never raise a child."*  
*(540.3) (Tumi)*

However, other participants appeared to construe the filicidal offenders as protective of their children.

*"He was very protective of his children." (462.26) (April)*

Interestingly, some filicidal fathers seemed to be construed feeling concerned about their children being neglected by the children's maternal families. For instance, June appeared to see her filicidal son construing his son's maternal family as incapable of taking care of his child.

*“Sly also said “you know what mom – I want this child to come stay with us. It seems he is not well cared for there ... He does not appear to be alright when I fetch him from there. It's like he is always dirty. Look I have to bath and make him presentable every time we get home.”” (509.31) (June)*

June seemed to construe Sly perceiving himself and her as more capable of caring for his child in comparison to the child's maternal family.

A few filicidal fathers appeared to be construed disapproving of the family constructions of the children's maternal families and not wanting their children to grow up in such a family system.

*“He always said “the situation at that house eish – I don't approve of it. This child will not grow up well there.”” (512.29) (June)*

Based on June's construing, the South African emotional expression of “*eish*” seemed to highlight Sly's feelings of disapproval. It appears that he and the child's maternal family lacked sociality and he did not want his child showing sociality with them.

In summary, in *Construing them not trusting him*, lack of sociality between a few filicidal fathers and the children's maternal families regarding childcare seemed to be problematic and perhaps contributed to the compromised safety of the children. The two parties appeared to be construed as unable to develop common constructions concerning childcare. While some participants seemed to have confidence in the offenders' parenting abilities, a lack of trust between a few participants and filicidal fathers and their inability establish sociality perhaps contributed to them failing to engage in a playing of roles to ensure the children's well-being.

**3.17.2 Construing us fighting over the children.** This theme considers anger (Cummins, 2003; McCoy, 1977) to make sense of the participants' construing of the filicidal offenders' fighting with their partners/wives over the children. It also explores the participants' interaction with the family-in-law in relation to the filicidal offenders' parenting. The triadic interpersonal level is examined to understand the incompatible relationships involving the filicidal fathers, Joe and Sly.

Some participants appeared to construe Joe's marital problems instigated by him and his wife construing in terms of different construct poles concerning the care of the non-biological children. The difference in construing seemed to trigger anger as the result of the offender and his wife invalidating each other's constructions.

*“Mama, this is my house! I will not allow my aunt's children to stay with me here. I have to first discuss the matter with my wife. I have to talk to her first even if my aunt's children are orphans. I should not make decisions before negotiating with her. That is something that caused problems – and then I – had already suggested taking*

*my nephew to my mother's place. When my sister realised this, she said "No, his aunt's children are staying with us but in the meantime – my child is rejected. These ones are loved and not mine.""* (486.8) (Jack)

Jack seemed to construe the removal of the filicidal offender's step-son from the house while the offender's aunt's children lived with them as making his sister angry, especially if she construed her son as part of the nuclear family. Her feelings of anger appeared to be induced by her construing of her husband as loving his aunt's children and not his step-son.

The couple's conflict and feelings of anger seemed to be construed by some participants as perpetuated by lack of sociality regarding the constructions of the non-biological children and inability to understand each other's core constructs which maintained their identities.

*"I took my nephew from that side. I did that to relieve Joe and I saw that he was pleased with what I was saying because his responsibilities lessened. He was relieved of his burdens because he was supposed to buy him clothes and food. However, when I looked at the situation mama, Joe had an aunt who had two children. She is dead now but before she died she said, "Joe can you please look after my children?" She died and he stayed with these children. This situation hurt my sister. She thought "Joe does not want my child." I want you to hear me very well because this is an important point. Joe did not want her child. Although he was not the biological father but the time he married her he said he loved my sister and her child. However, now he*

*rejected this child and in the meantime allowed his aunt's children to stay with him.*

*That was my sister's problem." (485.48) (Jack)*

As evident in Jack's quote, loyalty constructions seemed to be core of Joe's identity resulting in him being committed to supporting his aunt's children, but his wife perhaps failed to construe that. The couple also appeared to fail to understand and accept each other's construction processes, and therefore role play accordingly. Their understanding of each other's construing processes might have enabled them to negotiate constructions and construe a way of accommodating the non-biological children.

Furthermore, the word "*burdens*" is powerful because it indicates Jack's construing of his filicidal brother-in-law perhaps not loving his step-child and forcing himself to provide for him.

Lack of commonality concerning the couple's expectations about the care of the non-biological children appeared to be construed by some participants as also contributing to conflict and perpetuating anger.

*"Maybe he did not want sis Sue to be forced to love his aunt's children or something.*

*I don't know where his anger came from." (464.35) (April)*

Although April seemed to feel anxious about her filicidal brother's feelings of anger, his anger appeared to be precipitated by him and his wife having different parental anticipations. Joe's wife perhaps invalidated his constructions of her role relationship with his

aunt's children. Perhaps if the couple had similar expectations or accepted each other's different expectations, Joe might not have forced her to love the children.

Some participants seemed to construe the couple's anger escalating to hostility in which Joe's wife appeared to be construed as becoming violent towards the children.

*“The hatred which sis Sue had for Nomsa started when she told my brother, “You should not look after Nomsa, you should take care of your children.” My brother said, “I will not discriminate because Nomsa and her brother are my family.” Nomsa said that sis Sue ill-treated her in the house. She shouted at her even though she cleaned the house and washed the dishes.” (463.18) (April)*

Drawing on April's quote, her sister-in-law might have felt angered by her husband's refusal to stop supporting his aunt's children. She maybe became verbally violent towards the children to force Joe to stop caring for the children, and therefore validate her invalidated constructions.

Joe and his wife also appeared to be construed using hostile violence towards each other. They seemed to be construed physically and verbally attacking each other in an attempt to forcefully validate their invalidated constructions.

*“He was - complaining about – the child who was staying with them. He was hurting her with words ... Yes, the step-son! Joe – you know even the mistakes that my younger sister made ... For example, there is one which I heard after my sister died, that she chased him with ... I heard from the neighbours. She chased him around the*

*house with a knife. She did not tell me those kinds of things. I heard such things from the neighbours after this incident happened.” (483.2) (Jack)*

Based on Jack’s construing, Joe seemed to be verbally abusive towards his wife because perhaps he did not want to support his step-child who perhaps invalidated his fatherhood and family constructions. Therefore, violence might have been intended to force his wife to remove the child from the house, while his wife used violence to force the offender to accept his step-son.

Some participants also seemed to construe the couple’s hostile violence towards each other to be about the biological children. For instance, Joe’s violence towards his wife appeared to be construed intended to stop her from asking him for money.

*“When I also looked at this incident of their fighting I found that – maybe the child did not have milk, because their other child was still a baby, Joe has to take out money and give it to my sister because she was not working. She needed to buy food for the child. So, now Joe was able to tell her, “But you are getting child grant. What are you doing with the grant money?” She said, “No, the grant money is not enough because this other one is attending crèche. Can you please give me money?” That is when Joe raised his hand and slapped her.” (484.15) (Jack)*

Hostility also seemed to be construed manifesting through non-violent acts. For instance, Joe’s wife appeared to be construed deciding to leave the offender perhaps to validate invalidated constructions.

*“There was no spousal communication and agreement when these children came to stay in your house, but yet you are trying to be understanding and hide the fact that this issue was not discussed with you and there was no mutual decision-making. So, Joe and my sister did not deal with the issue mama. They did not deal with it – because his aunt’s children did not leave. I tried talking with him, Joe, and he made a choice. So, my sister said “Ok let me go since you are choosing these children.” That is when my sister said. “Let me go so that you can stay with them.”” (487.19) (Jack)*

According to Jack’s construing, his sister might have been angered by her husband undermining her wife role by excluding her in the decision-making process. Her feelings of anger appeared to be construed as aggravated by the lack of communication, as indicated by the emphasis on the underlined utterances. Therefore, she perhaps chose to leave to validate invalidated constructions of how she anticipated to be treated as a wife. Perhaps she could not tolerate staying with a husband who treated her as worthless.

Hostile violence also seemed to occur among the extended family members. The violent act appeared to result from some of the children’s maternal and paternal family members invalidating each other’s constructions of the filicidal fathers’ relationships with their children, as in the construing of Sly.

*“They claimed to have seen – WOUNDS on the child. They said, “No, we saw that the child was not alright.” I told them that Sly said the dashboard injured him. That is the only time they came here. And then they said that they saw the child ... The buttocks ... I don’t know how they said the buttocks looked. I said to them, ‘If you saw*

*something wrong with the child, please don't ever give Sly the child ... since you are saying that Sly hit the child with the dashboard.'"* (510.30) (June)

June seemed to be angered by her filicidal son being accused of child maltreatment. She appeared to verbally attack her son's child's maternal family and prohibited them from giving Sly the child in an attempt to stop the accusations, and therefore guard her constructions against invalidations.

Some of the children's maternal and paternal family members seemed to fight over the issues of child maintenance. The family members appeared to verbally attack each other in a hostile attempt to validate invalidated constructions of them as caring childcare givers.

*"They always liked complaining about the child's pampers<sup>16</sup> and things like that. They liked complaining a lot. They liked saying that I must take the child to ... I did not have a problem with those things. I did everything for the child because they are somewhat of a low class. I took care of the child and did everything for him ... They demanded money. That was my perception of them. I fought with them a lot over the issue of demanding. I was taking care of that child."* (510.49) (June)

June's construing of the child's maternal family as "low class" was interesting in that she was perhaps trying to validate invalidated constructions of being a financially capable grandmother by construing the maternal family as incapable of financially supporting the child. Therefore, she appeared to validate her self-constructions by contrasting herself to the family.

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<sup>16</sup> Pampers refers to disposable nappies.

The theme, *Construing us fighting over the children*, captured some participants' construal of lack of sociality and commonality about the children contributing to the couple's problems. Their difference in construing appeared to be construed as leading them to invalidate each other's constructions of their parenting role resulting in acts of hostility. Hostile violence also seemed to be used by some family participants to forcefully validate and protect the construed identity of the filicidal fathers as responsible parents, as was in June's case.

**3.17.3 Perceiving a hostile parent/guardian-child fight.** This theme explores a construed hostile dyadic, parent/guardian-child, and triadic, filicidal father-partner/wife-children, interpersonal relationships involving Joe's and June's nuclear families.

Some participants appeared to construe tension in the guardian-child relationship as induced by feelings of resentment in which they construed Joe's wife not wanting the offender's aunt's children.

*“Sis Sue did not want them. She did not want them to stay with her and my brother anymore. That was the problem. Her behaviour was bad towards them, Nomsa and Thato [April's cousin]. She did not treat Thato better than Nomsa. As a matter of fact, she did not talk to Thato. My other cousin, Thabo, and I visited Nomsa and we found sis Sue and Nomsa fighting. Sis Sue was not talking to Nomsa and I did not know why she was angry with her. I did not know what happened. Sis Sue did not even want us to visit Thato in the backroom. I could not understand why she was good towards my other family members, but she was not treating my two cousins, Nomsa and Thato, well.” (463.46) (April)*

Drawing on April's quote, her sister-in-law might have ill-treated her filicidal brother's aunt's children in an attempt to force them to leave, and therefore validate her invalidated constructions of them as not being part of her nuclear family.

However, the non-biological children also seemed to be construed by a few participants as resenting and ill-treating Joe's wife. For instance, Jack appeared to perceive Joe's cousin as undermining his sister.

*"My sister told me that the girl, she does not tell her when she has problems, she tells her uncle. She would not tell my sister if the school wanted something or they are going on a school trip. So, she saw my sister as nothing! ... This girl I am sure thought 'Ah! This person is giving me instructions and yet is nothing to me.'"*  
(486.17) (Jack)

Jack's emphasis on the utterance, "nothing to me", highlights the construed intense level of disrespect, in a sense proposed in this dissertation. Joe's cousin was perhaps disrespectful towards Joe's wife in an attempt to validate her constructions of the offender's wife not being her mother and family, and therefore not deserving her respect, in terms proposed in this dissertation.

The bitter guardian-child relationship appeared to be construed by a few participants as escalating to violence.

*"The girl is the one who left after she and my sister **FOUGHT PHYSICALLY**. This girl started having boyfriends. Girls in the house have the responsibility of doing*

*tasks like washing the dishes. She did not want to wash the dishes ... There were times that she did not sleep at home which my sister addressed with her, “Why are you not sleeping at home?” “No, you can’t tell me anything. You are nothing to me! You are also not my mother.” Those things are very hurtful mama! **THEY ARE VERY MUCH HURTFUL** especially when **YOU** are trying to build and unite your family. When you are trying to make them one.” (487.10) (Jack)*

The physical violence which seemed to shock the participant, as indicated by the loudly uttered “**FOUGHT PHYSICALLY**”, might have been used by the participant’s sister to extort respect from her husband’s cousin. Furthermore, the construed violence might have been used by Joe’s wife to validate invalidated constructions of members of her nuclear family respecting each other and performing conventional socio-gendered roles in the house in which she perhaps expected her cousin-in-law to perform female ascribed domestic duties.

Some of the parents appeared to be construed choosing to leave their nuclear families which seemed to present invalidations and incompatibilities in construing.

*“He said that “his mother, June, defends him when I try to discipline him concerning his criminal behaviour. So, I left them because I saw that I cannot stay with a child who is prepared to hit me.”” (529.6) (Jude)*

Jude seemed to construe Sly’s father as deciding to leave his nuclear family after his son allegedly tried to assault him. He might have construed the attempted assault as disrespectful and invalidating his constructions of how a child should treat his father.

Furthermore, he might have construed his parenthood constructions as invalidated by Sly's mother defending him. Therefore, he perhaps left to validate his invalidated constructions.

The theme, *Perceiving a hostile parent/guardian-child fight*, captured a construed hostile conflict in a dyadic parent/guardian-child interpersonal relationship which seemed to be destructive to some filicidal offenders' family systems. Some parents/guardians and the children appeared to be construed as unable to engage a playing of roles in which they understood and respected each other constructions. Their role relationships seemed to be construed as leading to anger which escalated to hostile acts of violence and non-violence aimed at extorting validation and respect.

**3.17.4 Constricting to avoid invalidation.** This theme concerns the participants' attempt to avoid invalidations of their constructions of the filicidal fathers. Some participants appeared to cope with incompatibilities in construing by avoiding construing evidence of some filicidal fathers ill-treating their children.

*“There was no sign that he was ill-treating him. You could never say that he was ill-treating him because that child always wanted to be with his father. There were no signs that this person does not want this person. Even the time the child came back hurt on the head because Sly said he hit the dashboard, the child always wanted to visit him even though my family said he must not go to Sly's place anymore. He always ran to him when he saw him and wanted to be with him. The child showed love for his father. There was nothing that showed that he was doing this and that to him.”*  
(553.45) (Mpho)

Although Mpho reported that her son had injuries after visiting his filicidal father, she appeared to avoid construing evidence of maltreatment by removing the signs from her perceptual field. Perhaps Mpho could not bear construing a father harming a child who loved him, such construing seemed to be incompatible with her constructions, and therefore she constricted.

Some participants appeared to constrict by construing a dysfunctional family system as functional perhaps as a means of avoiding construing further incompatibilities and invalidations.

*“They got along fine because when I got there ... What can I say? Sis Sue told me that Joe’s cousin should have his own room. And so they extended their house so that the boy could have a room outside the main house and the girl stayed with them in the house. That is what I know. I told them ‘No, if you guys have discussed and agreed on this matter then continue to build the room.’ They built the room but the result of the extension was this incident in which he killed his family and attempted to commit suicide. The boy was supposed to stay in that room, have the key to the room, and cook for himself.” (472.17) (Dave)*

Dave’s construing of a chaotic family system as “*fine*” appears to indicate his attempt not to construe evidence of the family encountering problems, which he perhaps anticipated to invalidate his constructions of the family and present him with incompatibilities in construing. Evidence seems to show that the family was not “*fine*” because Dave’s sister-in-law seemed to delimit her perceptual field by wanting her cousin-in-law out of the house. Furthermore, Joe appeared to employ extreme violence perhaps to permanently remove a

family that was presenting him with incompatibilities and invalidations from his perceptual field. (See *Construing a father killing as constriction*)

Moreover, some participants appeared to deal with an intolerable situation by spending less time with the filicidal offender's nuclear family to perhaps avoid invalidations of their constructions and construing incompatibilities.

*"I saw everything fine because I just visited and left, I did not spend a long time with them. Maybe if I did – I was going to see that my brother – was not treating sis Sue right, or that sis Sue was ill-treating my aunt's children. However, so far when I got there everything was fine."* (472.34) (Dave)

The theme, *Constricting to avoid invalidation*, indicated the use of constriction to avoid construing incompatibilities and invalidation of constructions. Delimiting the perceptual field appeared to prevent some participants from construing intolerable and incompatible evidence of child maltreatment, as in Mpho's case, and serious family problems which might have resulted in invalidations of their constructions about the filicidal offenders. Therefore, avoiding construing issues seemed to enable them to preserve their constructions of the filicidal fathers' role relationships with their nuclear families.

### **3.18 Construing the Killing**

**3.18.1 Construing the killing: planned-unplanned poles.** This theme draws on dichotomous construct poles of planned-unplanned to understand the participants' construing

of the killing. Some participants seemed to construe the filicidal fathers as having planned the filicide. Their construal appeared to be based on their experience of child negligence.

*“I think he planned it because he harmed him the first time and kept quiet about the incident. Isn't it that when a child is injured, you will report the injuries when you return him? You will tell them ‘look at him here and there. He did this and that.’ However, he just dropped him and went away. It means this thing was always in his plans or in his mind ... It was intentional because he kept quiet.” (531.8) (Jude)*

The emphasis on the underlined words seemed to indicate Jude's feelings of certainty about the filicidal father having planned the intentional killing of his child. Her construal seemed to be based on past events in which she accused the offender of allegedly harming the child.

Some participants appeared to tightly expect the filicidal father to seek help if the killing was an accident. Therefore, the construal of the filicidal father not seeking help seemed to perpetuate the participants' construing of the killing as planned and intentional.

*“He should have taken him to the hospital if it was an accident. If something frightens you ... I asked him ‘Why did you not seek help from the neighbours if you were frightened? Tell them that the child is burnt and I don't know what to do.’ Or I am staying there. The distance from his place to my home is not far. If it was an accident, then he should have come to my home. Adults were there at home and they were going to take him to the hospital. I asked him. He said it was a mistake. It's not a mistake.”*

*‘You wanted to kill him because you could not have covered him with blankets if you did not want to kill him and then after that you cleaned the house.’” (556.34) (Mpho)*

Mpho’s tight construing of the filicidal father killing their child intentionally because he covered him with blankets and cleaned the house seemed to be preemptive. She did not appear to consider that he might have attempted to reduce incompatibilities in construing by covering him with blankets and cleaning the house.

In contrast, some participants appeared to tightly and preemptively construe the killing as unplanned based on their encounter with the filicidal offenders in which they construed them as non-violent.

*“It is definitely something that he did not plan. He had a gun for a very long time. He owned a gun from the time our aunt was alive. He did not suddenly get a gun. He did not plan to commit this thing. He owned a gun from before he started dating sis Sue.” (464.38) (April)*

It is evident in the quote above and elsewhere in the analysed data that some participants who construed the killing as unplanned seemed to perhaps attempt to defend the filicidal fathers. Perhaps the construing of the filicidal offenders planning the killing was intolerable and incompatible with their constructions, and therefore they construed it as unplanned.

For instance, in some cases, constructions of evil appeared to be employed to construe the killing as being planned by the “*devil*” and not the offender.

*“Joe did not plan this crime, but the devil planned it.” (491.25) (Jack)*

Perhaps Jack’s construing of the “*devil*” planning the killing and not his filicidal brother-in-law reduced incompatibilities in construing and enabled him to avoid invalidations of his constructions of the offender.

In summary, in *Construing the killing: planned-unplanned poles*, different participants seemed to draw on their encounters with and construing of the filicidal offenders to tightly and preemptively construe the killing as either planned or unplanned, and intentional or unintentional. A few participants who construed in terms of planned and intentional construct poles appeared to fail to consider the filicidal father avoiding construing invalidations and incompatibilities in his role of killing by temporarily removing the child from his perceptual field, as in Mpho’s case. In contrast, some participants who tightly and preemptively construed in terms of unplanned construct poles seemed to avoid invalidating their constructions of the filicidal fathers by drawing on evil constructions to construe the killing.

**3.18.2 Not anticipating him to kill.** The theme explores the participants’ tight anticipations of the filicidal fathers not to kill. Most participants’ tight expectations appeared to be based on the construing of understanding the filicidal offenders’ construction processes, and therefore perhaps expecting to be able to construe if the filicidal fathers had homicidal tendencies.

*“When you know someone, then you know that person. There are certain things that he does which will show you that ‘No this person is not right. No, now this person is ok,’ and then you can ask him ‘What is wrong?’” (472.40) (Dave)*

Dave seemed to think that he and his filicidal brother showed sociality in which the participant appeared to confidently believe that he understood him, as indicated by the emphasis on the underlined utterance. Therefore, invalidations of tight construing seemed likely to trigger anxiety, which will be discussed later.

Furthermore, invalidations of tight construing appeared to induce intense feelings of anger, shock, and startle, in McCoy’s (1977) sense.

*“That day, ijoo! I was also scared and I could not believe that my brother committed such a thing. I could not believe it because he is a quiet person. He is not a person who does bad things. Ag shame! I could not believe it. It was the first time he became violent.” (464.29) (April)*

Most participants seemed to tightly predict that the filicidal fathers would not pose a danger to their children because of the construed loving father-children relationship.

*“I did not expect that he would intentionally or unintentionally harm him. I did not expect that. I did not think that he would hurt him because that child loved him.” (554.1) (Mpho)*

Drawing on the two quotes above, most participants appeared to fail to consider that tight predictions are risky and may be vulnerable to invalidations. Therefore, it was perhaps risky to tightly and preemptively construe loving and non-violent fathers as unlikely to commit filicide-homicide.

In some cases, the participants seemed to tightly expect filicidal fathers to kill their children's mothers and not the children, or kill daughters and not sons, perhaps because of the constructions of fathers seeming to prefer having sons in comparison to daughters in some societies.

*"I expected that he would do that to Mpho when they are fighting, but I did not have the thought that he would do it to a child ... Eish! I did not think that he will do such things to a child because it was a boy. Yes, if it was a girl because I know that they rape them and do this and that to them." (534.8) (Jude)*

However, such construing appears to be preemptive and susceptible to invalidations because filicide may sometimes occur in the context of familicide in which both the mother and the children are killed, as was evident in this research. Furthermore, filicide may not be influenced by the sex of the child. Therefore, it is imperative to understand the filicidal offender's construction processes so as to construe the killing.

The theme, *Not anticipating him to kill*, seemed to highlight the importance of construing the construction processes and meanings of paternal filicidal offenders to construe their choice to kill, instead of drawing on the notion of sociality, constructions of violence, and a construed dyadic father-children relationship to anticipate filicide-homicide. Tight and

preemptive anticipations of filicidal fathers not to kill appears to be risky as it might lead to a failure to construe risk factors and perhaps signs of homicidal tendencies, and therefore fail to intervene if intervening might be possible to prevent the killing.

**3.18.3 Struggling to construe.** This theme examines the participants' anxiety concerning the filicidal offenders killing their children including their wives in some cases. Most participants appeared to lack constructions to construe what might have led filicidal offenders who seemed to be determined to ensure the success of their nuclear families to commit filicide-homicide.

*“I COULD SAY that I am and we are disappointed because I don't know what happened that led to this thing ... I know them as good people. Joe was a good person and sis Sue was also a good person. And the most important thing is that Joe was very serious about his family. He put them up there ((pointing up)). They were his number one priority. He wanted his family to be somewhere in life. He wanted his family to be up there.” (478.1) (Dave)*

Dave's and similarly most of the other participants' construct systems appeared to be fragmented in which the killing constructions could not be subsumed by the constructions of the filicidal offenders being good family men who prioritised their families' success. Perhaps this resulted in the participants unable to reorganise their construct systems to construe the killing.

Furthermore, the participants might have lacked the constructions of loving fathers killing.

*“He loved him – and the child also loved him. He took him and they went to watch TV or played soccer. They loved each other. That child loved him and he also loved him. So eish, I don’t know how this thing happened.” (553.22) (Mpho)*

Mpho and likewise the other participants perhaps expected filicide to be committed by fathers who resented their children. Therefore, filicide committed by loving fathers appeared to be unconstruable.

The killing perhaps induced anxiety because it seemed to invalidate the constructions of the couples being able to talk through problems. Therefore, most participants perhaps realised that their constructions might have to be abandoned.

*“Their level of communication with each other was very good. So, I don’t know – what darkness came over him which – made my child do this thing because they had good communication. I don’t know. God is the only one who knows because I don’t know anything.” (455.31) (Mary)*

The word “*darkness*”, which seemed to refer to an evil force, appeared to indicate Mary’s attempt to reduce anxiety by drawing on evil constructions to construe her son killing, and therefore avoid abandoning her constructions of the couple having a good communication relationship. However, the evil constructions appeared to perpetuate anxiety because Mary could not seem to construe the type of “*darkness*” that might have led the son to kill.

Some participants seemed to attempt to reduce anxiety by exploring various issues to construe filicide. For instance, Mpho appeared to explore constructions of rejection, parental conflict, and issues between the couple after separation. However, the inapplicability of the constructions seemed to result in anxiety.

*“I don’t know what caused him to do something THIS BIG because I – did not have a problem with him. My family also did not have a problem with him. My family welcomed him when he came over. They did not chase him away, or say that he must not see the child, or shout at him. My family treated him well. Although my uncle disliked him, but he was okay towards him. So, I don’t know what made him do this thing because I left him alone and stopped running after him after we broke up. There was nothing like I fought with him or what. I don’t know. We interacted and communicated decently, like normal people. We have never fought – and my family has never fought with him. So eish, I don’t know what I can say led him to do this.”*  
(554.10) (Mpho)

The loudly uttered “THIS BIG” seems to indicate Mpho’s construing of the filicide as serious, and therefore she was perhaps desperately wanting constructions to make sense of it. The South African emotional expression of “eish” appeared to indicate her feelings of frustration at being unable to construe the filicide.

The unconstruable killing, in which the participants seemed to fail to develop constructions to apply to the event, appeared to result in them being “caught in a confusion of anxiety” (Kelly, 1955, p. 495).

*“Eish! I don’t know. I don’t find answers to my questions. I am always asking myself questions – but I don’t have the answers to what happened which led him to kill his family ((tearful)).” (455.21) (Mary)*

In summary, in *Struggling to construe*, the traumatic killing seemed to trigger anxiety as a result of lack of constructions, and the invalidations of constructions which perhaps led to the realisation that the construct system might have to be revised to develop new constructions to construe. The inapplicability of constructions to the filicide-homicide incident appeared to perpetuate anxiety. Failing to develop constructions to construe the filicide-homicide seemed to result in the participants engulfed by anxiety.

**3.18.4 Construing a father killing as constriction.** This theme examines April’s and Jude’s construing of some filicidal offenders committing filicide to avoid construing invalidations and incompatibilities. The participants seemed to construe some filicidal fathers committing filicide-homicide to permanently remove from their perceptual field problems which they perhaps construed as incompatible with their constructions and invalidated their constructions.

*“I think he just told himself that he was ending the conflict by committing this incident.” (465.13) (April)*

One participant seemed to construe the filicidal father killing to reduce incompatibilities in construing. For instance, Jude appeared to loosely construe the offender committing filicide to minimise incompatibilities in construing his partners, his child’s

mother, whom he was construed as rejecting, and the ‘new’ partner, whom he was construed as loving.

*“He maybe killed Tom because maybe he did not love Mpho and saw her as stupid and not beautiful. He maybe saw the new girlfriend as more beautiful, and he could not tell Mpho ‘don’t come to me anymore’ and so maybe he looked for a way to get her out of his life, and this was it.” (533.23) (Jude)*

Jude appeared to then construe the father killing his child to avoid construing and interacting with his child’s mother.

Additionally, Jude seemed to tightly construe the offender committing filicide to reduce incompatibilities in construing his children, in which he was construed as appearing to hate his first child and love the second child, and therefore he killed his first child.

*“He said that they must not sentence him because he has another child. This means that he did not care about Tom, he cared about the new child. He saw that this one was going to get in his way, so it was better for him to remove him so that he is left with that one.” (533.17) (Jude)*

Jude also seemed to construe the filicidal father killing to avoid invalidations of the constructions of his new intimate relationship.

*“I don’t know if he aimed to do this thing because people said that he had another girlfriend. I think that he thought ‘my girlfriend will not like it when I maintain this child. It is better for me to get him out of the way.’” (530.4) (Jude)*

The participant appeared to construe the offender tightly anticipating his child to invalidate his new relationship constructions, and therefore killed him.

In summary, in *Construing a father killing as constriction*, while April and Jude appeared to construe some filicidal offenders construing filicide-homicide as a solution to permanently avoid construing problems, Jude seemed to construe filicide as used by a filicidal father to minimise construing incompatibilities.

**3.18.5 Construing a father killing impulsively.** The theme explores some participants construing filicidal offenders shortening the decision-making process and impulsively killing. For instance, some participants seemed to construe the filicidal offenders spending little or no time exploring various issues involved in the decision-making and impulsively making a decision to kill.

*“I don’t think that he planned it. I think that it is something that just suddenly happened, just like that. He has never showed that he was thinking of committing something like this.” (454.48) (Mary)*

The utterance, “*something that just suddenly happened*”, indicates that Mary seemed to construe her filicidal son as not thoroughly exploring his problems and different solutions to the situation, but instead making an impulsive decision to kill.

Some participants seemed to construe filicidal offenders having lacked control and acted impulsively during the killing. For instance, May appeared to construe her filicidal brother as having been unable to reason and not in control during the impulsive killing.

*“It is like those things make you somehow when they continuously occupy your mind. You can even act like a mad person or something. This crime shows you that there was a period in which – he was mad for some time.” (503.14) (May)*

Some filicidal fathers appeared to be construed as lacking control during the impulsive killing because of being attacked by evil spirits.

*“This guy was coming back from a night shift when he committed this incident. He did this thing when he was supposed to return to work that evening. So, now you can also understand that – THIS PERSON – left his home happy. He was still happy when he returned home but these spirits attacked him right there and then.” (484.2) (Jack)*

Jack’s construing seems to be preemptive in that he appeared to fail to consider that the filicidal father might have encountered a sudden provocative issue at home which perhaps resulted in him impulsively using reactive violence.

Furthermore, drawing on May’s and Jack’s quotes, using psychiatric and evil constructions, respectively, to construe filicide-homicide appears to lessen the offender’s responsibility in the killing. Moreover, it seems to prevent one from understanding the offender’s construing and construction processes involved in making a decision to kill.

Some participants appeared to perceive the filicidal fathers as not having been aware of their actions during the killing.

*“It was those spirits mama which made him go to the crèche. An evil spirit can get you do things. He was not aware of what he was doing. He was not aware that he is not himself. Do you know that an evil spirit can take control of your mind? You will do anything that it wants.” (491.36) (Jack)*

Jack’s construing seemed to be preemptive in that he did not appear to consider that violence manifesting from a foreshortened Circumspection-Preemption-Control Cycle might result in the offender struggling to construe and recall what they did.

Some filicidal fathers appeared to be construed as preemptively deciding to commit filicide to protect their children. For instance, Jack seemed to construe his filicidal brother-in-law as killing his children to prevent them from suffering.

*“Satan will show you only the good things when he comes to you. He will say, ‘Look, your child will have a bad life, so it is better for you to kill him.’” (491.28) (Jack)*

Jack appeared to tightly and preemptively construe the filicidal father as led by “Satan” to kill his children to prevent suffering. The participant did not seem to consider that the filicidal offender might have failed to explore other options to prevent his children’s suffering instead of preemptively deciding to commit altruistic filicide.

In summary, in *Construing a father killing impulsively*, the filicidal offenders seemed to be construed as making an impulsive decision to kill, which suggests that their C-P-C Cycle was foreshortened. The construing of the filicidal fathers losing control during the killing and failing to construe the traumatic incident is indicative of a foreshortened C-P-C Cycle. Some participants, e.g., May and Jack, respectively, appeared to tightly and preemptively construe some filicidal offenders' impulsive and preemptive decision to kill as a manifestation of madness and evil.

**3.18.6 Construing the killing avoidable.** This theme examines the construing of filicide-homicide as might have been prevented. Most participants seemed to construe intimate/marital problems as having contributed to the killing, and therefore appeared to tightly predict that the couples might have prevented the traumatic incident if they sought help.

*“They had serious problems which they should have discussed with my family, but they chose to keep their problems locked inside their house, and this happened. None of this would have happened if they spoke about their problems.” (465.15) (April)*

Avoided problems seemed to be tightly construed as dangerous in that they might lead to an exceeded inhibition resulting in the offender no longer able to avoid issues, inhibit negative emotions, and tolerate provocation, and therefore explode with extreme violence.

*“He must not keep his problems to himself because the problems will eventually **EXPLODE**” (503.11 (May)*

In contrast, filicide in some cases seemed to be construed as occurring in the absence of intimate/marital relationship problems.

*“THERE ARE SERIOUS ISSUES which can even make you commit suicide. However, they wanted serious issues, issues that he and Mpho had. However, they could not find any issues which could have led Sly to kill his child.” (512.39) (June)*

The loudly uttered, “*SERIOUS ISSUES*”, seems to highlight June’s tight construing of intimate/marital relationship problems being possible risk factors of filicide. The failure to find problems perhaps provoked feelings of shock and was perhaps likely to induce anxiety.

Filicide occurring in the absence of relationship problems may result from child negligence.

*“That is what led Sly to make this mistake which resulted in his child not being here today. This Nyaope that he was smoking. IT came FIRST, and in the meantime, he forgot that he was responsible for a child.” (513.45) (June)*

The filicide may be regarded as accidental. As emphasised by June, her filicidal son seemed to be under the influence of Nyaope while caring for his child, which might have led to negligence resulting in him accidentally causing his son’s death

However, accidental filicide appeared to be construed as preventable if the filicidal father made an elaborative choice of seeking help.

*“My big problem with him is that he did not take the child to the hospital. The biggest issue that I have is that ‘you should have told Mpho’s family.’ There is an older woman there, she was going to see that the child is severely injured and therefore they were going to take him to the hospital. HIM, because he loves his child, isn’t it? He should have taken the child to the hospital. This situation would not have been like this ... That child would not have died!” (516.36) (June)*

Therefore, the filicidal father appeared to be blamed for causing his child’s death by failing to seek help but instead letting his medical condition to worsen, *“he just stayed with the child in the house – and the CHILD’S CONDITION DETERIORATED.”* (541.15) (Tumi)

Drawing on the findings from the ABC model (Tschudi & Winter, 2012), which amongst various other factors it examines why individuals choose a particular construct and construct pole during decision-making (Tschudi, 1977), all of the participants appeared likely to intervene if intervening might have been possible to prevent the killing.

*“I prefer taking steps to – prevent it from happening, that is if you are aware of the misunderstanding. Let me say that I knew that they had a misunderstanding, I would have tried to approach and discuss with them if maybe I knew. It is like we would have tried together to solve the problem in such a way that nobody was grieved.”*  
(507.13) (May)

Although some participants appeared to intervene to prevent the killing but failed,

*“We can say that we are trying to prevent the child from coming back hurt, but sometimes he deceives her like the way he deceived her. My mother said that “I told her not to give him the child.” In the meantime, when she was sitting in the dining room, they left through the kitchen door and she gave him the child, and that was the end of the child’s life.” (547.1) (Tumi)*

They seemed likely to revise their construct systems and explore alternative ways of intervening to prevent the killing.

*“You were supposed to do something to prevent it from happening. Like I told you that I would have moved Mpho and Tom to my relative’s house if I knew that something like this was going to happen.” (537.37) (Jude)*

Therefore, the participants appeared to wish that the couples also revised their construct systems in which they learn to ask for help so as to prevent the killing.

*“If they asked for help this would not have happened. I wish that they learnt to ask for help with their problems.” (500.2) (May)*

The participants seemed to have eagerly wanted to prevent the killing perhaps with the intention of wanting to avoid experiencing the painful effects of not intervening to prevent paternal filicide.

*“I felt a lot of pain” (562.47) (Mpho)*

In summary, in *Construing the killing avoidable*, filicide, irrespective of its nature, appeared to be construed as avoidable if the extended family members were involved. Although some participants seemed to encounter challenges in intervening, all of the participants appeared to prefer to intervene, if intervening might have been possible, and explore alternative intervention strategies to prevent the traumatic filicide. The participants also appeared likely to choose to intervene in the future perhaps to avoid encountering the traumatic effects of filicide.

**3.18.7 Perceiving a father dislodged from his role.** This theme examines the participants' construing of the filicidal fathers feeling guilty.

Some participants seemed to loosely construe prison as an institution that appeared to trigger feelings of guilt in the filicidal fathers.

*“One regrets when they are in prison. He is regretting, but it is too late. He is maybe asking himself ‘why – did I do this thing? I would be doing this and that. I would have changed if they acquitted me.’” (534.32) (Jude)*

Perhaps Jude and some of the other participants construed prison as perhaps leading the filicidal fathers to construe themselves as losing their identities and role in society, and therefore resulting in guilt.

The filicidal fathers appeared to be construed as perhaps revising their construct systems after the killing, constructing a new self who might have felt dislodged from the construing of the core role of the old self, and therefore felt guilty about committing filicide.

*“He is very regretful. Ag shame! He is feeling very guilty because now he is facing the consequences of his actions. He is maybe saying, ‘Why did I commit this thing?’ He is regretful. He is not happy that he did this THING. Right now he is regretting committing this crime.” ... He told me when I visited him, “Eish, you know I don’t like committing this crime.”” (465.30) (April)*

In summary, in *Perceiving a father dislodged from his role*, prison appeared to be construed as punishing the filicidal fathers by taking away their sense of self and dislodging them from their construing of their core role in society. The consequential effects of filicide particularly on the self seemed to be construed as leading the filicidal fathers to reconstrue their role in the killing and construct a new self whose core role did not involve constructions of extreme violence.

**3.18.8 Anticipating the filicidal father to feel shame.** The theme explores the participants’ anticipations of the filicidal fathers feeling shame as the result of the killing.

The participants seemed to anticipate the filicidal fathers likely to feel shame by construing the people of their culture no longer construing them as good family men but now bad family men who failed in their manhood and fatherhood roles.

*“My culture does not support family killings. It encourages us to seek guidance from the elders in the family when we are having problems. So, obviously the people of my culture will be disappointed in him and see him as having failed as a man. All the good that he did for his family will not be seen anymore. He is now a FAILURE, eish!” (466.16) (April)*

*“Eish! I don’t know what to say. He did something that is wrong. He did something that is against my culture. My culture does not encourage men to kill their wives and children. So, I don’t know maybe the Xhosa<sup>17</sup> people would see him as a bad person.”*  
(458.34) (Mary)

Additionally, the participants appeared to expect that the filicidal fathers’ feelings of shame to be perpetuated by them construing the people of their culture as not construing them as loving fathers anymore but killers.

*“Eish! It is tough because they are seeing him as a killer. I don’t think they will ever see him as a loving and caring father. He was a good father but this thing is making people see him as a killer, eish.”* (519.15) (June)

Judging and labelling the filicidal fathers might also be seen as a form of punishment. Therefore, punishing the filicidal fathers by labelling them as bad people and killers seemed to indicate an attempt by some people, particularly those sharing constructions of family violence not being a part of their culture, to protect their core roles. Perhaps they were attempting to distinguish themselves from the offenders by showing that the offenders are not one of them. This form of punishment may induce feelings of shame as the result of the offender construing himself as dislodged from people’s construing of his core role.

The South African emotional expression of *“Eish!”* seems to indicate June’s feelings of concern and frustration in which she was perhaps unable to tolerate her filicidal son’s loss

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<sup>17</sup> Xhosa people are one of the ethnic subgroups in South Africa who adhere to Xhosa cultural beliefs.

of socio-cultural identity. Other participants also appeared to share similar feelings of concern and frustration.

However, one participant seemed to be hostile in continuing to construe her filicidal son as a good person, perhaps to protect his identity and ensure that he did not feel shame in her presence.

*“My culture does not encourage men to kill their wives and children. So, I don’t know maybe the Xhosa people would see him as a bad person, but I still see him as a good person.” (458.35) (Mary)*

The theme, *Anticipating the filicidal father to feel shame*, captured that filicide might not have an effect on some filicidal offenders’ role relationships, and therefore not result in them feeling shame, as in the case of Mary whose construing of her filicidal son did not change after the killing. However, the participants seemed to be concerned about the filicidal offenders feeling shame due to the consequential effects of filicide on the filicidal fathers’ relations and relationships with people who adhere to cultural beliefs which condemn family violence who were anticipated to might change their construing of the offenders.

In conclusion, this study explored the construction processes of, and meaning of the filicide for, the extended family members of paternal filicidal participants. It must be taken into consideration that the family participants were interviewed a few years after the filicide-homicide. Therefore, although most participants seemed to construe the filicide-homicide as instigated by the couples’ intimate/marital problems, while one participant appeared to construe it occurring in the absence of relationship issues, many participants spoke of not

having had construed problems in the couples' relationships. Their failure to construe problems appeared to be because of submergence and constriction in which the participants seemed to delimit their views of the couples' issues to avoid construing invalidations and incompatibilities.

Based on the participants' construing of the couples, the filicidal offenders' tight and positive construing which exposed them to invalidations, inhibition of problems and feelings, alcohol abuse and encountering a vicious cycle of abuse, as loosely construed by May and April, respectively, seemed to be construed to might lead to impulsivity. The hostile violence as construed in Joe's case appeared to be construed by some participants as emanating from the couple's lack of sociality and commonality about the constructions of the children which triggered anger.

While most filicidal fathers seemed to be construed to kill impulsively, some filicidal fathers appeared to be construed to kill to delimit their perceptual field to problems, avoid invalidation of constructions, and reduce incompatibilities in construing. The construed lack of control of the filicidal offenders over the filicide-homicide, in which some seemed to be construed struggling to construe and remember the killing appeared to be a manifestation of a foreshortened C-P-C Cycle. The filicide-homicide seemed to be construed to have consequential effects on the filicidal offenders' identities involving a loss of their role in society, a new self whose constructions seemed to be incompatible and impermeable to the constructions of the violent self, and a dislodgement from others construing of their core role.

## Chapter 4: Discussion

This chapter incorporates the findings from study one, which explored the filicidal participants' construction processes and construing of filicide-homicide, and study two, which examined the family participants' construction processes, meanings of the events leading to the filicide-homicide, and construing of the filicidal participants' construing of the killing. Discussing the findings from the two groups of participants in combination might offer substantial insight into what transpired in the filicidal participants' worlds which led to extreme violence. Most findings from the Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) and personal construct analysis seemed to complement each other. Therefore, the findings from the two analytic methods are discussed in conjunction. Personal construct theory is applied to discuss the findings in relation to the literature on family violence. Clinical and practical implications of the findings, methodological considerations, and recommendations for future research are considered.

### 4.1 Pathways to Filicide

The theme, *Pathways to filicide*, within which the findings are discussed in relation to existing literature draws on some of the pathways to violence described by Winter (2003). *Pathways to filicide* comprise the sub-themes, *Violence as an act of hostility*, *Violence as extortion of respect*, *Violence as an outcome of threat*, *Killing as a constrictive act*, *Killing as foreshortening of circumspction-preemption-control cycle*, *Feeling dislodged from core role*, and *Feeling shame*. However, since the interviews occurred a few years after the killing, the filicidal and family participants' construing about the filicide-homicide might have changed from before the traumatic incident.

**4.1.1 Violence as an act of hostility.** Most couples and extended family members tend to anticipate marriages to be long-term, in which many couples seem to invest highly in the anticipations (Juvva & Bhatti, 2006). This was evident in the current research, in which most filicidal and family participants appeared to tightly anticipate the filicidal participants and their partners/wives to have successful intimate/marital relationships. Many filicidal and family participants did not seem to anticipate the filicidal participants and their partners/wives to encounter problems, which appeared to be risky because according to Winter and Procter (2014) invariable construing may be vulnerable to invalidation. Most filicidal participants' encounter with intimate/marital problems, which have been found to contribute to filicide (Adinkrah, 2003; Debowska, Boduszek, & Dhingra, 2015; Harris, Hilton, Rice, & Eke, 2007), appeared to trigger anger, in McCoy's (1977) sense of the term, which led to hostility. The majority of filicidal participants and their partners/wives seemed to engage in Doster's (1985) eruption of hostility and violence phase, in which they appeared to force on each other invalidated constructions. For instance, some filicidal participants seemed to perform activities their constructions of which were already invalidated, which they could perhaps predict would anger and invalidate their partners'/wives' constructions. Therefore, the filicidal participants appeared to attempt to extort validation of their invalidated constructions.

Violence sometimes is an act of hostility (Winter, 2003) in Kelly's (1955) sense of this term. Most filicidal participants and their partners/wives seemed to equally partake in hostile violence, perhaps to force each other to validate their constructions. Their use of violence appeared to indicate that they lacked commonality and sociality, seeming unable to understand and accept each other's construing. Furthermore, it suggested the fighting/surrendering polarity of the semantics of power (Ugazio, 2013), in which no one

seemed to want to construe from the surrendering pole, which resulted in an irresolvable conflict. However, considering that not all violent acts are hostile, and hostility does not always involve violence (Winter, 2003), some filicidal participants and their partners/wives sometimes employed non-violent tactics to attempt to extort validation evidence.

Some filicidal participants appeared to engage in a hostile pursuit-withdrawal pattern of communication as described by Markman, Stanley, and Blumberg (2010) with their partners/wives. Although these filicidal participants seemed to avoid conflict by withdrawing to validate self-constructions of not being violent people, their partners/wives appeared to be angered by the withdrawing, in which they perhaps construed the filicidal participants undermining them and invalidating their expectations of addressing issues. One filicidal participant's wife seemed to attempt to force the participant into a confrontation by fighting with the children. This supports studies which found that some children might be involved in the parental conflict (Appel & Holden, 1998) and be killed by their fathers in retaliation against their spouses (Liem & Koenraadt, 2008). Spouse revenge filicide (Resnick, 1969) was not evident in the current research.

Some filicidal participants seemed to construe their partners/wives playing a role in the violence by provoking them to be violent. The construed hostile provocation appeared to lead some filicidal participants to employ reactive violence, which is violence in reaction to provocation (Berkowitz, 1993), which seemed to be used to stop the provocation while validating their partners'/wives' anticipations. Similar to victims of abuse who may justify and excuse the abuse (Yount & Li, 2009), most offenders may also justify the abuse by blaming their partners/spouses for making them angry, and therefore leading them to be violent (Henning, Jones, & Holdford, 2005). Although intimate partner violence might be

construed as triggered by anger, Horley and Johnson (2002) argued that domestic violence is not necessarily an expression of anger, in Cummins' (2003) sense, but instead an extortion of validation evidence, and manipulation and control of the other person.

Most filicidal participants in the eruption of hostility and violence phase seemed to slot rattle into "not me", as referred to by Doster (1985, p. 228). While all the filicidal participants appeared to avoid or withdraw from conflict to avoid escalating conflict, most filicidal participants' inhibition ability seemed to be exceeded, which resulted in them switching roles into violent selves. This appeared to be consistent with the view of over-controlled one-off offenders exploding with excessive violence as a result of inhibited emotions (Megargee, 1966).

**4.1.2 Violence as extortion of respect.** Although personal construct theory has been criticised for being individualistic, it does recognise that individuals may apply socio-cultural constructions to make choices about personal constructions (Walker, 1996) and perhaps negotiate family construct systems (Procter, 1981). Findings from IPA and personal construct analysis of the filicidal participants indicated that all the filicidal participants seemed to draw on dominant hegemonic (heterosexual) masculinity to anticipate role relationships with their partners/wives. Hegemonic masculinity involves constructions of how to be a man in a patriarchal society, expectations of socio-gendered roles of dominant masculinity in relation to femininity and subordinate masculinities, and enacting the roles (Connell, 1987). Therefore, the filicidal participants seemed to anticipate their partners/wives to treat them with respect, which as proposed in this dissertation involves construing another person validating your constructions of their core role towards the perceiver. Respect constructions appeared to be superordinate in the filicidal participants' construct systems. Construing

disrespect, in terms proposed in this dissertation, seemed to provoke feelings of anger and insult in some filicidal participants. Drawing on Procter and Dallos's (2006) perspective on anger as familial, perhaps some filicidal participants were also angered by their partners/wives invalidating what they construed as a family construct system in which a man should be treated with respect as the leader of the household. Although anger is not necessarily associated with hostility (Cummins, 2003), the feelings of anger emanating from construed disrespect appeared to erupt in violence used to extort respect.

Some filicidal participants seemed no longer able to inhibit the feelings of anger and insult from the repeated disrespect in which they construed their partners/wives as repeatedly undermining them. They appeared to use violence to stop the disrespect and invalidate their partners'/wives' construing of them as unmanly by asserting their manhood. Considering that violence is sometimes used by men to discipline and teach their partners/wives a lesson (Augustine, 2002; Wood & Jewkes, 2001), perhaps some filicidal participants employed violence to show their partners/wives the repercussions of disrespecting them. Therefore, violence may sometimes be used to ensure that women do not deviate from the conventional socio-cultural and gendered roles (Dobash & Dobash, 1979).

Drawing on Ugazio's (2013) power/submission polarity in the semantics of power, some filicidal participants appeared to employ other manipulative tactics which were non-violent to extort respect, and therefore assume the power pole. Perhaps these filicidal participants expected their partners/wives to adopt the submission pole, and therefore validate the social construction of women as submissive to men (Connell, 2002; Jeftha, 2006). As a result, some filicidal participants appeared to engage in an ongoing power struggle with their partners/wives in which they seemed unable to extort the level of respect and power they

perhaps construed themselves to be entitled to but instead assumed the submission pole during the conflict, as in John's case.

**4.1.3 Violence as an outcome of threat.** Filicide has been found to be associated with parental separation and divorce (Brown, Tyson, & Arias, 2014; Johnson, 2005, 2006; Kirkwood, 2012; Sachmann & Harris-Johnson, 2014). Mounting intimate/marital relationship problems which involved possible separation and divorce seemed to trigger an immense sense of threat in most filicidal participants in the current research. Similar to other studies (Johnson, 2005, Kirkwood, 2012), the filicidal participants in this research appeared unable to accept the possibility of losing their partners/wives.

Evidence from IPA indicated that the threat seemed to escalate in one filicidal participant's case, who appeared to draw on dominant social constructions, in which women's bodies are construed as males' 'possessions' and women as 'sexual objects' (Boonzaier, 2008; Mankayi & Shefer, 2005), to construe his wife. This is referred to as "sexual politics" (Connell, 1987, p. 16), which is deeply embedded in various institutions including marriage in a patriarchal system in which most men appear to construe their wives as their belongings (Dryden, 1999; Kordvani, 2002).

Most filicidal participants in this research, therefore, seemed to resort to violence to eliminate the threat by stopping their partners/wives from leaving. Similarly, most men in other studies were reported to have threatened to kill their partners and children when anticipating separation because they did not want other men to raise their children (Johnson, 2005). Violence, therefore, seemed to be used to extinguish the source of threat while

protecting one's identity when anticipating or construing an imminent and comprehensive change to core structures (Winter, 2003).

Drawing on Procter's (2014) triadic interpersonal construing level to construe the relationship between the couples, extended families, and families-in-law, most filicidal participants appeared to construe the families-in-law as threatening their sense of manhood by posing a threat to their relationships with their partners/wives and children. Similar construing were made by some family participants who seemed to share commonality with the filicidal participants concerning construing the in-laws causing fights between some filicidal participants and their partners/wives.

Interestingly, drawing on findings from IPA and personal construct analysis, although most family participants reported not knowing the couples' problems, as indicated above they appeared to have some awareness of the issues. This suggests that most family participants perhaps reduced their perceptual field to avoid further invalidations of constructions and incompatibilities in construing. For instance, one family participant reported construing and learning of her son-in-law destroying her filicidal son's marriage by allegedly abusing her filicidal son. Therefore, although some relatives might play a role in combating domestic abuse (Horton & Barry, 1993), evidence in this research indicated that some families-in-law might contribute to domestic violence (Raj, Livramento, Santana, Gupta, & Silverman, 2006). Furthermore, the current study showed that similar to women who are vulnerable to experiencing abuse (Rianon & Shelton, 2003), men may also be subject to abuse as in Dobash and Dobash's (2004) study on women abusing their male intimate partners.

Drawing on the system of family constructs/polarities in which individuals construct positions within the context of family constructions (Procter & Ugazio, 2017), most filicidal participants and the in-laws seemed to engage in a power struggle. The fight for power appeared to involve Ugazio's (2013) power/submission, overbearing/submissive, fighting/surrendering polarities of the semantics of power. Most filicidal participants seemed to employ violence to challenge the in-laws' overbearing pole by fighting to assume power as family men. This is consistent with studies on men's use of violence to protect their sense of manhood, exert power, and express authority when construing their masculinity as threatened (Gadd, Fox, Corr, Alger, & Butler, 2015; Sedumedi, 2009).

**4.1.4 Killing as a constrictive act.** Filicide in this research occurred in a context of familicide and was followed by attempted suicide in some cases, which is similar to findings from other studies (Friedman et al., 2005). Extreme violent acts, suicide (Kelly, 1991) and homicide may be regarded as strategies of constriction (Winter, 2003, 2006). This was echoed in the current research in which most filicidal participants appeared to avoid further invalidations and incompatibilities in construing by permanently removing from their perceptual field people construed as presenting invalidations and incompatibilities. Likewise, some family participants appeared to construe some filicidal participants committing filicide-homicide to reduce incompatibilities in construing and end problems which were invalidating their constructions.

In contrast to studies which found mothers to mostly commit altruistic filicide in comparison to fathers (Eriksson et al., 2016; Léveillé et al., 2007), some filicidal participants in this research reported killing their children to protect them. Additional to the view of homicide used by offenders as constriction (Winter, 2003), some filicidal participants also

seemed to commit altruistic filicide to permanently remove their children from a situation they anticipated and construed to present the children with invalidations and incompatibilities.

As mentioned previously, suicide is another way to achieve constriction (Kelly, 1991). It is imperative to understand the suicidal attemptor's meaning of the act to understand their choice to kill or attempt to kill themselves (Kelly, 1961). Kelly (1961) proposed two main types of suicide, realism/deterministic suicide, in which an individual can anticipate the outcome of events in his/her life, and chaotic/indeterminacy suicide, in which the outcome of events is unpredictable, and therefore one attempts or commits suicide to introduce a design in his/her life. Of the four filicidal participants, one filicidal participant who appeared to kill his child accidentally did not attempt suicide, which supports the findings that accidental filicide does not seem to be concomitant with suicide (Friedman et al., 2005). One filicidal participant who shot his nuclear family, killing his daughter, reported also intending to commit suicide but did not go through with the act. Therefore, suicide was attempted by two filicidal participants who appeared to commit altruistic filicide, hence supporting Kauppi et al.'s (2010) findings on altruistic filicide being mostly accompanied by attempted or committed suicide. One filicidal participant seemed to attempt deterministic suicide which will be discussed in *Killing as foreshortening of circumspection-preemption-control cycle*, and the other one appeared to attempt indeterminacy suicide.

Consistent with Stefan and Linder's (1985) view of chaotic suicide attemptors experiencing their worlds as unconstruable, one filicidal participant in the current research seemed to construe himself "caught in the confusion of anxiety" (Kelly, 1955, p. 495). He appeared unable to construe various aspects of his life concerning work and his marriage. The

filicidal participant's construing seemed to be loose, in which he explored constructions of resigning from work, moving to another province, divorce, and committing suicide perhaps in an attempt to find constructions to apply to events in his life. However, his inability to construe events seemed to result in him being caught in chaos. Indeterminacy suicide attemptors tend to loosen their construing in an attempt to make sense of their chaotic reality (Stefan & Linder, 1985). Perhaps the filicidal participant attempted suicide as a last resort in a series of failed constriction tactics to permanently remove himself from the chaotic situation, as in depressive fatalism (Neimeyer, 1984) in which suicide may be committed as an ultimate constrictive act in the constriction process.

This filicidal participant appeared to construe his life as meaningless, which, drawing on Neimeyer and Winter's (2006) suggested predictors of suicide, indicates a disrupted Experience Cycle, which is involved in meaning-making (Kelly, 1970). Suicide may occur when the cycle is disrupted at any of its five phases (Neimeyer & Winter, 2006), anticipation, investment, encounter, validation/invalidation, and construct revision (Kelly, 1970). The filicidal participant seemed unable to tolerate invalidations of his anticipations and constructions, including those in which he construed himself as in control of his life, which resulted in him losing a sense of investment in living. He perhaps anticipated suicide to bring meaning and validation, and enable him to reassert control over his life, which he seemed to construe as unpredictable and unconstruable. Therefore, suicide might be construed as validating one's life instead of ending it (Kelly, 1961). However, this filicidal participant perhaps encountered further invalidations when the suicide attempt failed. An unsuccessful suicide attempt may also perpetuate validation of the construing of self as a failure (Neimeyer & Winter, 2006).

Additionally, drawing on Neimeyer and Winter's (2006) view of dichotomous construing as one of the predictors of suicide, this filicidal participant seemed to have polarised competent-failure self-constructions, in which he construed himself as a responsible father who was failing in his fatherhood role to protect his children. Therefore, he appeared to encounter a dilemma, which he perhaps solved by attempting to commit filicide-suicide, which indicates that some of the predictors of suicide (Neimeyer & Winter, 2006) might also be applied to homicide.

#### **4.1.5 Killing as foreshortening of circumspection-preemption-control cycle.**

Violence may in some instances be a manifestation of a foreshortened Circumspection-Preemption-Control (C-P-C) Cycle (Winter, 2003), which involves decision-making (Kelly, 1955). The filicidal participants in the current research appeared not to engage in the circumspection phase but instead plunged into the preemption phase. They did not seem to propositionally construe, in which various constructs are used to make a judgement about the situation before making a choice (Kelly, 1955). For instance, one filicidal participant seemed to make a preemptive choice not to seek medical treatment for his child which led to him accidentally killing the child as a result of negligence. Additionally, three filicidal participants appeared to impulsively decide to use reactive violence, which has been found to be employed by one-off offenders (Winter, 2016) to solve problems. Most family participants also appeared to construe filicidal participants as impulsively killing.

The findings of the current research, in which most filicidal participants seemed to intentionally kill their children and in which one also killed his wife support studies which found that one-off offenders tend to be impulsively and extremely violent towards their family members (Houston, 1998; Tweed & Dutton, 1998). However, one filicidal participant

in this research also seemed to employ instrumental violence, which is goal-directed (Berkowitz, 1993), towards other people but the violence was less extreme. This indicates that some one-off offenders may not only be violent in their intimate relationships as originally considered by Houston (1998) and Tweed and Dutton (1998).

Some filicidal participants' impulsive decision to kill seemed to be precipitated by the abrupt slot rattling of their constructions of their partners/wives, in which they appeared to suddenly switch from construing them positively to negatively. Slot rattling (Kelly, 1969) of construing of victims which might lead to impulsive violence (Winter, 2003) has been reported in one-off offenders, who were found only to construe their victims, mostly family members, from the positive construct pole (Houston, 1998; Howells, 1983). One-off offenders seem to slot rattle to the negative construct pole when invalidated, which might lead to violence (Houston, 1998). They often kill their victims, in comparison to habitually violent offenders, because of their over-controlled tendencies in which an exceeded inhibition might result in a sudden explosion of extreme violence (Megargee, 1966).

As previously mentioned, deterministic suicide was attempted by one filicidal participant who killed his children and wife, which supports studies which found that most filicidal men may attempt to kill their partners/wives and themselves at the time of the filicide (Léveillé et al., 2007). This filicidal participant's suicide attempt seemed to be intended to introduce a preferred design to events in his life instead of the undesired predicted outcome of going to prison. Drawing on Neimeyer and Winter's (2006) suggested predictors of suicide, his construct system appeared to be constricted, in which he perhaps could not construe alternative designs to reassert control in his life, which resulted in him preemptively construing suicide as his elaborative choice.

Furthermore, although it was previously discussed that some filicidal participants in this research seemed to commit filicide as constriction, perhaps a constricted construct system, as in Neimeyer and Winter's (2006) predictors of suicidality, contributed to their impulsive decision to commit altruistic filicide. Additional to these filicidal participants killing their children as constriction, a constricted construct system might have prevented them from construing alternatives to protect their children instead of impulsively killing them.

Consistent with Winter's (2016) study on one-off offenders, most filicidal participants in the current research seemed to struggle to construe what they had done as a result of a foreshortened C-P-C Cycle. Therefore, they appeared to be immensely engulfed by anxiety and guilt. Moreover, due to a foreshortened C-P-C Cycle (Winter, 2016), some filicidal participants seemed to be temporarily unable to remember the traumatic killing. Although Sermpezis and Winter (2009) found that traumatic incident constructions are over-elaborated in the victim's construct system, the findings of this study appear to support Sewell, Cromwell, Farrell-Higgins, Palmer, Ohlde, and Patterson (1996) in showing that the constructions might be temporarily under-elaborated. The ability to recall seems to occur when the construct system supports the event (Kelly, 1955).

**4.1.6 Feeling dislodged from core role.** Most filicidal men have been found not to have past convictions and history of violent crimes (Bourget & Gagné, 2005; Marleau et al., 1999). Only one filicidal participant, who committed accidental filicide, in the current research was a habitual offender, which supports findings on one-off offenders seeming to commit extremely violent offences which might be deadly (Houston 1998; Howells, 1983). Similar to the other three filicidal participants, this filicidal participant also appeared to feel

guilty about killing because he did not construe himself to be a violent person. Most family participants also seemed to construe some filicidal participants as overwhelmed by feelings of guilt about committing filicide-homicide. The filicidal participants appeared to construe the killing as sin, which involves construing a committed act as involving dislodgment from one's core role (Kelly, 1969). Therefore, the filicidal participants' feelings of guilt seemed to emanate from construing themselves as committing sin, which indicates that sin and guilt might be entwined (Kelly, 1969).

One filicidal participant's construing of being dislodged from his core role appeared to be instigated by his tight construing of filicide committed by evil fathers. His construing echoed some family participants' construing of some filicidal participants killing as a result of 'demonic' possession. Psychiatric and evil constructions are often employed to construe such destructive acts (Winter & Tschudi, 2015). However, mental illness and evil constructions seem to provide a simplistic explanation of the offence and remove responsibility from the offender. They also inhibit the understanding of the offender's meaning of the offence and processes of choosing a "dark vision" (Nowinski, 2004, p. 521). Winter (2006) argued that such destructive acts may only be understood when construed from the perspective of the offender.

Prison, which is an institution of punishment (Kelly, 1955; Travis, 2002), appeared to contribute to most filicidal participants' sense of dislodgement from their core role. Society seems to punish offenders because they feel threatened by them (Kelly, 1955). Perhaps they construe the offender as a reflection of a person they might become if they did not exercise self-control (Kelly, 1955). Therefore, the punishers might reduce the threat and protect their

identities by punishing the offender through incarceration or rejection, which will be elaborated in *Feeling shame* (Kelly, 1955).

The relationship between punishment and guilt identified by Kelly (1955) seemed to be accentuated in most filicidal participants' experience of loss of core role as good family men and construed role as reputable people in society due to incarceration. However, one filicidal participant who reported previous convictions did not seem to construe prison as dislodging him from his construed role in society. Perhaps this is because the filicidal participant construed himself as a criminal but as previously mentioned not violent. Although the filicidal participant appeared to feel guilty about committing filicide, he did not seem to feel guilty about being incarcerated because constructions of prison are perhaps subsumed into his self-constructions. Perhaps he construed prison as his way of life, as violent people may construe violence as their way of living (Horley & Johnson, 2002; Winter, 2003). Therefore, punishment might not provoke guilt if the offender establishes and construes his core role in accordance with an identity that is construed by others as threatening (Kelly, 1955).

The consequences of punishment, which included a construed loss of self, appeared to result in most filicidal participants desperately wanting to re-establish their identities, which is common among most punished people who feel dislodged from their core role (Kelly, 1955).

**4.1.7 Feeling shame.** The filicidal participants appeared to feel shame by being judged, labelled killers, and rejected by people, including those they construed as understanding, and therefore having intimate ROLE relationships with, them. Societal

judgment and rejection is another form of punishment. Therefore, this dissertation proposes that punishment is not only associated with guilt as suggested by Kelly (1955) but also be linked to shame, in which an offender might construe himself/herself dislodged from other people's construing of his/her core role. Similar to Kelly's (1955) view of an offender seeking to restore his/her sense of self after punishment, some filicidal participants perhaps wanted to extinguish shame by undoing the killing.

Findings from IPA and personal construct analysis of the family participants showed that most family participants appeared to be extremely concerned and anxious, in Kellyan terms, about most filicidal participants being rejected by members of their culture, which they anticipated to result in the filicidal participants perhaps feeling shame. The construing of the family participants indicates that although people develop constructions of themselves and their worlds, as indicated in Kelly's (1955) Individuality Corollary, as previously discussed in *Violence as extortion of respect*, they may also refer to cultural constructions to make anticipations (Walker, 1996). Drawing on the Sociality Corollary, in which people are construed playing roles with others based on their construing of other people's ways of construing (Kelly, 1955), individuals sharing cultural beliefs might expect each other to play roles according to cultural constructions. The family participants seemed to construe the filicidal participants' role of killing as dislodged from cultural constructions, and hence anticipated the filicidal participants to construe the people of their culture to construe them as not having behaved as they were expected to behave.

However, offenders' families may also be subject to punishment. Consistent with Condry's (2007) study on families of offenders, the current research found that some family participants experienced shame as a result of being rejected and blamed by most members of

the in-laws for the killing. Condry (2007) considered this to be “secondary stigma” (p. 67), which is concomitant with feelings of shame in which the offender’s stigma is transferred onto his/her family, and the family member’s new identity is construed in relation to the constructions of the crime.

## **4.2 Implications of the Research**

The findings of the current research led to a consideration of some of the clinical and practical implications which might contribute to the combat against acts of extreme violence within families and perhaps help some filicidal offenders and their extended families find sociality after the filicide.

**4.2.1 Clinical implications.** This section discusses the assessment and treatment of filicidal offenders.

**4.2.1.1 Assessing the violent offender.** Assessing for risk-need factors, especially criminogenic needs/dynamic risk factors which are subject to change and play a role in criminal behaviour (Bonta & Andrews, 2007), is imperative in the prediction of the risk of recidivism (Bonta, 2002). Bonta and Andrews (2007) developed a Risk-Need-Responsivity (RNR) model to assess the risk and needs of offenders and determine appropriate treatment. Based on the model, the filicidal participants appeared to have been high-risk offenders before the filicide-homicide because they presented with most of the major risk/need factors identified by Bonta and Andrews (2007). The risk was exacerbated in Sly, who had a history of criminal behaviour which he rationalised, reckless behaviour, substance abuse, and friends who were involved in crime. The risk was also escalated in Neo and John, who were law

enforcement agents, which is an immensely stressful occupation which has been linked with burnout (Anshel, 2000), alcohol abuse, and suicidal tendencies (Rothmann & van Rensburg, 2002) especially among officers who experience marital problems (Janik & Kravitz, 1994). As was evident in Neo and John, some law enforcement agents have been found to slot rattle (Winter, 1993) into abusive men towards their families (Stinson, Liederbach, & Freiburger, 2012).

It was evident during the interviews that the filicidal participants' risk of committing violent reoffences might have de-escalated because they reconstrued violence and substance use, particularly in Sly's case, and developed new constructions about themselves which did not involve violence. However, it is recommended that the Level of Service Inventory-Revised (LSI-R), which is a risk/needs assessment instrument (Andrews & Bonta, 1995), be administered to assess for other dynamic risk factors. The Violence Risk Appraisal Guide (VRAG) (Harris, Rice, & Quinsey, 1993), which is an actuarial instrument which assesses the risk of violent reoffences among mentally disordered offenders but has been modified for nonforensic offenders (Harris, Rice, & Camilleri, 2004), might also be administered.

However, in an effort to combat violence, psychological assessments should not just focus on assessing and predicting the risk of recidivism (Rosenblatt & Rosenblatt, 2000), but also the offender's meanings of violence, which have received limited consideration, and construing processes involved in the decision to employ violence (Winter, 2007).

Understanding the offenders' meanings and processes of construing is significant in the effectiveness of treatment and possible reduction of the risk of recidivism (Winter, 2007; Winter et al., 2007). As evident in the current research, the offenders' meanings can be elicited through interviews, as also used by Winter (2007), PEG, ECM, Tschudi's (1977)

ABC model, and narratives written by offenders, as used by Winter et al. (2007). More formal personal construct assessment techniques including repertory grids, self-characterisation, laddering, and pyramiding have also been used in attempts to elucidate ways of construing and gain insight into the content and structure of the violent offenders' construct systems (Houston, 1998; Howells, 1978, 1983; Landfield, 1971; Needs, 1988; Winter, 2006; Winter & Goulds, 2000).

**4.2.1.2 Treating the violent offender.** Treatment of violent offenders should focus on reducing criminogenic needs to alleviate the risk of future reoffences (Bonta & Andrews, 2007). Moreover, the selected therapeutic techniques should be based on the diagnostic assessment of the modes of construing which may contribute to violence (Winter, 2007). For instance, therapeutic techniques aimed at loosening the construing of a client whose violence was perhaps an attempt to escape chaos may be ineffective if the client's view of his/her world is already loose. The therapeutic technique has to be tailored to tighten the client's way of construing as was evident in Winter, Sireling, Riley, Metcalfe, Quaitte, and Bhandari's (2007) study of self-injurious individuals.

Pathways to filicide proposed by this dissertation indicated that particular Kellyan diagnostic constructs and ways of construing might be implicated in deadly violence within families. Therefore, personal construct psychotherapy, which is underpinned by Kellyan constructive alternativism and considers the client as constructing his/her reality and equally participating in the therapeutic process (Neimeyer, Saferstein, & Arnold, 2005), might be effective in reducing the filicidal participants' likelihood of committing future violent offences. The filicidal participants might be enabled to develop alternative constructions of dealing with issues, and therefore complete the C-P-C Cycle which is involved in decision-

making instead of impulsively choosing violence when angry and threatened. Therapy might enable the filicidal participants to develop new and acceptable constructions about the self which may be incorporated into their core constructs, which might lead to a reduction of guilt. A credulous therapist might help the filicidal participants feel less shame by developing new ways of construing other people's construing of who they are irrespective of their role of committing what might be construed as an evil act of killing.

Winter (2006, 2007, 2016) found personal construct psychotherapy to be an effective treatment for offenders who committed similar offences, e.g., Paul, a parricidal offender. Similar to Paul's case (Winter, 2006), personal construct psychotherapy might lessen the filicidal participants' anxiety by enabling the constructions of the traumatic filicide-homicide and attempted suicide, as in Joe's and John's case, to be more elaborated and integrated into their construct systems. The filicidal participants might, therefore, be able to make better sense of their construing of events which led to them slot rattle into killers.

Similar to Paul, who found healing by taking off the shelf what Winter (2006, p. 167) reported that he referred to as a "big event" which he "put on a shelf", the interviews in this research which employed personal construct approaches including credulity seemed to be therapeutic and instilled a sense of hope in the filicidal participants.

Evidence from the semi-structured interview and PEG indicated that the filicidal participants perceived themselves negatively after the killing. Furthermore, most filicidal participants seemed to struggle to accept and construe the ways of construing of their partners/wives and other members of their extended families. Most filicidal participants also appeared to have difficulty addressing issues with their partners/wives and seeking help

instead of avoiding problems and inhibiting feelings. Kelly's (1955) fixed-role therapy (FRT), in which the therapist sketches a role orthogonal to the client's description of the self, people, and his/her world which is then enacted by the client provided that it is not threatening and anger-provoking, might benefit the filicidal participants. The filicidal participants might be challenged to develop alternative ways of construing the self. They might also learn to have sociality in which instead of slot rattling their construing of significant others when invalidated, they accept that other people will have positions which are different to their own. Most importantly, through the playing of roles in therapy, the filicidal participants might develop constructions to manage intimate/marital conflict without involving the children.

FRT has been used by Horley (2005) and Houston (1998) with violent offenders. The challenge with FRT in a prison setting concerns the offender having a limited opportunity to experiment with and enact the new role (Horley, 2005). Horley (2005) proposed the use of imaginary playing of roles followed by a discussion of how the self enacting the sketched role would respond. Furthermore, the therapist might have difficulty sketching an acceptable alternative role which the offender might be willing to enact based on his/her current construing of himself/herself (Horley, 2005).

The nature of the filicidal participants' childhood attachment relationships with their parents and their attachments with their partners/wives and children were beyond the scope of the aims of this research, and therefore the attachments were not explicitly explored. However, John and Joe seemed to have a secure attachment relationship with their parents in that they briefly spoke about their fathers being their role models concerning fatherhood. Sly reported that his father left him when he was young, which suggests an insecure-disorganised

attachment. Neo did not speak about his relationship with his father, and he was not asked about their attachment. The filicidal participants might benefit from Bowlby's (1988) attachment-oriented psychotherapy, which has been used with men who commit intimate partner violence (Sonkin & Dutton, 2003).

If the filicidal participants had disorganised attachments because of childhood trauma/loss, particularly in Sly's case, the therapist might help them to deal with unresolved trauma/loss, which is a common experience among violent/abusive offenders (Dutton, 2007; Sonkin & Dutton, 2003). As in Sonkin and Dutton's (2003) therapeutic work with abusive men, the therapist might help the filicidal participants, particularly Sly, explore and restructure the mental representations of himself, his father, whom he perhaps perceived as having abandoned him, and his dysfunctional relationship with his father. Sly might also deal with unresolved childhood issues which perhaps contributed to his use of Nyaope, which played a role in the accidental filicide. An experience of adverse childhood experiences has been strongly correlated with substance use and addiction including parental drug use (Dube, Felitti, Dong, Chapman, Giles, & Anda, 2003). Sly might develop constructive and more organised working models of himself, himself as a father, and his relationship with his child in which he does not parent under the influence of Nyaope.

The threat of a construed possible separation/divorce significantly contributed to the incidents of filicide-homicide and attempted suicide by Joe and John in this research. Insecure-disorganised attached abusive men have been found to have a fear of abandonment or rejection (Dutton, van Ginkel, & Landolt, 1996). Consistent with the findings of this research, the men may become abusive and intrusive when experiencing attachment anxiety (Dutton et al., 1996). The abusive and intrusive behaviour is used to obtain power and control

and reduce anxiety (Dutton, 2007). Attachment-focused therapy might be effective in helping such offenders develop an ability to recognise their anxiety reaction to fear of loss or rejection, develop constructive ways of dealing with attachment anxiety, and ability to self-soothe (Sonkin & Dutton, 2003). A loss-fear diary might help the offenders become more attuned to their feelings and experiences (Sonkin & Dutton, 2003). Consistent with Sonkin and Dutton (2003), the therapist might help the filicidal participants recognise how their anxiety and reaction to this in attachments is perpetuating intimate/marital discord and preventing them from having their needs met. The offenders might learn new skills to regulate anxiety and anger such as self-soothing, relaxation, and reassurance which might lead to a reduction of reactivity and sensitivity to a perceived threat (Sonkin & Dutton, 2003).

The filicidal participants might also benefit from group therapy. Group therapy may be particularly appropriate for offenders who show a lack of sociality (Winter, 2003) such as the filicidal offenders in the current research. The filicidal participants spoke of feeling shame, in McCoy's (1977) sense, as a result of being judged and rejected. They also experienced a sense of incompetence in which they construed themselves as unable to make appropriate and elaborative decisions. Self-help groups which have been offered to other abusive men (Gold, Sutton, & Ronel, 2017) might be beneficial to the filicidal participants. The self-help group might foster a sense of competence as the group decides what is discussed in the meetings (Gold et al., 2017). This might be appropriate for violent offenders who have difficulty following instructions, e.g., Paul, a parricidal offender who ignored the instructions to write a self-characterisation in the third person in Winter (2016). The group might also contribute to a reduction of McCoy's (1977) shame by providing the members with a sense of belonging, sociality, and commonality as they interact with other people with whom they share a common experience of violence, ways of construing, and expectations

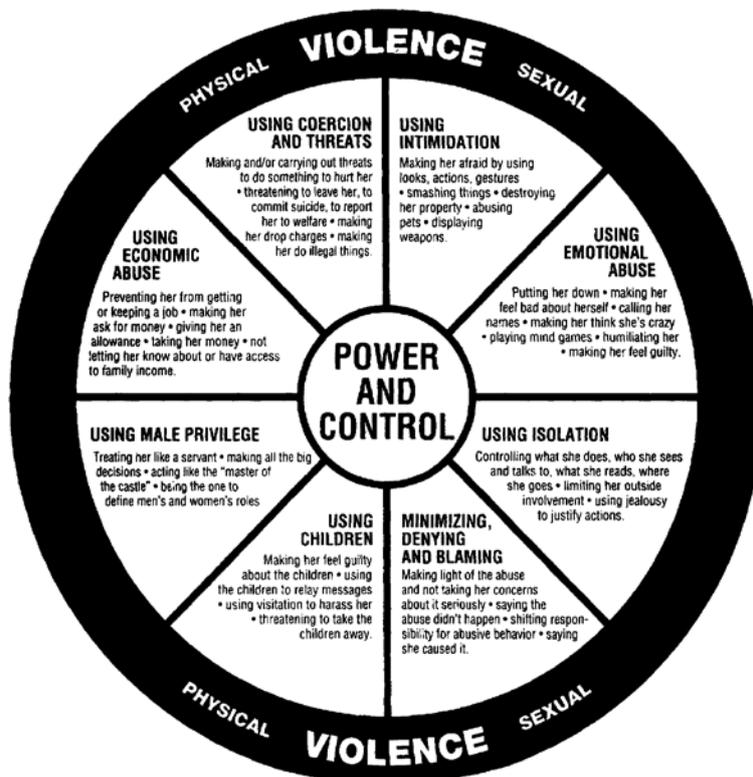
(Gold et al., 2017). The members' self-esteem might be fostered by acquiring constructive ways of solving problems from the group (Gold et al., 2017) which might lead to a revised and elaborated construct system.

The filicidal participants drew on patriarchal socio-gendered and cultural beliefs of masculinity to develop constructions about the self, their partners/wives, and their relation with their partners/wives. Their belief systems comprised a dichotomous masculinity-femininity relationship in which they thought of themselves as superior and entitled to respect in relation to their partners/wives, who were perhaps perceived as inferior and objectified as in Neo's case. A construed challenge to their beliefs and thoughts triggered disrespect and feelings of insult, anger, threat, and Kellyan guilt. Consistent with Dobash and Dobash (1998), most filicidal participants perceived violence as a way of valorising male authority, power and control, keeping their partners/wives in their socially rightful place, and reaffirming their masculine identity. They justified the violence as reactive to provocation. The filicidal participants might benefit from a battering intervention programme that employs Pence and Paymar's (1993) Duluth model which adopts a feminist perspective (Dutton & Corvo, 2007) and components of cognitive-behaviour therapy (CBT) to change the abusive behaviour (Gondolf, 2007). The Duluth model posits that domestic violence is rooted in patriarchal ideologies which give men a sense of entitlement and authority and socio-cultural sanctions of a hierarchal power relation between men and women (Pence & Paymar, 1993). Violence is seen as used by men to control women's behaviour, thoughts, and feelings (Pence & Paymar, 1993).

The Power and Control Wheel (see Figure 11) is used to challenge the men's perceived right to control and dominate their partners/wives (Pence & Paymar, 1993). The

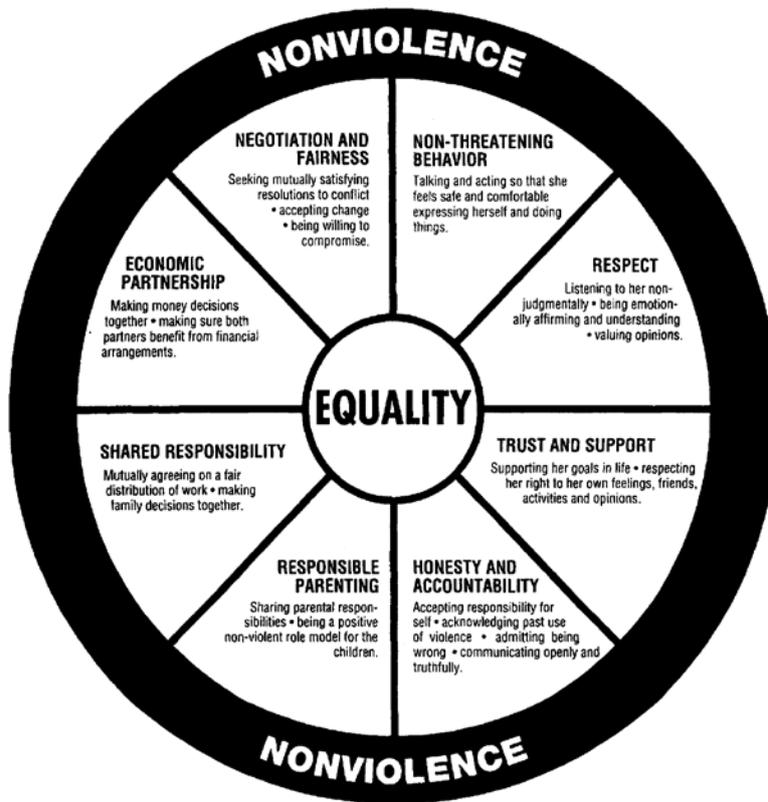
wheel shows that violence is part of a pattern of behaviour instead of an isolated abusive act and that anger is not a precipitant of violence (Pence & Paymar, 1993). However, the current research indicated that inhibited anger and avoided problems might lead to a volcanic eruption of hostile violence. Considering that most violent offenders, both husbands and wives, were found to be angrier than the maritally distressed couples who were non-violent (Jacobson, Gottman, Waltz, Rushe, Babcock, & Holtzworth-Munroe, 1994) suggests that inhibited anger might be destructive.

Figure 11: *Power and control wheel*. Source: Pence and Paymar (1993, p. 3)



The Duluth model aims to promote an egalitarian intimate/marital relationship by helping violent men to change from using behaviours on the Power and Control Wheel which may lead to a power struggle which leads to abuse to using the behaviours on the Equality Wheel (see Figure 12).

There are contradictions in the literature on the effectiveness of the Duluth model in de-escalating violence. Although Babcock, Green, and Robie (2004) found that the Duluth model and CBT interventions had no effect differences in that they both had a minimal impact in reducing recidivism, Dutton and Corvo (2007) argued that the Duluth model is ineffective in de-escalating violence. Dutton and Corvo (2007) criticised the Duluth model for simplistically considering domestic violence as caused by a patriarchal system which sanctions and reinforces male dominance and violence and, furthermore, for failing to understand the complexity in the inter-related and multidirectional relationship between thoughts, emotions, and behaviour. However, Gondolf (2004) found that the Duluth model is effective in reducing violent reoffences. Gondolf (2007) argued that effectiveness of the programme, like all other programmes, depends on the continuous monitoring of risk, penalties against non-adherence to court orders, a support system for victims, and arrests for domestic violence offences.

Figure 12: *Equality wheel*. Source: Pence and Paymar (1993, p. 8)

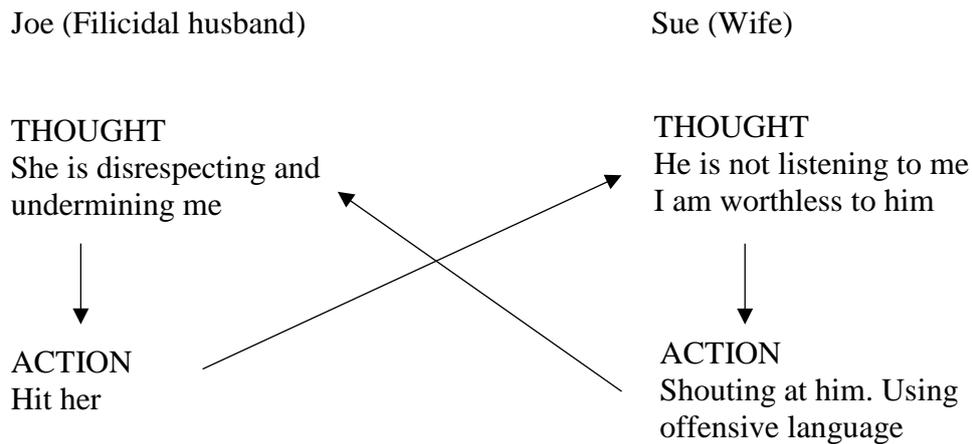
Additionally, CBT, which may be used in individual or couple format and has been used in a group format with abusive men (Smedslund, Dalsbø, Steiro, Winsvold, & Clench-Aas, 2007), might be beneficial to the filicidal participants. CBT is interested in a person's beliefs/thoughts about the self, other people, and his/her world (Beck, 1979, 2011). CBT posits that since a person's beliefs or thoughts influence his/her mood and behaviour, behaviour might be changed by changing the person's belief system (Beck, 2011). The therapist aims to stop the violent behaviour by changing the way the offender thinks about violence (Smedslund et al., 2007), for example, as in most of the present filicidal participants, as a solution to problems. Therefore, through the use of vignettes and role plays which depict a situation of conflict (Gondolf, 2007), therapy might help the filicidal participants to develop and practice alternative and adaptive behavioural responses to conflict. Cognitive restructuring (Gondolf, 2007) might change the filicidal participants' patriarchal masculinity-

femininity beliefs and thought patterns about violence. CBT also uses behavioural and problem-solving techniques (Beck, 2011). Therefore, communication skills might help the filicidal participants learn ways of communicating and addressing issues especially since poor communication was at the centre of their intimate/marital problems. Anger management might help the filicidal participants learn ways of working with their anger instead of inhibiting it. Cognitive-behavioural programmes have been found to be effective modes of treatment for violent offenders (Landenberger & Lipsey, 2005; Wilson, Bouffard, & Mackenzie, 2005).

Cummins' (2006) working with anger group might be beneficial to the filicidal participants because their anger appeared to be anchored in their construing of how a man should behave in relation to his partner/wife. Cummins (2006) believes that changing processes of construction might de-escalate reactions of anger. The programme uses Tschudi's (1977) ABC model to help the group explore their construing of the advantages and disadvantages of their anger and become aware of the part that their anger plays for them (Cummins, 2006). Procter's (1985) bowtie is employed to help the group gain insight into how their construing and behaviour to achieve goals might be construed and responded to by their partners/wives (Cummins, 2006). Furthermore, the bowtie is used to help the group become aware of how their enacting of roles with their partners/wives based on their construing processes maintains a destructive cycle of conflict (Cummins, 2006). See an example of the bowtie of Joe and his wife in Figure 13, which illustrates how their interaction with each other, construing and behaviour is maintained in a "loop" of conflict (Procter, 1985, p. 328). Laddering, which elicits superordinate constructs (Hinkle, 1965), is used to help the group become aware of the hierarchical organisation of their constructions, and that the invalidation of superordinate and impermeable constructs they draw on when playing

roles with their partners/wives might trigger anger (Cummins, 2006). Therefore, developing sociality, which might lead to the development of constructive alternatives to achieve goals which are validated by their partners/wives, might diminish anger (Cummins, 2006).

Figure 13: *Bowtie diagram. Adapted from Cummins (2006)*



The filicidal participants did not seem to take responsibility for the filicide-homicide. Most filicidal participants appeared to blame their partners'/wives' provocative hostility, in Kelly's (1955) sense of the term, for leading them to make a destructive choice of killing. They also seemed to blame anger, which they reported feeling engulfed by, which led them to lose control and impulsively commit filicide-homicide. In contrast, Sly blamed Nyaope for his preemptive decision which led to the accidental killing of his child. Laming's (2005, 2006) SHED programme, which aims to change the behaviour of abusive/violent men, might help the filicidal participants learn to recognise and accept responsibility for their role in the killing. "Response-ability", in which the group members are enabled to construe that they have a choice in life, is central to SHED (Laming, 2006, p. 29). Therefore, through SHED's use of laddering and fixed-role play including the support of the group (Laming, 2006), the filicidal participants might construe that anger, violence, and other abusive tactics are not the

only ways of solving conflict and problems. The filicidal participants might make an elaborative choice to explore and develop alternatives constructions to abuse and violence which are validated by the group.

Most importantly, Laming (2005) used Pence and Paymar's (1993) Power and Control Wheel and Equality Wheel to elicit constructs which enabled the abusive men in the SHED group to construe their sense of being entitled to have power and control over their partners/wives from an alternative construct pole. The constructs in the Power and Control Wheel and Equality Wheel contributed to the abusive men in Laming's (2005) SHED group revising their construct systems and reconstruing anger and domestic violence, which validates the possible effectiveness of the Duluth model.

Self-characterisation, one of the tools in personal construct theory which SHED uses (Laming, 2006), might enable the filicidal participants to loosen their construing and construe themselves in terms of positive instead of negative construct poles. This might be particularly beneficial to Sly, who seemed to have also construed himself negatively before the killing, a feature which is common among extremely violent offenders (Houston, 1998). The slot rattling in self-construing in which the filicidal participants identify strengths and positive characteristics in themselves might restore and enhance their self-esteem, which most abusive/violent men have been found to lack (Cummins, 2006; Laming, 2006). The restoration and enhancement of self-esteem, in which the filicidal participants develop a sense of self, might escalate their determination not to use anger and violence to avoid being dislodged from the construing of their new selves, that is to avoid guilt. Some intervention programmes which integrate the offender's strengths and self-determination have been used

to combat and reduce future acts of violence or abuse (Curwood, DeGeer, Hymmen, & Lehmann, 2011).

Deeply embedded in most filicidal participants' intimate/marital problems was their inability to negotiate common relationship goals and ways of solving family issues. This created a power struggle, which is evident in Ugazio's (2013) semantic polarities in dysfunctional families. The filicidal participants and their partners/wives might have perhaps benefited from personal construct family therapy, which recognises that family members might have similar or different ways of construing (Procter, 2005), if they had sought psychotherapy before their problems escalated to deadly violence. The therapist might have assisted the couple to gain insight into their unique anticipations and constructions, and different ways of construing their problems. He/she might have helped the couple to understand that they will not always construe situations in a similar way, but that they must learn to communicate and negotiate ways of solving problems.

Information obtained during personal construct family therapy on the couple's dyadic interpersonal relationship, as described by Procter (2014), might have enabled the couple to realise how their enacted roles and construing of each other maintained their destructive behaviour towards each other and perpetuated their problems. Therefore, through Kellyan fixed-role play the couple might have explored and practised alternative constructive ways of playing roles with each other and responding to each other's differences in construing without invalidating each other and being violent. Couple therapy, particularly multi-couple group therapy of men who batter and abuse their partners/wives, has been found to be more effective in reducing recidivism and improving marital satisfaction compared to individual couple therapy (Stith, McCollum, Rosen, & Thomsen, 2004). Furthermore, the abusive men's

attitude towards violence against their partners/wives was found to have changed in the multi-couple group therapy (Stith et al., 2004). The therapeutic technique enabled the couples in the group to have sociality by hearing each other's stories (Stith et al., 2004), which Cummins (2006) and Laming (2006) believe to facilitate the process of reconstruing anger and violence, and therefore to de-escalate possible future reoffences of violence. The couples in the group who were able to improve their relationships also served as role models for other couples (Stith et al., 2004). However, couple therapy for treatment of violent men has been discouraged and prohibited in some places because it is considered to make the victim vulnerable to more experience of abuse as retribution for disclosure in the sessions and blame (Lipchik, Sirles, & Kubicki, 1997).

Qualitative grids may also be used in family therapy to help the family members develop sociality (Procter, 2002). For instance, the PEG might have enabled the couple to understand how they perceived themselves, each other, their intimate/marital relationship, and intimate/marital issues, and therefore reduced their anxiety. The couple might have had an alternative understanding of the intimate/marital discord from the viewpoint of their significant other and perhaps worked together to develop ways to address problems.

Some filicidal participants who seemed to use alcohol as a constrictive agent to cope with problems reported construing intimate/marital issues affecting their job performance which resulted in problems accumulating, and therefore leading them to feel increasingly frustrated and overwhelmed including threatened, in Kellyan terms, as in John's case. These filicidal participants might have benefited from an Employee Assistance Program (EAP), which is a work-based intervention program which assists employees to cope with personal and substance-related problems which affect their work (Masi, 1992). The filicidal

participants might have received counselling regarding intimate/marital problems, alcohol-related issues, and stress management skills. EAP has been found to be slightly effective in reducing the occurrence of domestic violence (Maiden, 1996). Therefore, in addition to EAP and all the psychotherapeutic and programme interventions focusing on violence/abuse discussed, it is recommended that the filicidal participants with substance use problems attend Alcohol Anonymous (i.e., Neo and John) and Narcotics Anonymous (i.e., Sly), as also suggested by Gondolf (1999).

**4.2.1.3 Using personal construct methods to promote change.** Therapists may have a blinkered view of clients because of their upbringing, life experiences, and training (Pollock, 1986). Burgess (1985) illustrates this in her work with psychiatric nurses, who had different construing of patients because of the different therapeutic models used to construe the patients. Blinkering can prevent sociality between the therapist and the client, and therefore disrupt the therapeutic process. Similar to the structured repertory grids (Pollock, 1986), the semi-structured personal construct methods in this research (i.e., ECM, PEG, the ABC model, and diagnostic construct analysis) can alleviate blinkering, facilitate sociality, and promote change in clients. The methods can contribute to a “psychological reconstruction of life” (Kelly, 1955, p. 187), which personal construct psychotherapy strives to achieve.

The Experience Cycle Methodology (ECM), which shows the pathway process of meaning-making (Oades & Viney, 2012), might be used in therapy to understand and facilitate the process of revision of personal constructs in filicidal offenders. The method provides the client with an opportunity to test anticipations, experiment with new constructions, and experience invalidation in an overall therapeutic climate of validation (Winter, 2016). The therapist and client are co-experimenters, and by invalidating

constructions the therapist is not denying their validity but instead encouraging suspension, in Kellyan terms, in which they are held in abeyance when the client explores alternative avenues (Winter, 2016).

Kellyan fixed-role therapy can be amalgamated with the methodology to enable the experimentation process in which the therapist sketches a role for the client which facilitates encountering situations which may validate or invalidate his/her constructions and lead to an altered construct system based on evidence (Winter, 2016). Winter (2016) argued that the client's resistance to therapy must not be construed as obstinacy but that perhaps the role to be enacted is threatening. Resistance is a self-protective process used by most clients who are experiencing a profound invalidation of core role (Walker & Winter, 2005). Resistance provides the therapist with an opportunity to explore the client's core structures and processes (Walker & Winter, 2005) in order to sketch a non-threatening role to be enacted by the client (Walker, 2016). Zarroug (2011) recommended the use of ECM with transgendered people to facilitate their pathway of construing when making a transitional decision to get into a romantic relationship.

Drawing on evidence from Tschudi's (1977) ABC model in this research, the filicidal participants did not have implicative dilemmas that might have prevented them from changing and choosing an alternative construct pole of not killing one's child/children. That is, they did not have perceived advantages of killing one's child/children ('c2') and disadvantages of not killing one's child/children ('c1'). Such dilemmas in construing may elucidate a person's resistance to change (Winter, 2016). However, Hinkle's (1965) laddering could be used in therapy to explore and elicit possible constructs and construct poles that might prevent a shift from the problematic pole of killing ('a1') to the desired pole of not

killing ('a2'). Winter (1988) used laddering to demonstrate the undesired implications of sexual responsiveness which may underlie sexual problems in some clients.

Dilemmas in construing could perhaps have been identified by the use of repertory grids, as in the work of Feixas and Saúl (2005). Such dilemmas could perhaps have been resolved in therapy by the use of Tschudi and Winter's (2012) ABC model. As proposed by Tschudi and Winter (2012), the ABC model could perhaps have been used to reframe the problem in terms of the dilemma, and therefore elaborate the dilemma. This process could perhaps have been facilitated by Feixas and Saúl's (2005) adaptation of empty chair technique in which the chair represents contrasting construct poles of the dilemma. The advantages of the desired pole ('b2') could perhaps have been combined with the advantages of the problematic pole ('c2'). Feixas and Saúl (2005) suggested asking the client to play a fixed role of the resolved dilemma which might enable him/her to integrate incompatible constructions, and therefore elaborate his/her construct system. Furthermore, the client could perhaps have been asked to enact the construct pole of 'b2' while maintaining the construct pole of 'c2'. Constructs in the dilemma could perhaps have been reframed which might have led to an "experiential shift" (Ecker & Hulley, 1996, p. 20) as a result of a permanent change in the constructions of the problem. The client could perhaps have accepted the problematic pole ('a1') which might have led to "reverse resolution" (Ecker & Hulley, 1996, p. 26) in which the problematic pole is not construed as a problem anymore. Moreover, the ABC model could perhaps have been used to facilitate the exploration process in the Kellyan C-P-C Cycle to enable the client to make an elaborative choice (Tschudi & Winter, 2012) as used by Winter (2006) with Paul, which led to him choosing to talk about the parricidal incident.

Kelly (1991) defined a disorder as repeated use of constructions which have been consistently invalidated. This implies that a person with a disorder fails to complete the Experience Cycle which enables the process of experimentation with new constructions to elaborate the construct system based on validational/invalidational evidence (Winter, 2003). A blockage that occurs in the early phases of the Experience Cycle, which as previously discussed comprises the anticipation, investment, encounter, validation/invalidation, and construct revision phase, might result in a severe disorder (Neimeyer, 1985). The failure to test out constructions which Walker (2002) termed non-validation may be considered to be a coping strategy to avoid the risk of possible invalidations which might be anticipated in the completion of the Experience Cycle (Winter, 2003). Therefore, a person with a disorder may be regarded to have an imbalance in his/her use of construing strategies in which he/she only uses one strategy in relation to the contrasting strategy (Winter, 2003), e.g., an exclusive use of constriction versus dilation or tight versus loose construing.

However, in defining a disorder, Kelly (1991) appeared to have failed to consider that the process of validation/invalidation of constructions occurs within an interpersonal context (Walker & Winter, 2005). Construction of disorder from a constructivist and constructionist perspective is embedded in the personal and social meanings people draw on to construe another person's behaviour and construing (Raskin & Lewandowski, 2000; Walker & Winter, 2005). Behaviour that is validated by one group of people might be invalidated by another group depending on the socio-culturally constructed knowledge that shapes the groups' construing. For example, *ukuthwasa*, in which a person presents with schizophrenic-like symptoms as a calling from the ancestors to become a traditional healer, might be construed by most Black South Africans as an ancestral calling and the person might be advised to consult a traditional healer to seek training in comparison to people following a Western

culture (Asmal, Mall, Kritzinger, Chiliza, Emsley, & Swartz, 2011). Therefore, a constructivist or constructionist psychologist will construe the disorder within the historical, socio-cultural, and interactional parameters of the client, which is different to a traditional psychiatric perspective which focuses on the individual in pathologising behaviour (Raskin & Lewandowski, 2000).

Kelly (1991) was highly critical of the traditional psychiatric approach to diagnosis, which he considered to view clients in terms of disease entities and to pigeonhole them into stereotyped diagnostic categories. The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM) (American Psychiatric Association, 2013) is one of the “cookbooks”, as referred to by Kelly (1991, p. 196), which facilitates the pigeonholing of people and medicalising aspects of human experiences (Winter, 2016). The DSM promotes a preemptive construing of a disorder in which the therapist does not consider other possible alternatives (Raskin & Lewandowski, 2000) which leads to the client being preemptively treated (Kelly, 1991; Walker & Winter, 2005). Therefore, Kelly (1991) argued that a disorder should be construed propositionally, that is multidimensionally, to understand the client’s behaviour and behavioural patterns.

A transitive diagnostic approach to diagnosis which focuses on how people transition in life (Kelly, 1955, 1991) might offer an alternative to classifying clients in terms of the diagnosed psychopathology (Winter, 2003). Transitive diagnosis uses diagnostic constructs, which are a system of coordinate axes on which behavioural patterns can be plotted, to gain insight into the construing patterns and processes of clients during the process of transition (Kelly, 1991). Some of the diagnostic constructs were used to understand and formulate the filicidal participants’ predicaments in their intimate/marital relationships. The use of diagnostic constructs to formulate clients’ difficulties, restore balance in the structure and

processes of the construct system, and enhance optimal functioning has been applied in other forensic settings as indicated in Horley (2003). This is illustrated in Winter's (2003) study on police officers' emotional responses to stress which involved hostile provocation and violence, reversal of the core role from law-enforcement to law-breaking, tightened construing, and constriction. The use of constriction was also evident in some filicidal participants who were law enforcement agents who delimited their perceptual field by isolating themselves. Winter (2003) found that personal construct psychotherapy which adopts a credulous approach might be effective in enabling the police officers, who may be construed to have a suspicious nature, to reconstrue.

Personal construct formulation has been used with people with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) who have been found to lack or have few constructions to construe the traumatic situation (Sewell, 1997), which is inconsistent with Sermpezis and Winter's (2009) findings of the over-elaborated constructions of the traumatic event. However, this research found that the constructions of trauma might be initially under-elaborated and later become over-elaborated. Most importantly, this research found that similar to victims/survivors of trauma, perpetrators of extreme violence might also have features of PTSD, as was also found by Winter (2016). Homicidal offenders who were found to show most PTSD symptoms were reactively violent and had overcontrolled and inhibited characteristics (Pollock, 1999), traits which are evident in one-off offenders like the paternal filicidal offenders in this research. Eye movement desensitisation and reprocessing (EMDR), which enables access to and reprocessing of the traumatic memories and intrusive thoughts using eye movement (Shapiro, 2001), might be effective in treating trauma-related psychological symptoms in homicidal offenders (Pollock, 2000). However, the personal construct theory model of post-traumatic

stress suggests that personal construct psychotherapy might also be an effective mode of treatment (Sewell, 1997).

Similar to Kelly's (1961) construing of suicide and Winter's (2003) construing of violence, filicide-homicide followed by suicide in some cases in this research seemed to be the ultimate constrictive act. Most filicidal participants appeared to have narrowed their realities to a manageable size by committing filicide-homicide. This taxonomy of violence may be extended to deliberate self-harmers whose limited view of their future self is associated with chaos, hopelessness, depression, and suicidal ideations, and this resulted in an effective eclectic personal construct psychotherapeutic intervention which also incorporated some techniques from cognitive therapy (Winter et al., 2007).

Although a personal construct approach might offer an alternative to psychiatric diagnosis, which pays little attention to the personal meanings of the client's complaints (Winter, 2016), this does not mean other approaches should be abandoned (Houston, 2003), which would be preemptive as cautioned by Kelly (1991). Adopting an eclectic approach (Winter, 2003) by drawing on traditional psychiatric diagnosis and personal construct theory methods would enhance the understanding of the client's predicaments, and identification of future treatment and rehabilitation needs even though the two systems are likely to have limits of applicability (Houston, 2003). The potential benefits of an eclectic approach were illustrated by Houston (2003) in her work with mentally disordered offenders, who were mostly diagnosed with antisocial and borderline personality disorders. The eclectic approach might enable an understanding of what the offence means to an offender with a particular mental disorder (Houston, 2003). It might enable the construing of fragmentations between the 'current self', 'offending self', and the self the offender might aspire to become (Houston,

2003), in which incompatibilities between the selves might disrupt the process of change in therapy. The eclectic approach might enable the therapist to construe if the offending behaviour is compatible with or dislodged from the offender's construing of his/her sense of self (Houston, 2003). Furthermore, the therapist might be able to construe how the offender's childhood experiences and difficulties in life influenced his/her construal of his/her world and role in it (Houston, 2003).

Personal construct formulation is not limited to a forensic setting but can be extended to a clinical setting. It has been used with people with schizophrenia (Bannister, 1960) in which Bannister (1963) found evidence that the loosened construct system was an outcome of serial invalidation, and developed a therapeutic intervention based on serial validation to reverse this process. Furthermore, personal construct approach has been used with people diagnosed with depression and anxiety disorders (Winter, 1992) and autism (Procter, 2001), and has included work with children (Butler & Green, 2007) and older people (Robbins, 2005). Therefore, it can be argued that personal construct assessments and therapeutic approach can enrich and elaborate aspects of the traditional psychiatric approach to enhance the understanding of disorders and improve and develop treatment intervention.

**4.2.2 Practical implications.** Despite various gender policies which aim to create gender equality by challenging and transforming dominant socio-gendered and cultural constructions which seem to fabricate gender inequality and encourage gender-based violence, domestic violence continues to dominate our society (Ntlama, 2003). Although there are slight changes in the attitudes and behaviours of some men (Ntlama, 2003), the findings from the current research which showed that conventional socio-gendered and cultural constructions might significantly contribute to extreme violence within families

indicates that more work needs to be urgently done to reconstruct dominant socio-cultural constructions. As proposed by Jewkes (2002), perhaps educational television dramas such as *Soul City* in South Africa; promoting men's groups which address issues of women violence by males; and initiating and promoting life-skills programmes in schools on gender-related issues and anger and conflict management skills, might be effective in changing personal and social constructs which might contribute to domestic violence.

Additionally, adopting a credulous approach in which one takes the filicidal offenders' construing of their realities at face value instead of demonising and psychiatrically labelling the offenders might perhaps contribute to the development of interventions to de-escalate filicide-homicide incidents.

Restorative Justice (RJ) aims to rebuild relationships between the offender and his/her victim/s and other people who might be affected by the offence (Braithwaite, 2003) by restoring dignity, addressing negative emotions, and encouraging cooperation (Neimeyer & Tschudi, 2003; Tschudi, 2016). Therefore, programmes such RJ might facilitate the process of the filicidal participants being accepted and reintegrated into society, in which they construct a new role. It might also repair the filicidal participants' relationships with their extended families and the in-laws, while also rebuilding the damaged relationship between the extended families and the in-laws.

Furthermore, sport intervention programmes might help the filicidal participants reconstrue their identities in society, restore their self-esteem, and find people with whom they share similar constructions of the world and who understand their ways of construing. Sport has been found to contribute to the rehabilitation and meaning-making of young

offenders in the UK (Williams, Collingwood, Coles, & Scheemer, 2015) and amputated victims of war in Sierra Leone (Winter, 2016).

### **4.3 Methodological Considerations**

This section discusses the strengths and limitations of this research.

**4.3.1 Strengths.** This research explored the experiences and construing processes of paternal filicidal offenders and their extended families, whose meanings are under-represented in research. Considering the paucity of studies on filicide in developing countries (Adinkrah, 2003) in comparison to developed countries (Bourget & Gagné, 2005; Eriksson et al., 2016), the current research contributes to the knowledge of domestic violence by investigating filicide in the South African context. Furthermore, this research offers valuable insight into violence within families by exploring paternal filicide from the perspective of the offenders and their extended family members. As argued by Nowinski (2004) and Winter (2006), acts which might be construed as destructive may only be understood by examining the construing and constructs of the offenders.

Exploring the family participants' construing of the filicidal participants' construing of their realities before the killing was prominent in enhancing the understanding of how some filicidal fathers make sense of themselves and their worlds. Furthermore, examining the dyadic and triadic interpersonal relationships, in terms used by Procter (2014), of the filicidal participants allowed the researcher to have an awareness of problematic role relationships which might have contributed to the filicide-homicide.

Amalgamating IPA (Smith et al., 2009) and personal construct analytic methods, which are idiographic, enabled the researcher to comprehensively explore each participant's, whether they were an offender or family member, unique understanding of the filicide-homicide. Although Yorke and Dallos (2015) amalgamated IPA and repertory grids in their study on anger in young offenders, the researcher is not aware of other studies which combined the two methodologies to explore extreme violence within families. The construed similarities and differences in the experiences and construing of the filicidal and family participants, respectively, enabled the researcher to gain insight into the complexities involved in paternal filicide. For instance, while filicide might be instigated by intimate/marital relationship problems which are perhaps construed as threatening by the offender, in some instance the filicide might be accidental. The extreme violence might serve various purposes such as eliminating the threat, constriction, extortion of respect and validation evidence, guarding and reasserting a sense of manhood, and an act of impulsivity.

Using triangulated methodologies, i.e., semi-structured interviews, IPA, Perceiver Element Grid (Procter, 2002), ABC model (Tschudi, 1977), Experience Cycle Methodology (Oades & Viney, 2012), and the diagnostic construct analysis enhanced the credibility of the research. Moreover, the methodologies enabled the researcher to have a comprehensive view of the filicidal participants' psychological processes in construing themselves and their partners/wives, anticipating and constructing their intimate/marital relationships and fatherhood, which seemed to influence their approach to issues, hence decision to kill. Additionally, as evident in the current research, one of the advantages of these methods is that they can be used in different cultural settings since they elicit the individual's views in

their own words rather than, for example, imposing the researcher's (often Western) framework as with standard questionnaires.

Selecting a diverse sample, i.e., age, racial, ethnicity, cultural, marital status, occupational, and the nature of the committed filicide-homicide, of the filicidal and family participants improved transferability while challenging the notion of filicide perhaps being committed by a particular group of people.

**4.3.2 Limitations.** This research has some limitations. Firstly, considering that maternal filicide seems to be more rife than paternal filicide (Harris et al., 2007), although some researchers have found paternal filicide as prevalent (Bourget & Gagné, 2002), the researcher was unable to recruit more paternal filicidal participants in South Africa because of various reasons discussed. Since the researcher's anticipations might channelise her psychological processes (Kelly, 1955), during the researcher's service at the Department of Correctional Services (DCS), South Africa, she construed more mothers appearing to be incarcerated for filicide in comparison to fathers. Therefore, the researcher tightly anticipated identifying and recruiting a few paternal filicidal participants, which is what happened hence validated the anticipation. However, the researcher's anticipations and construing might have biased the selection process by perhaps limiting her approach to locate the participants. Furthermore, the selection process was limited to newspapers. The encountered challenge with using police and DCS records was that the types of committed murders were unspecified unlike in Friedman et al.'s (2005) study, hence making it impossible to identify filicide cases.

The sensitivity of the research might have contributed to some potential filicidal participants refusing to participate in the study. Additionally, some filicidal offenders who

were not yet sentenced refused consent out of concern about compromising their cases, especially when applying for an appeal. Therefore, the researcher did not invest effort in locating and seeking consent from other filicidal offenders of this category with the tight anticipation of consent refused based on previous invalidations.

Secondly, the heterogeneity across the filicidal participants' extended families made it impossible to obtain homogeneity as per IPA requirements which resulted in the researcher analysing the experiences of two mothers and sisters, respectively, of the filicidal participants. However, the heterogeneous sample of the family participants did not seem to influence the personal construct analysis, perhaps because of the theory's Individuality, Commonality, and Sociality Corollaries which enable it to accommodate similarities and differences in people's experiences.

Thirdly, the interview occurred a few years after the killing. Therefore, it must be considered that during the elapsed time between the killing and the interviews the filicidal participants might have revised their construct systems, which might have influenced their reconstruing of encountered problems before the filicide-homicide, and hence their construing during the interviews. Moreover, the family participants' construing before the killing might have been different to after the filicide-homicide since they now have an awareness of issues.

Fourthly, although semi-structured interviews provide the participants with an opportunity to freely and openly talk about their experiences, the socio-cultural milieu of the participants must be taken into consideration (Willig, 2013). Therefore, considering the Black African people's culture in South Africa, some filicidal and family participants might not

have shared some sensitive family issues with the researcher because she was a 'stranger' and of a young age.

Finally, the researcher could not conduct a focus group with the filicidal participants because they were incarcerated at different Correctional Centres. A focus group is an interview that occurs with a group of people with the aim of eliciting different views (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). Considering the sensitivity and stigma which might be attached to a father killing his child/children, perhaps the filicidal participants could not talk about some issues during individual interviews which they might have been able to express in a group setting. A focus group might have provided a sense of commonality and sociality in which the filicidal participants might have been with people whom they shared similar views because of their similar filicidal experiences and also understood their ways of construing.

**4.3.3 Critical reflection on the use of IPA and personal construct theory.** Using personal construct theory and IPA was an elaborative choice, in the Kellyan sense. The qualities of IPA and personal construct theory, which have been thoroughly discussed in *Amalgamating IPA and personal construct analysis methods* and throughout the dissertation, enabled a rich and in-depth understanding of the internal processes of fathers who kill. Unlike most traditional research methods, IPA and personal construct methods enabled the researcher to enter and make sense of the filicidal participants' chaotic worlds through their eyes, which most of them appeared to be too desperate to escape or permanently end. Furthermore, the researcher was able to construe the painful lived experience of struggling to construct a moral self after the non-violent self committed what may be construed as a sinful act of filicide-homicide. Therefore, it may be argued that an idiographic and hermeneutic approach in IPA (Reid, Flowers, & Larkin, 2005) amalgamated with a credulous approach

and the notion of sociality of personal construct theory may enhance and elaborate aspects of the methods' potential to address research objectives relating to family killings.

Despite the potential of IPA and personal construct methods to expand the knowledge of domestic violence, some of the shortcomings of the methods may limit our understanding of the phenomenon. IPA has been criticised for becoming a “default option” for most students which is likely to result in a poorly constructed IPA project which is descriptive instead of interpretative (Hefferon & Gil-Rodriguez, 2011, p. 756). Furthermore, it has been argued that although IPA provides a great set of structured procedures and guidance for performing the analysis to fulfil its analytic requirements, these have been experienced to be rather restrictive (Clarke, 2010). Although IPA is effective in giving rich and detailed interpretations of people's lived experiences, it is criticised for being unable to explain the cause of such experiences, and therefore limiting our understanding of the phenomenon under investigation (Willig, 2013).

To counter the identified IPA limitations, the researcher closely followed the steps of the analytic process outlined by Smith et al. (2009). Furthermore, the researcher attempted to achieve the standards of a high-quality IPA project, as identified by Smith (2011), by having constructive discussions with the supervisory team, whose importance in achieving a successful IPA analysis was emphasised by Reid et al. (2005). Kelly's (1955) diagnostic constructs and ECM helped counter the limitation of IPA by enabling an understanding of the occurrence of paternal filicide from the personal construct perspective.

IPA (Reid et al., 2005) and personal construct theory (Walker, 1996) attempt to understand the participant's meanings within the contextual and cultural environment within

which he/she is embodied and encultured. Personal construct theory recognises that a person is socially constructed but once constructed he/she makes personal choices to define and expand his/her construct system (Burr, Butt, & Giliberto, 2016). Therefore, constructs comprising the personal construct system do not exist in isolation but are largely embedded in society (Procter & Parry, 1978) and are a part of relational construct systems associated with culture, groups, family, and other relationships in which the person is playing a role (Procter, 2016). This indicates that personal construct theory can bridge the gap between personal-social polarity (Procter, 2016). However, similar to IPA (Parker, 2005), Walker (1996) argued that personal construct theory has been criticised for being too individualistic and focusing little attention on contextual factors.

Although personal construct theory recognises issues of power (Kelly, 1969), hence its advocacy of an egalitarian psychotherapeutic relationship (Kelly, 1955), Kalekin-Fishman (1995) argued that Kelly (1962) did not recognise power disparities in gender, racial, and socio-economic class relations. Kalekein-Fishman (1995) found personal construct theory to be incapable of combating the misuse of power in society and lobbying for equality at a social level. Similarly, Salmon (1990) construed personal construct theory as inadequate in considering social influence, and therefore advocated for the theory to be elaborated to address issues of inequity, privilege, coercion, and oppression instead of focusing on changing the construct systems of individuals for problems that need to be addressed at a socio-cultural level.

Therefore, the limitation of IPA and personal construct theory in which they are viewed as too individualistic might have limited the research from exploring the effects of contextual factors, such as unemployment, poverty, crime, and deprivation, which are

prevalent in South Africa (Boonzaier, 2005), on abuse and extreme violence within families. For instance, Boonzaier (2005, p.100) and Sedumedi (2009) found that women's changing positions in the socio-economic sector unsettle men's notions of "successful masculinity" by challenging the discourse of male domination and female submission. This is likely to result in some women experiencing abuse in their intimate heterosexual relationships as a result of their partners'/husbands' sense of powerlessness and emasculation (Boonzaier, 2005; Sedumedi, 2009). Women's economic independence seemed to give some women in Sedumedi's (2009) study a sense of power and control over their sexuality in which they expressed their sexual needs and felt entitled to terminate the intimate relationship if their partners did not fulfil those needs. This is contradictory to the objectification of women's bodies in which men were construed as sexually active in relation to the sexually passive women (Boonzaier, 2005). Therefore, some men felt entitled to have multiple sexual partners (Wood & Jewkes, 2001) and commit marital infidelity, which is found to perpetuate woman abuse (sexual and physical) by their partners/husbands (Boonzaier, 2005). Therefore, it is important to realise the power relation in gender and class and its effect on gendered identities and how the shift in power due to socio-economic and cultural transformation impacts on the gendered identities and the construction of and use of violence in intimate heterosexual relationships.

#### **4.4 Recommendations for Future Research**

It is recommended that future research investigate paternal filicide through discursive research methods to enhance the knowledge of domestic violence by accounting for contextual and discursive factors that might contribute to filicide. The dissertation recommends that a radical feminist approach which considers women's oppression to exist in

a society that is influenced by patriarchal beliefs and practices (Kiguwa, 2004) underpins the research. It is recommended that the research amalgamate FDA, which is discussed in section 2.4.6.1.3, and personal construct analytic methods, which might elaborate the understanding of the occurrence of paternal filicide in a patriarchal society.

Other possibilities for future research were considered. An encounter with a paternal filicidal offender who refused consent to participate in the study, who seemed to have made an elaborative choice to kill one of his children while leaving another one unharmed evoked a few questions. Why do some fathers choose to kill one child and not the other, or all of them? How do they choose which child to kill? What are their anticipations of killing one child and not the other? Is there a commonality between fathers who kill only one child and those who kill all their children, that is, are their meanings and construction processes similar or different? Perhaps some of the questions might be explored with the use of the ABC model (Tschudi & Winter, 2012), which would examine why this type of filicidal father chooses to kill one child and not the other one, and investigate the construed positive and negative implications of killing this child and not the other one. Therefore, two separate ABC model interview schedules for the killing/not killing of each child might have to be administered and the data would be analysed and compared. Additionally, a semi-structured interview schedule structured using the Experience Cycle Methodology (Oades & Viney, 2012) would explore the filicidal father's anticipations and investment concerning killing the child and whether those are validated or invalidated by the outcome of filicide.

Another study might explore if there is a distinction or commonality in the construal processes of filicidal fathers in South Africa and those in the United Kingdom, especially since people's interpretations of themselves and surroundings might differ cross-culturally

and across socio-economic contexts (Burr, 2003). However, although the context of individuals predicts their behaviour, it does not dictate their actions (Leitner et al., 1996). Instead, people's behaviour is influenced by their anticipations and constructions of events and the validation or invalidations thereof (Leitner et al., 1996).

#### **4.5 Conclusion**

This research explored paternal filicide from the perspective of personal construct theory. The dissertation argued that discords in intimate/marital relationships might contribute to filicide-homicide. The findings from this research complemented existing literature while offering insight into the construing processes which seemed to contribute to the filicidal and family participants' choices of dealing with relationship problems. The filicidal and family participants' failure to anticipate issues, but instead only anticipating positively, seemed to result in them lacking constructions to address issues. As a result, many filicidal and family participants appeared to delimit their perceptual field to avoid construing problems and to minimise the severity of construed issues.

Escalating problems seemed to induce a sense of threat in most filicidal participants. They appeared to become increasingly frustrated, and their depleted inhibition resulted in them erupting in violence directed towards their partners/wives and also other people, as in Neo's case. The lack of commonality and sociality between the extended family members and the in-laws who participated in the research appeared to prevent them from intervening and de-escalating the filicidal participants' intimate/marital relationship problems.

Amidst accumulating problems, most filicidal participants seemed to slot rattle into violent selves in which they employed violence to extinguish the threat, while some used it to extort respect, especially when they construed their partners/wives not enacting the personal and conventional socio-gendered and cultural roles of femininity in relation to masculinity. A construed threat to masculinity seemed to threaten most filicidal participants' core structures, which resulted in them employing violent and non-violent tactics to preserve their masculinity and avoid invalidations of their manhood constructions

Most filicidal participants also appeared to draw on violence to maintain a sense of power and avoid assuming the submission pole. However, despite their efforts, some filicidal participants' feelings of emasculation seemed to be perpetuated in that they construed themselves losing their roles as men. An impulsive act of extreme violence involving filicide-homicide and attempted suicide in some accounts appeared to be the last resort in a vicious cycle of violence to permanently end anger-provoking problems. While a suicide attempt seemed to be used to instill a sense of control and validation, and reduce anxiety in one case, it was employed to regain a sense of power by invalidating a predicted outcome and introducing the desired design in another account.

Therapeutic approaches such personal construct family therapy and EAP might have prevented the filicide-homicide by helping the filicidal participants make sense of their intimate/marital issues, understood and accepted their partners'/wives' ways of construing, and developed constructions to deal with problems.

The killing appeared to have negative implications on the identities and role relationships of the filicidal offenders with their family members and society, and the role

relationships of some family participants with the families-in-law. As a result, the filicidal participants seemed to construe themselves losing a sense of who they are, how other people construed them, and sociality. Programmes such as RJ and sports might help to re-establish the filicidal participants' identities and find commonality and sociality in society and with their families.

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## Appendices

## Appendix A: Names of Other People

Table 1: Name of people in the research

| Offenders                                     | Joe             | Sly                                 | Neo | John                                       |
|---|-----------------|-------------------------------------|-----|--|
|   | Not Interviewed |                                     |     |  |
|   |                 |                                     |     | Megan – first wife                         |
|   |                 | Gigi – new partner                  |     |  |
| Jabu – son. Died during the killing.          |                 |                                     |     |  |
|   |                 | Tom – son. Died during the killing. |     |  |
|   |                 |                                     |     | Anna – daughter. Died during the killing.  |
|   |                 |                                     |     | John Junior – son. Died during the killing |
|   |                 |                                     |     | Joy – daughter. Died during the killing.   |
| Dan – step-son                                |                 |                                     |     |  |
|   |                 |                                     |     | David – step-son from the first marriage.  |
| Nick – step-son. Died not during the killing. |                 |                                     |     |  |
|   |                 | Lebo – daughter with new partner    |     |  |
| Nomsa – cousin                                |                 |                                     |     |  |

|  |                               |                     |  |                         |
|--|-------------------------------|---------------------|--|-------------------------|
|  | Thato – cousin                |                     |  |                         |
|  | Thabo – cousin                |                     |  |                         |
|  | Zack – cousin                 |                     |  |                         |
|  | Ben – Dan’s biological father |                     |  | Swart – Psychologist    |
|  |                               |                     |  | Eric – former colleague |
|  |                               | Mike – Tumi’s child |  |                         |

## Appendix B: Participant Information Sheet

### Appendix B1: Filicidal Participants



University of Hertfordshire  
Hatfield  
AL10 9AB  
UK  
tel +44 (0)1707 284000  
fax +44 (0)1707 284115  
website: [www.herts.ac.uk](http://www.herts.ac.uk)

#### FORM EC6: PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET FOR THE OFFENDER

##### Title of Research

"I killed my child(ren)": A qualitative study exploring the phenomenon of paternal filicide in the South African context.

##### Introduction

You are being invited to take part in a research study. Before you decide whether to do so, it is important that you understand the research that is being done and what your involvement will include. Please take the time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. Do not hesitate to ask us anything that is not clear or for any further information you would like us to help you make your decision. Please do take your time to decide whether or not you wish to take part. Thank you for reading this.

##### What is the purpose of this study?

The study aims to explore and uncover the reasons that lead fathers to kill their children. The researcher intends to discover the underlying factors that precipitate child homicide by interviewing the offenders (i.e. fathers who killed their child or children), the offenders' family members, and the family members of the perpetrators' wife or intimate partner.

##### Do I have to take part?

It is completely up to you whether or not you decide to take part in this study. If you do decide to take part you will be given this information sheet to keep and be asked to sign a consent form. Agreeing to join the study does not mean that you have to complete it. You are free to withdraw at any stage without giving a reason. A decision to withdraw at any time, or a decision not to take part at all, will not affect the rest of the treatment/care that you receive.

##### How long will my part in the study take?

If you decide to take part in this study, you will be involved in it for only the duration of the one off individual interview. The interview will proceed for about an hour. However, the researcher will request your contact details in case clarity is sought in the future.



University of Hertfordshire  
Hatfield  
AL10 9AB  
UK

tel +44 (0)1707 284000  
fax +44 (0)1707 284115  
website: [www.herts.ac.uk](http://www.herts.ac.uk)

#### **What will happen to me if I take part?**

The first thing to happen will be to organise a convenient meeting time. During our meeting, the researcher will briefly introduce herself and reiterate the purpose of the study to you, and you will be given an opportunity to ask questions regarding the research. Furthermore, the interviewer will briefly discuss the consent form with you and request you to sign it, if you have not already done so. You will be informed that a tape recorder will be used for transcription purposes and the data will be securely stored for a period of five years, and might possibly be used in another study which aims to explore further the findings which were found in the current study. If you agree to partake in the study, you will be requested to engage in a one-on-one interview session which will cover your views about yourself, your relationship with your wife or romantic partner, fatherhood, and the actions you took that resulted in the death of your child or children, and also your perceptions of an ideal family system.

The researcher will ask for your permission to contact your family members because their perceptions of the events are significant in the study. You will be requested to provide the researcher with your family's contact details if you permit her to interview them. I will also contact your wife's or intimate partner's family members. However, you will be guaranteed that the content of our discussion will remain confidential.

#### **What are the possible disadvantages, risks or side effects of taking part?**

Due to the sensitivity of the research, the study can provoke unpleasant emotions such as anger, sadness, guilt, and shame in the participants. However, these emotions will be appropriately contained and managed by the researcher.

#### **What are the possible benefits of taking part?**

Talking about traumatic events is considered by various Psychologists to be therapeutic, and therefore the study may be advantageous to the respondents as it will provide them with a non-judgmental platform to express their feelings and thoughts about what has happened. Furthermore, the interviewees will indirectly benefit from the study as their experiences will contribute to the general knowledge of filicidal crimes, hence, assist in protecting children, as well as combating and preventing similar incidents from occurring in the future.



University of Hertfordshire  
Hatfield  
AL10 9AB  
UK

tel +44 (0)1707 284000  
fax +44 (0)1707 284115  
website: [www.herts.ac.uk](http://www.herts.ac.uk)

#### **How will my taking part in this study be kept confidential?**

The researcher will securely store the gathered data in a lockable steel cupboard, and people except the supervision team will not be permitted access to the material. The interviewer will create a computer password to protect the transcribed data that has been stored in the computer. Pseudonyms (i.e. false names) will be used when reporting the findings obtained in the research. However, confidentiality will not apply if the researcher thinks that you are a danger to yourself or other people. In that case, the interviewer will inform necessary people of the possible risk and request them to assist in managing the situation.

#### **What will happen to the results of the research study?**

The results of the research study will be reported in a dissertation which is required for a PhD degree. Furthermore, the results of the study may be used by the researcher in other relevant studies which intend to explore further the phenomenon of paternal filicide. However, confidentiality and anonymity of the participants will proceed to be respected and guaranteed.

#### **Who has reviewed this study?**

This research has been reviewed by the Ethics Committee at the University of Hertfordshire in the UK.

#### **Who can I contact if I have any questions?**

If you would like further information or would like to discuss any details personally, please contact the secretary at the University of Hertfordshire, Psychology Department on 01707 286322. The secretary will transfer your message to the researcher, and I will contact you regarding your request.



University of Hertfordshire  
Hatfield  
AL10 9AB  
UK

tel +44 (0)1707 284000  
fax +44 (0)1707 284115  
website: [www.herts.ac.uk](http://www.herts.ac.uk)

**Although we hope it is not the case, if you have any complaints or concerns about any aspect of the way you have been approached or treated during the course of this study, please write to the University Secretary and Registrar at the abovementioned address.**

**Thank you very much for reading this information and giving consideration to taking part in this study.**

## Appendix B2: Family Participants



University of Hertfordshire  
Hatfield  
AL10 9AB  
UK

tel +44 (0)1707 284000  
fax +44 (0)1707 284115  
website: [www.herts.ac.uk](http://www.herts.ac.uk)

### FORM EC6: PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET FOR THE OFFENDER'S EXTENDED FAMILY MEMBERS

#### Title of Research

"I killed my child(ren)": A qualitative study exploring the phenomenon of paternal filicide in the South African context.

#### Introduction

You are being invited to take part in a research study. Before you decide whether to do so, it is important that you understand the research that is being done and what your involvement will include. Please take the time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. Do not hesitate to ask us anything that is not clear or for any further information you would like us to help you make your decision. Please do take your time to decide whether or not you wish to take part. Thank you for reading this.

#### What is the purpose of this study?

The study aims to explore and uncover the reasons that lead fathers to kill their children. The researcher intends to discover the underlying factors that precipitate child homicide by interviewing the offenders (i.e. fathers who killed their child or children), the offenders' family members, and the family members of the perpetrators' wife or intimate partner.

#### Do I have to take part?

It is completely up to you whether or not you decide to take part in this study. If you do decide to take part you will be given this information sheet to keep and be asked to sign a consent form. Agreeing to join the study does not mean that you have to complete it. You are free to withdraw at any stage without giving a reason. A decision to withdraw at any time, or a decision not to take part at all, will not affect the rest of the treatment/care that you receive.

#### How long will my part in the study take?

If you decide to take part in this study, you will be involved in it for only the duration of the one off individual interview. The interview will proceed for about an hour. However, the researcher will request your contact details in case clarity is sought in the future.



University of Hertfordshire  
Hatfield  
AL10 9AB  
UK

tel +44 (0)1707 284000  
fax +44 (0)1707 284115  
website: [www.herts.ac.uk](http://www.herts.ac.uk)

### **What will happen to me if I take part?**

The first thing to happen will be to organise a convenient meeting time and venue if the place which the researcher organised is not suitable for you. During our meeting, the researcher will briefly introduce herself and reiterate the purpose of the study to you, and you will be given an opportunity to ask questions regarding the research. Furthermore, the interviewer will briefly discuss the consent form with you and request you to sign it, if you have not already done so. You will be informed that a tape recorder will be used for transcription purposes and the data will be securely stored for a period of five years, and might possibly be used in another study which aims to explore further the findings which were found in the current study. If you agree to take part in the study, I will conduct an interview with you which will focus on your perceptions of the offender's marital or intimate relationship, his relationship with his child or children, and also your views on the offender killing his child or children. The researcher will also explore your views on whether it would have been possible to have intervened to prevent the murder occurring.

The interviewer will also ask you for the contact details of the family members of the offenders' wife or romantic partner because their contribution in the study is important. The researcher will not disclose to them the content of our discussion. Once you have provided the researcher with the contact details, she will telephonically contact them before writing them a letter seeking for their official consent.

### **What are the possible disadvantages, risks or side effects of taking part?**

Due to the sensitivity of the research, the study can provoke unpleasant emotions such as anger, sadness, guilt, and shame in the participants. However, these emotions will be contained and managed by the researcher.

### **What are the possible benefits of taking part?**

Talking about traumatic events is considered by various Psychologists to be therapeutic, and therefore the study may be advantageous to the respondents as it will provide them a non-judgmental platform to express their feelings and thoughts about the painful event. Furthermore, the interviewees will indirectly benefit from the study as their experiences will contribute to the general knowledge of filicidal crimes, hence, assist in protecting children, as well as combating and preventing similar incidents from occurring in the future.



University of Hertfordshire  
Hatfield  
AL10 9AB  
UK

tel +44 (0)1707 284000  
fax +44 (0)1707 284115  
website: [www.herts.ac.uk](http://www.herts.ac.uk)

#### **How will my taking part in this study be kept confidential?**

The researcher will securely store the gathered data in a lockable steel cupboard, and people except the supervision team will not be permitted access to the material. The interviewer will create a computer password to protect the transcribed data that has been stored in the computer. Pseudonyms (i.e. false names) will be used when reporting the findings obtained in the research. However, confidentiality will not apply if the researcher thinks that you are a danger to yourself or other people. In that case, the interviewer will inform necessary people of the possible risk and request them to assist in managing the situation.

#### **What will happen to the results of the research study?**

The results of the research study will be reported in a dissertation which is required for a PhD degree. Furthermore, the results of the study may be used by the researcher in other relevant studies which intend to explore further the phenomenon of paternal filicide. However, confidentiality and anonymity of the participants will proceed to be respected and guaranteed.

#### **Who has reviewed this study?**

This research has been reviewed by the Ethics Committee at the University of Hertfordshire in the UK.

#### **Who can I contact if I have any questions?**

If you would like further information or would like to discuss any details personally, please contact the secretary at the University of Hertfordshire, Psychology Department on 01707 286322. The secretary will transfer your message to the researcher, and I will contact you regarding your request. Alternatively, you can contact me via email on [t.sedumedi-maluleke2@herts.ac.uk](mailto:t.sedumedi-maluleke2@herts.ac.uk).



**University of Hertfordshire**  
Hatfield  
AL10 9AB  
UK

tel +44 (0)1707 284000  
fax +44 (0)1707 284115  
website: [www.herts.ac.uk](http://www.herts.ac.uk)

**Although we hope it is not the case, if you have any complaints or concerns about any aspect of the way you have been approached or treated during the course of this study, please write to the University Secretary and Registrar at the abovementioned address.**

**Thank you very much for reading this information and giving consideration to taking part in this study.**

Appendix C: Consent Forms

Appendix C1: Filicidal Participants



University of Hertfordshire
Hatfield
AL10 9AB
UK
tel +44 (0)1707 284000
fax +44 (0)1707 284115
website: www.herts.ac.uk

UNIVERSITY OF HERTFORDSHIRE
ETHICS COMMITTEE FOR STUDIES INVOLVING THE USE OF HUMAN PARTICIPANTS
('ETHICS COMMITTEE')

FORM EC3
CONSENT FORM FOR STUDIES INVOLVING HUMAN PARTICIPANTS

The material contained in this form may be adapted for use in an alternative consent form, provided the principles of what is contained in the form are retained

I, the undersigned [please give your name here, in BLOCK CAPITALS]

of [please give contact details here, sufficient to enable the investigator to get in touch with you, such as a postal or email address]

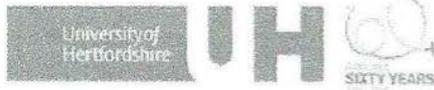
CORRECTIONAL CENTRE

hereby freely agree to take part in the study entitled [insert name of study here]

I KILLED MY CHILD (REN): A QUALITATIVE STUDY
EXPLORING THE PHENOMENON OF PATERNAL
FILICIDE IN THE SOUTH AFRICAN CONTEXT.



A Charity Exempt from Registration under the Second Schedule of the Charities Act 1993



University of Hertfordshire  
Hatfield  
AL10 9AB  
UK

tel +44 (0)1707 284000  
fax +44 (0)1707 284115  
website: www.herts.ac.uk

### FORM EC3 FOR THE OFFENDER

#### CONSENT FORM FOR STUDIES INVOLVING HUMAN PARTICIPANTS

The material contained in this form may be adapted for use in an alternative consent form, provided the principles of what is contained in the form are retained

1. I confirm that I have been given a Participant Information Sheet giving particulars of the study, including its aim(s), methods and design, the names and contact details of key people and, as appropriate, the risks and potential benefits, and any plans for follow-up studies that might involve further approaches to participants. I have been given details of my involvement in the study. I have been told that in the event of any significant change to the aim(s) or design of the study I will be informed, and asked to renew my consent to participate in it.

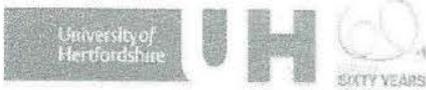
2. I have been assured that I may withdraw from the study at any time without disadvantage or having to give a reason.

3. I have been given information about the risks of experiencing an emotional distress during or after the interviews. I have been told about the aftercare and support that will be offered to me in the event of this happening, and I have been assured that all such aftercare or support would be provided at no cost to myself.

4. I have been told how information relating to me (data obtained in the course of the study, and data provided by me about myself) will be handled: how it will be kept secure, who will have access to it, and how it will or may be used.



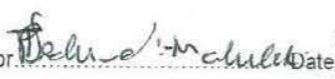
A Charity Exempt from Registration under the  
Second Schedule of the Charities Act 1953



University of Hertfordshire  
Hatfield  
AL10 9AB  
UK  
tel +44 (0)1707 284000  
fax +44 (0)1707 284115  
website: www.herts.ac.uk

5. I have been told that I may at some time in the future be contacted again in connection with this or another study.

Signature of participant:  ..... Date: 

Signature of principal investigator:  ..... Date: 

Name of principal investigator [in BLOCK CAPITALS please]  
TUMISANG PRECIOUS SEDUMEDI-MALULEKE



A Charity Exempt from Registration under the  
Second Schedule of the Charities Act 1953

Appendix C2: Family Participants



University of Hertfordshire
Hatfield
AL10 9AB
UK
tel +44 (0)1707 284000
fax +44 (0)1707 284116
website: www.herts.ac.uk

UNIVERSITY OF HERTFORDSHIRE
ETHICS COMMITTEE FOR STUDIES INVOLVING THE USE OF HUMAN PARTICIPANTS
('ETHICS COMMITTEE')

FORM EC3
CONSENT FORM FOR STUDIES INVOLVING HUMAN PARTICIPANTS

The material contained in this form may be adapted for use in an alternative consent form, provided the principles of what is contained in the form are retained

I, the undersigned [please give your name here, in BLOCK CAPITALS]

[Signature line]
of [please give contact details here, sufficient to enable the investigator to get in touch with you, such as a postal or email address]

hereby freely agree to take part in the study entitled [insert name of study here]

I KILLED MY CHILD(REN) A QUALITATIVE STUDY
EXPLORING THE PHENOMENON OF PATERNAL FILIIDE
IN THE SOUTH AFRICAN CONTEXT



A Charity Exempt from Registration under the
second schedule of the Companies Act 1985



University of Hertfordshire  
Hatfield  
AL10 9AB  
UK

tel +44 (0)1707 294000  
fax +44 (0)1707 284115  
website: www.herts.ac.uk

### FORM EC3 FOR THE OFFENDERS' FAMILY MEMBERS

#### CONSENT FORM FOR STUDIES INVOLVING HUMAN PARTICIPANTS

The material contained in this form may be adapted for use in an alternative consent form, provided the principles of what is contained in the form are retained

1. I confirm that I have been given a Participant Information Sheet giving particulars of the study, including its aim(s), methods and design, the names and contact details of key people and, as appropriate, the risks and potential benefits, and any plans for follow-up studies that might involve further approaches to participants. I have been given details of my involvement in the study. I have been told that in the event of any significant change to the aim(s) or design of the study I will be informed, and asked to renew my consent to participate in it.

2. I have been assured that I may withdraw from the study at any time without disadvantage or having to give a reason.

3. I have been given information about the risks of experiencing an emotional distress during or after the interviews. I have been told about the aftercare and support that will be offered to me in the event of this happening, and I have been assured that all such aftercare or support would be provided at no cost to myself.

4. I have been told how information relating to me (data obtained in the course of the study, and data provided by me about myself) will be handled: how it will be kept secure, who will have access to it, and how it will or may be used.



A Quality Exempt from Registration under the  
Sixth Schedule of the Charities Act 1993



University of Hertfordshire  
Hatfield  
AL10 9AB  
UK

tel +44 (0)1707 284000  
fax +44 (0)1707 284115  
website: www.herts.ac.uk

5. I have been told that I may at some time in the future be contacted again in connection with this or another study.

Signature of participant: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of principal investigator: *Tumiso Maluleke* Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of principal investigator [in BLOCK CAPITALS please]

TUMISANG PRECIOUS SEDUMEDI-MALULEKE



It is hereby exempt from registration under the  
Financial Services and Markets Act 2000

**Appendix D: Transcription Notation Symbols**

| <b>SYMBOLS</b> | <b>SIGNIFICANCE</b>   |
|----------------|---|
| -              | Indicates a short untimed pause within an utterance.  |
| <u>Word</u>    | Underlining of a word indicates emphasis of the word.   |
| WORD           | Upper cased word indicates that it was articulated louder than other words in the same utterance. |
| hhh            | Inhalation  |
| ((act))        | Indicates an act that occurred during articulation of an utterance, e.g., laughing, crying etc.   |
| >word<         | An utterance articulated at a quicker pace.   |
| ( )            | Inaudible word or phrase within an utterance.   |
| (word)         | Soft tone of voice.   |
| (word)         | Not clearly audible word.   |
| .....          | Indicates an incomplete sentence.   |

**Appendix E: Transcripts Extracts****Appendix E1: Filicidal Participants****Joe****Semi-structured interview.**

1 **Interviewer:** Your grandmother, Norah?

2 **Joe:** Yes, and she asked “WHAT IS HAPPENING?” you see. So my wife replied ... she was  
3 talking loud because she was angry. She said “YOU DON’T KNOW WHAT IS  
4 HAPPENING, YOU DON’T KNOW WHAT IS HAPPENING”, you see. So I told her that  
5 she must not involve my grandmother and disrespect her when we are disagreeing about  
6 something – that is what I told her. I told her that she must confront me if she maybe has a  
7 problem and talk to me decently, but that she must not disrespect me and then don’t shout at  
8 me – in the middle of people as if we are the same age. So she said “what will you do to me?”  
9 She was saying things like that with her voice still loud. We fought again and they tried to  
10 stop us, you see. So right there – I decided that this thing is getting worse and then I went to  
11 the bedroom, you see. I went to the bedroom and then I looked for the car keys so that I can  
12 go. I did not find them. She was still busy swearing. So I ended up talking to her ... giving  
13 her a warning. I told her to stop talking about this matter and to stop talking to me. But she  
14 still continued shouting and raising her voice. I warned her again and told her that I am  
15 speaking for the last time – please don’t make me lose control and make a decision which I  
16 will regret maybe for the rest of my life, or making a bad decision. So she continued to  
17 provoke me saying that I must hit her, things like that. She said “hit me so that I can get you  
18 arrested.” So right there ... she did not see it ..... I took out my gun. They just saw me taking  
19 out my gun and then I shot her. I immediately left ... I was aware that she was dead after I  
20 shot her, you see. So I had this thought that, this thing has happened, it is above my powers. I  
21 realised that obviously this thing has happened, I don’t have another alternative, besides the  
22 one of coming to prison. So I just told myself that I am not going to prison. After I shot her, I  
23 decided to ... because our daughter attends crèche which is not far away from our place ... I  
24 went to crèche in a bad state ... I was crying ... I took her from crèche and returned to the  
25 house. So when I returned home I closed the burglar door. I left my son in the house because  
26 he was young, he was there when all of this was happening. Then I shut the burglar and took  
27 a book and wrote all my problems ... what is happening ... what happened, and also maybe  
28 that I – feel I cannot cope with this issue.

29 **Interviewer:** What year was this?

30 **Joe:** It was on the [REDACTED]. It was on Friday around 8 o’clock or half past seven  
31 or so. I even took leave from work on that day and thought that my family and I will go on an  
32 outing. But it did not happen like that, but instead this incident happened. So I wrote the  
33 suicide letter and asked my family and also close family friends to forgive me because I am  
34 really ANNOYED by this situation, so the best way was to end it.

35 **Interviewer:** What else do you think you could have done when you realised that the  
36 situation was getting out of control rather than taking out your gun?

37 **Joe:** Eish, you know to be honest – I saw that all my efforts were unsuccessful. So I did not  
38 have hope anymore, especially after – the way things went in the morning. I thought to  
39 myself that whatever I have tried to do was unsuccessful. It seemed to me that I was always  
40 blamed ... I was too tired. So that is when I did that. Well, I know what I did was wrong, it  
41 was not the right thing to do, you see.

42 **Interviewer:** What made you decide to also kill the children sir?

1 **Joe:** What got to me was my realisation that the mother of my children was dead. So I  
2 thought maybe – that they were still young, so there was no option. I thought there was no  
3 option ..... because I thought – if maybe I spare their lives and mine, I am still going to be  
4 imprisoned and they will still not have parents. So according to me ... maybe under the  
5 influence of SATAN was that the other option ... these children were going to suffer, so I  
6 decided to kill them and myself, and that was my solution. So that is why I am saying that it  
7 was not the right decision – and also it was wrong of me to kill my wife.  
8

### Perceiver Element Grid.

9 **Interviewer:** I am just going to ask you a couple of questions sir. Some of the questions will  
10 be slightly repetitive to the ones I asked earlier. What did you think of yourself before the  
11 crime?

12 **Joe:** Well, before the crime, my community ..... I saw myself and also other people – that  
13 had an understanding of me, they said that they could see that I was going to be successful or  
14 that I have progressed in life. So I also saw that my future was bright – and my family's  
15 future was also bright, before maybe the incident.

16 **Interviewer:** Now, how do you see yourself?

17 **Joe:** Since I am already here, I could say that I am in a process of change. But I believe that I  
18 am not in prison. I am just undergoing a process of transition so that they could change me  
19 into a better person someday. I think that even though I am in prison obviously others will  
20 say that I am a killer or what, but – I know that even if I can be in prison but my heart is  
21 outside.

22 **Interviewer:** When you say that you are in a process of transition to become a better person,  
23 what do you mean?

24 **Joe:** That I should not repeat mistakes such as this, ESPECIALLY the situation that got me  
25 in prison.

26 **Interviewer:** It sounds as if you see yourself as a hopeful person. You believe that you will  
27 one day be released from prison a much better person than you were before being sentenced.

28 **Joe:** YES. You see I believe that someday the time will arrive when – GOD will help me to  
29 be mentally mature because I think that age is also important. He will help me to be mature.  
30 Maybe He will bring me a person who will love me and I also love. At the end there will  
31 maybe be a history between us – like we were there and now we are here, then we can count  
32 our blessings from God. So I still believe that even if I did something that affected a lot of  
33 people and killed my family, but I don't think that I can tell myself that my life is finished. I  
34 cannot tell myself that it is over. Life still has to continue. I cannot dwell on the past because  
35 what is done is done. So I cannot keep on punishing myself by thinking that I have failed in  
36 life.

37 **Interviewer:** I understand what you are saying. How else did you also see yourself before the  
38 incident?

39 **Joe:** Umm – I could say that I was a person who had goals and I always told myself that if I  
40 want to bring change in my workplace or community, I DID IT. There were people in my  
41 community who told me that they consider me to be their role model or hero. So I could say  
42 that I was a positive light to people.

43 **Interviewer:** Ok. How did you see your family? For instance, if somebody said that you  
44 must describe your family before the incident, what would you say?

45 **Joe:** Uh, I am going to say what a lot of people said. THEY – before the incident ..... People  
46 could see ..... and you could also see that these people have an understanding. It is people  
47 who are in love. It is a happy family. Sometimes when I was busy in the garden, you would  
48 find that I would go with my wife to drop off garden waste and we would come back playing

1 and I would push her on the wheelbarrow. Some people in our area always said “you guys  
2 like playing as if you are children.” So I could say that – there was that kind of happiness  
3 inside of me.

4 **Interviewer:** Imagine this incident happened and nobody died, how would you see your wife  
5 and kids?

6 **Joe:** Well, you see even now – I sometimes have this thought of what happened. I end up  
7 asking myself – eish did I commit this thing? How did it happen? How did the situation  
8 become so sour that it got to this point? I think I would try to make sure that this thing does  
9 not happen again. Obviously, they would be somehow towards me. I would try to get their  
10 trust in me back. I would try to show them that I will not hurt them again.

11 **Interviewer:** How do you think your family saw you when they were still alive?

12 **Joe:** Before the incident?

13 **Interviewer:** Yes.

14 **Joe:** YES, THEY BELIEVED IN ME A LOT. They also had faith that I would try my best to  
15 attend to all their concerns and do anything that I am capable of doing. So I think that they  
16 believed in me a lot.

17 **Interviewer:** Imagine that they would awake from death, how do you think they would see  
18 you now?

19 **Joe:** The truth is that, even if I don’t know what is happening where they are now, I think  
20 they know that maybe – I was a man of his word. That is, I did not make promises which I  
21 did not deliver. I think I always tried to gain their trust in me.

22 **Interviewer:** So you don’t think that they would see you different, but instead they would  
23 still see you as a true man who did his best to make them happy?

24 **Joe:** Yes.

25 **Interviewer:** How do you see your extended family?

26 **Joe:** Well, I always say that I am grateful to God because after I put them in this situation  
27 which also AFFECTED THEM .... It did not just affect me or my wife’s family, it also  
28 affected them, but that is why I am grateful to God because even after this situation they are  
29 still supportive of me, which is what I need the most.

30 **Interviewer:** Say that somebody who does not know you asked them what kind of person  
31 you are what do you think they would say?

32 **Joe:** Yes, I could say that they believe in me and they can also see that I am a person – who  
33 does not give up easily. I try by all means to make the best of my life. Even in here, I am still  
34 a busy person, I am not idle. I have been doing everything possible to try and – and come out  
35 a better person so that I can change the community or – my country.

36 **Interviewer:** What are you doing sir?

37 **Joe:** I am studying electrical engineering which is offered at the Correctional Centre and also  
38 rehabilitation programmes. I try by all means to participate in such programmes.

39 **Interviewer:** Which programmes have you participated in?

40 **Joe:** I have done Restorative Justice. It teaches you about – the crime that you committed and  
41 the impact it has on the victims. It teaches you how you can make peace with them. I have  
42 also done – Anger Management.

43 **Interviewer:** In your mind sir, what kind of a family did you want to have when you started  
44 having a family?

45 **Joe:** The way I had big hopes for my family, I thought that we could be a family ..... That we  
46 could be a good example to people and also that we could be a family which when people  
47 look at us they find hope.

48 **Interviewer:** Thank you sir.

49 **Joe:** Ok.

50

**ABC model.**

1 **Interviewer:** Ok, this is the last set of questions. I want you to choose between the two  
2 options which one you prefer. Your decision to kill your children and not deciding to kill  
3 your children, which one do you prefer?

4 **Joe:** It is not killing my children.

5 **Interviewer:** What are the disadvantages of killing your children?

6 **Joe:** ((Silence)) You get on the wrong side of the law. You also do wrong in front of God  
7 because He does not want that thing, total.

8 **Interviewer:** What are the advantages of not killing your children?

9 **Joe:** Well, I could say that by not killing your children you get hope that you still have  
10 responsibilities which you have to fulfil which in turn motivates you. You have hope that  
11 things will get better and that you will be a better person once again. So I could say that – you  
12 have hope for the future. Your children make you want to know who are and where you are  
13 going in life.

14 **Interviewer:** What are the advantages of killing your children?

15 **Joe:** No, there is nothing good that you gain, only sadness. There is nothing good that you  
16 will benefit or achieve, no. You only bring sadness into your life. Even now EISH this thing  
17 is very painful because I sometimes think about their dates of births. I count that this one  
18 would be this age and this one would be this age. So you will never be fine after you kill  
19 them. This thing will always follow you. It is not a good thing. It is a permanent LOSS  
20 because it always follows you. Children who are the same age as your children remind you of  
21 them. When you see them going to school, you think I could be taking mine to school too.  
22 Seeing other children reminds you of what you did. It is something that will haunt you  
23 forever. It is very painful. It is not a good decision at all. It is not a good thing to do.

24 **Interviewer:** What are the disadvantages of not killing your children?

25 **Joe:** No, there are no disadvantages to not killing your children. There is nothing that you  
26 lose. I can just give a short answer to that one. There is nothing that you will be losing.

27 **Interviewer:** In closing, do you have anything that you want to add based on your  
28 experience?

29 **Joe:** Yes, people who know about my case judge and discriminate against me. It is painful  
30 because – STILL I have not healed inside. I am not a kind of a person who easily becomes  
31 angry but other people and also some inmates who know something about my case say  
32 offensive things. I just tell myself that EISH these people want to get me in trouble so I keep  
33 away from them.

34 **Interviewer:** What kind of things do they say, sir?

35 **Joe:** “What kind of a father are you that kills his children and wife?” It really hurts me. Even  
36 though I committed this thing but there was something for just that time that led me to think  
37 that way. It is not something that I planned to do. I am not sure maybe there could be a way  
38 that they are educated so that they don’t say these things.

39 **Interviewer:** So what you are saying is that you want fathers and people in general to be  
40 educated on how the offenders of this crime should be treated?

41 **Joe:** Yes. Being here means I have a problem that needs to be CORRECTED. Even before  
42 the incident happened, I felt that I was in prison but where I am not locked up, an emotional  
43 prison. I appeared to be happy but deep down my soul was not right, my heart was breaking.  
44 That is what led to the situation being like a bomb which exploded. That is how I felt before  
45 the INCIDENT. I know I did something wrong and that is why I am here but I don’t need  
46 people saying offensive things to me. So I think that maybe if things like that are tackled I  
47 think that things would be better for people like me.

Neo

**Semi-structured interview.**

- 1 **Interviewer:** Would you say that you started becoming ..... you started abusing it?  
2 **Neo:** Yes. I think that I was abusing it – up to so far.  
3 **Interviewer:** Yes sir.  
4 **Neo:** I was abusing it just because when I was just sitting, I thought about everything that  
5 was happening – uh I saw that the best thing was to drink, you see. So this means that most of  
6 the time, the time that I was able to spend – at home, I limited it. I was not able to spend a lot  
7 of time at home because I had a lot of different thoughts WHEN I sometimes looked at her,  
8 you see. So I realised that the BEST thing was to leave. Because I felt THAT even when it  
9 was the weekend – although I was there and she was also there, I did not stay at home.  
10 **Interviewer:** When you say that you had a lot of different thoughts, what kind of thoughts  
11 are you talking about sir?  
12 **Neo:** I had thoughts that sometimes I should just go and leave the house – you see. Uh – I  
13 thought of things like divorcing, you see. Those are some of the things which came to my  
14 mind – you see. But when I thought about divorcing – I also thought about the issue  
15 concerning the children, that the children ..... that is, they will grow up having a problem  
16 that “my mother and father have separated.” You see.  
17 **Interviewer:** Does that mean that you were still hopeful? Can you please elaborate on that  
18 statement because I don’t quite understand it sir?  
19 **Neo:** UH, you know what I can tell you is that I was still positive – uh about our marriage. I  
20 TOLD MYSELF that – all of these things will end in the future. Everything will return back  
21 to normal, THE WAY it was before. Well I had that hope, I had it – uh even though I was not  
22 a person who was ..... it was ..... communication breakdown. But I had that mind that one  
23 of the good days everything will return back to normal and become right, but I saw it  
24 becoming worse. But I did not lose hope – one of the good days, things will return to normal,  
25 it will be fine, you see.  
26 **Interviewer:** Where did this hope come from sir? Like what was giving you hope?  
27 **Neo:** What was giving me hope was that I could ALWAYS achieve whatever I wanted to do,  
28 you see. I was able to achieve whatever I wanted to do. So I never failed at anything that I  
29 wanted to do – that is why I had that hope, you see just because when I remember ((deep  
30 breath)) it was at work, everything that I did became positive for me. There was nothing that  
31 maybe I ..... you see. So that is why I had that hope that one of the good days – maybe it will  
32 be right, you see. But unfortunately – I was ..... that is, I was hoping but I had something  
33 inside which was not right, which could not become fine.  
34 **Interviewer:** What reduced your hope sir?  
35 **Neo:** My hope was reduced by the issue that ..... you find that now most of the time – that  
36 is, a week does not EVEN pass without us fighting in the house. That is where my hope  
37 started to slowly, slowly finish. Uh – other things happened and I asked myself why are these  
38 things happening? So I saw that EISH, no here ..... things are no longer right here.  
39 **Interviewer:** Your thing is your thing.  
40 **Neo:** Yes, that is, like I was possessive you see – whereby I felt ..... that is why I am saying  
41 that I concluded things. I felt that – there is no way that – if I say that this person is my wife,  
42 she is my wife full stop. There is no way that – there will be another person who will be  
43 involved you see. So I ended up having a mind that ..... the way I saw things happening –  
44 and the way there were fights in the house without happiness, and the way she treated me –  
45 not treating me like her husband anymore. I felt that no, this woman there is something which  
46 she is busy with WHICH up to so far ..... it means that she has decided that with regard to me

1 ..... she is no longer interested in me, you see. So (*I*) I slowly and slowly developing anger  
 2 you see. So – whereby a slight thing which she did, I compared it to other things that  
 3 happened in the past, you see. Uh, IF I TOLD YOU the situation that occurred uh – there was  
 4 ..... we had ..... before the incident happened ..... we were – not sleeping together for about  
 5 two weeks before this incident happened. So – I am sure I can say – the day before - yes we  
 6 argued the day before, you see. And we argued about something which is useless, not  
 7 important, which needed ..... it did not even need an argument as such, but just because  
 8 ..... I felt that we were holding grudges against each other – it became a very serious  
 9 argument, very serious you see. Well, it ended like that, that is the way we interact with each  
 10 other – one goes there and the other goes there, you see. Uh, I drank a lot of beers – the  
 11 following day from the morning UNTIL the incident happened.

12 **Interviewer:** I want to know, since you mentioned something very powerful concerning your  
 13 feelings of possessiveness, did you feel that you were losing something that you thought  
 14 belonged to you?

15 **Neo:** YES, IT IS LIKE THAT. I felt like my wife was slipping through my fingers. That is, I  
 16 don't know THE WAY ..... another person could take it like that and say “you did this thing  
 17 because you did not love her.” You see, they could say that, but it is not like that. I loved her  
 18 – a lot, a lot more than the word. So – eish I felt ..... I felt somehow. Why should this  
 19 situation lead me to this?

20 **Interviewer:** Lead you to what sir?

21 **Neo:** That is, THE WAY ..... the way everything was messed up, the relationship having a  
 22 problem inside, you see.

23 **Interviewer:** What did you want to achieve that night sir? What did you tell yourself that you  
 24 will achieve by doing what you did?

25 **Neo:** No, you know it ..... the way that I could say it attacked me, you see, I cannot say what  
 26 I wanted to achieve. But in the process of this thing happening, I concluded that – ah, it is  
 27 better if there is nobody in the family. That is what I ended up doing, you see. Uh,  
 28 unfortunately ..... or let me say fortunately – God did not want that to happen the way it was  
 29 supposed to happen, you see. He did not want ..... maybe if it happened like that I am sure,  
 30 sure that – maybe there was not going to be anybody who is alive, including me, myself. So –  
 31 that is, it was something that – that happened in a short period of time. It, it ..... that is, it  
 32 attacked me FAST that – after, when I was sitting down, that is when I saw what I did. That  
 33 ah – why did I do such a thing? You see.

34

### Perceiver Element Grid.

35 **Interviewer:** This is the second set of questions that I told you about. Some of the questions  
 36 will be repetitive to the first interview.

37 **Neo:** Ok.

38 **Interviewer:** What kind of a person did you think you were before the killing?

39 **Neo:** Before the killing I saw myself as a person who is right. I was living normally and I  
 40 respected other people. I was a LAW-ABIDING CITIZEN that is why I chose to do work  
 41 that is – against people who are – against the law.

42 **Interviewer:** Ok. How did you see yourself after the killing?

43 **Neo:** After the killing I saw myself as a person who – failed his family – and the people who  
 44 trusted me, people who know me. Eish! I failed a lot of people who had faith in me. I failed  
 45 them. But STILL I am a person who wants to recover in life – and return to the normal life I  
 46 once lived.

47 **Interviewer:** How did you see your family before the killing?

1 **Neo:** Before the killing my family was happy. We were not struggling in life. We could  
2 afford whatever we wanted. We were normal like any other family.

3 **Interviewer:** If your family, wife and child, were alive how would you see them?

4 **Neo:** I think they would be very surprised by this thing – because we did not have a lot of  
5 problems which you could think would end like this. So I think they would be surprised  
6 because I also took care of them, you see. I treated them well. My wife did not die when I  
7 shot her, she just died recently. She always asked me “why did you shoot us?”, when she  
8 visited me here. You see, she was still surprised.

9 **Interviewer:** How do you see your child now?

10 **Neo:** Uh, right now I think that she has lost trust in me. Uh – WHY DO I SAY trust is  
11 because the way she knew that “my father protects me”. She is not sure if I am still protecting  
12 her because I hurt her – in life. So I think the way ..... MAYBE IN THE FUTURE when she  
13 grows up she will test me to see if I AM STILL that father from before who did everything  
14 that she wanted. I don’t think she will come to me when she has a problem.

15 **Interviewer:** How do you think your relationship with her will be like?

16 **Neo:** I DOUBT that – it will be close because – OBVIOUSLY they are BUSY telling her the  
17 way I am not good, the way I am disadvantaging her. So she is going to grow up with the  
18 mind that “eish my father is disappointing. He is disadvantaging me – because he did this and  
19 that, and if it was not because of him, ah I would be living this kind of life.” So she will  
20 always have a problem of trust – (*in me*).

21 **Interviewer:** How do you think your wife and children saw you before the killing?

22 **Neo:** They saw me as a provider. I am a person who protects them. I am a person who does  
23 EVERYTHING that they need, which – uh – they are sure, sure that I can do for them as a  
24 responsible father, yes.

25 **Interviewer:** How do you see your extended family?

26 **Neo:** My family saw me as a person who is going somewhere in life. They knew that I am an  
27 achiever and thought that I would be someone big in life. They only thought good things  
28 about me. I don’t think they thought I would be in here. Right now – uh – I could say that  
29 they see me as a person who is ..... somewhere somehow I lacked their support, you see.  
30 Uh, BUT not leaving the fact that – I was the person who did not tell them my problems. If I  
31 told them my problems, I think that they would have gave me support and advice to avoid  
32 this situation. So right now I feel they don’t want anything to do with me. I think they are  
33 thinking that since I did not involve them in my problems at the beginning, I should not  
34 involve them now. So they are keeping away from me. They have never visited me here.

35 **Interviewer:** Yes, I understand. What kind of a family did you wish to have?

36 **Neo:** Uh, I wished for a family that had LOVE, understanding, and patience. That is a family  
37 that (*I wished for*). I STILL wish for the SAME – kind of family. It must not have quarrels,  
38 unnecessary arguments, unnecessary CONFLICT. Yes, it must have COMMUNICATION  
39 which is very important. We lost that – in a big way and it is what (*made things be the way*  
40 *they are*).

41

### ABC model.

42 **Interviewer:** Ok, this is the last set of questions.

43 **Neo:** Yes.

44 **Interviewer:** Please try to concentrate because the questions might be a bit confusing.

45 **Neo:** Yes.

46 **Interviewer:** What do you prefer between killing your children and not killing your children?

- 1 **Neo:** I prefer not to kill my children because killing them at the end of the day separated me  
2 from them. I should have consulted relevant people who would have assisted me with my  
3 problems.
- 4 **Interviewer:** Ok. What do you think are the disadvantages of killing your children?
- 5 **Neo:** The disadvantages of killing your children – is the issue that you lose your family. You  
6 lose support – from your extended family. Some of them cannot accept this crime so when I  
7 come out they are going to look at me with an eye that is not right, “why did this person  
8 commit a thing like this? He should not have done something like this.” Uh – your life ((deep  
9 breath)) becomes disturbed. You lose a lot of things in life which – maybe you could have  
10 achieved. You end up being in prison. You end up staying with people who – you would have  
11 never in your life lived with. Uh, you start to see life – as difficult – for you.
- 12 **Interviewer:** What do you mean sir, you start to see life as difficult for you?
- 13 **Neo:** Living with inmates, being an inmate, the way the officials treat you, and being in this  
14 place, it ends up having an effect on your life.
- 15 **Interviewer:** Can you please explain further your statement that you see your life as being  
16 disturbed, or that one of the disadvantages is that your life becomes disturbed. What do you  
17 mean?
- 18 **Neo:** Uh – when I say disturbed, I mean – uh I right now I cannot – do anything that I want to  
19 do at my own time. I don’t have movement. There are a lot of things which I wish that I  
20 could do BUT JUST BECAUSE of my movement, I cannot do them. Uh, it ALSO BECAME  
21 DISTURBED by the fact that – I cannot LIVE A NORMAL LIFE – because I don’t think  
22 that living behind bars is living a normal life. That is how I see this situation. That is why I  
23 am saying that my life is disturbed. Uh, sometimes I think things are not – going to work out.  
24 So obviously life becomes disturbed in such a way.
- 25 **Interviewer:** What do you think are the advantages of not killing your children?
- 26 **Neo:** The advantage is that you live a normal life, first of all. Uh, you can do anything that  
27 you want at your own time. Uh, you can see that life ..... You can achieve in life. Yes.
- 28 **Interviewer:** What are the advantages of killing your children?
- 29 **Neo:** The disadvantages?
- 30 **Interviewer:** The advantages. I asked you the advantages of not committing it and now the  
31 advantages of committing it.
- 32 **Neo:** Yes. Uh up to so far – the advantage ..... that is what, what, what do they do to you?
- 33 **Interviewer:** What do you gain by killing your children?
- 34 **Neo:** What do you gain? UH, up to so far – I mean when I look at it, I cannot say there is  
35 something that you gain. Uh, you don’t gain anything. The only thing that you gain is the  
36 DISADVANTAGES. I cannot say that you GAIN something by being in prison. You don’t  
37 gain anything – because your life is being wasted.
- 38 **Interviewer:** What are the disadvantages of not killing your children?
- 39 **Neo:** The disadvantages of not killing your children?
- 40 **Interviewer:** Yes, what do you lose by not killing your children?
- 41 **Neo:** ((Silence)) NO (laughing)) I don’t think that you lose anything ((laughing)). You don’t  
42 lose anything by not killing your children – because I think that it is not normal to kill them.  
43 What would this country be if we gain something by committing this kind of crime  
44 ((smiling))? It is not normal. If I SAY that we gain something, it means that we are not  
45 normal. You will not like something like this if you are normal. EVEN ME, IF IT  
46 HAPPENED to somebody else because I once dealt with such crimes, I always became  
47 heartbroken because I saw it as ABNORMAL.
- 48 **Interviewer:** Yes, I understand you sir.
- 49 **Neo:** Yes.
- 50 **Interviewer:** Just in closing, what would you like people to know about this kind of crime?

1 **Neo:** Uh, the disadvantage of it or the .....

2 **Interviewer:** Just in general, your general comments on this crime sir.

3 **Neo:** Ok. According to me, IF – you have a problem which could lead to this crime, if you  
4 see signs that will end up leading you to do this, consult. Uh, the most important thing is  
5 consultation. THAT IS WHAT I SEE and it is what I SAW was a serious problem with me.  
6 Consult either your family or professionals so that they can guide you. That is what I saw –  
7 just because it is what leads to ..... AND then another one which I realised is that you must  
8 not conclude. You must not conclude things to be like this and that just because you see them  
9 in a certain way. Always ask – WHY is the situation like this? What is it? Aim to understand  
10 it. Don't conclude without understanding the situation.

11 **Interviewer:** Yes.

12 **Neo:** Yes, BECAUSE IMMEDIATELY when you conclude – that is when you have a  
13 problem because you are going to end up saying that it is like that – whereas it is not like that.

14 **Interviewer:** Yes.

15 **Neo:** Another thing which I realised is that IF you FEEL that – your problems are not being  
16 solved, it is better if one takes her road and you take your road, and then – you will  
17 communicate over the issue of the children. The problem must end because you will start  
18 acting in a way that is wrong because you are TELLING YOURSELF that you are RIGHT.

19

**John**

**Semi-structured interview.**

20 **Interviewer:** You were not a non-confrontational person?

21 **John:** YES. I did everything to make Lucy absolutely happy. I am like that. I just wanted to  
22 give love. But Lucy made a crisis of something. She made a BIG thing of a small thing,  
23 which led to – conflict. In later years when she wanted to fight with me, I walked away or  
24 ignored her, she then took out her frustrations on Anna. After Joy was born, she took out her  
25 frustrations on John Junior.

26 **Interviewer:** Ok.

27 **John:** So she was fighting with Anna and John Junior. But when John Junior was born, he  
28 was everything to her. When Joy was born, she became everything to her. But Anna did not  
29 matter to her. ((Deep breath)) When she was questioned in Court on why she abused Anna.  
30 She said “I did not carry her for nine months – that is why.” ((Crying)) It hurts me – because  
31 I know what went on in the house. I was there. Anna was there, John was there. I was in that  
32 situation, daily. There was DAILY CONFLICT. There was – ABUSE – towards Anna, me,  
33 and John Junior. I had enough of the abuse. I had enough of been sworn at. I had enough of –  
34 the children been hit, been sworn at. Every time that she acts like this – it feels like she is  
35 stabbing me in the heart. That is how I felt. Every time that she either shouted or swore at me,  
36 shouted at John Junior, or pulled him around, or hit Anna, then it is like stab wounds  
37 ((stabbing hand)).

38 **Interviewer:** Earlier you mentioned that you wanted a wife who will love Anna. How did  
39 you view your expectations during your domestic situation?

40 **John:** My expectations of having a good mother for my daughter were disappointed. We had  
41 our honeymoon late. I hoped that we would then start having sex like a normal couple. I  
42 respected that she was not ready for sex all this time, but I expected to have sex on our  
43 honeymoon. Every time I tried she said no.

44 **Interviewer:** How was the sex affecting your relationship?

1 **John:** That started to cause a problem. She also started to cause a problem in the relationship.  
2 She was frustrated and had anger outbursts. She threw all the crockery against the backdoor –  
3 of the kitchen.

4 **Interviewer:** What made her to do that?

5 **John:** That was frustrations – from the sex. We fought about it and I walked away. And then  
6 she just threw all plates and glasses against the door. ((Silence)) At that stage I just suddenly  
7 said no – this thing is not going to work – I want to pull out.

8 **Interviewer:** You wanted to divorce?

9 **John:** Yes, I wanted to get out of the marriage, but I did not because I believed that our  
10 problems will IMPROVE. It will get better. I was patient. And then I thought I was going to  
11 upset a lot of people with a divorce. We had been married for four months and vowed to be  
12 together through thick and thin. I also loved her. I loved her up to the end when this thing  
13 happened ((crying)). I was committed to our marriage.

14 **Interviewer:** What makes you say that you should not have kept your feelings, your  
15 emotions bottled up?

16 **John:** Those feelings built up – over the years – especially with the events of the last year of  
17 our relationship before the shooting of the children and myself. I just snapped ((snapping  
18 fingers)).

19 **Interviewer:** What kind of a person did you become leading to the incident?

20 **John:** Where I was – always withdrawing, keeping closed, always walking away, I started to  
21 retaliate. I started to attack back – verbally. The anger became ..... THE BUILD UP of  
22 frustrations over the years – became like a pressure cooker. It built up, it built up and then – it  
23 started to explode ((snapping fingers)). It was like a volcano that started to erupt ((snapping  
24 fingers)) over small things.

25 **Interviewer:** You became an entirely different person.

26 **John:** Yes. I was just exploding over small things. At that point I started to see my marriage  
27 as ..... Because I was in the law enforcement, I worked with TERRIBLE crime scenes. I had  
28 to handle things like that. So when I get home I just wanted to lock my door and forget about  
29 that. I wanted to see my home as a safe house. It was supposed to be a safe house. It was  
30 supposed to be a warm and loving place. But it was not. I was not a person who fought back.  
31 I TURN AROUND and walked away, so she AGAIN took out her frustrations on Anna. I  
32 withdrew for about three weeks when she lost her temper. Then she would come to me and  
33 FOLLOW ME. I would walk away, she would follow me. She would stand aggressively in  
34 front of me and say “no don’t be a moffie, DON’T RUN AWAY, TALK – NOW!” She was  
35 aggressive and wanted me to react to what she was saying. But I ran– because I didn’t want  
36 to fight. So eventually I could not take that anymore. I just started to snap ((snapping  
37 fingers)).

38 **Interviewer:** How did the incident come to happen?

39 **John:** ((Crying)) We had ... I was a Deputy official at the agency and sometimes an acting  
40 Head. So my workload was a lot. At – HOME things started accumulating as well. Problems  
41 piled up. Lucy’s behaviour changed. She spent hours making herself beautiful. But she was  
42 ice-cold towards me – when it comes to sex. For the last – seven months – having sex ones a  
43 week was too much for her. Her phone always rang at night and she answered it out of  
44 hearing distance. I could hear that she was talking to a man. When I confronted her about  
45 him, she said he’s just a colleague. I thought how can a colleague call at like 2 o’clock in the  
46 morning? So, our problems got worse.

47 **Interviewer:** I am moving on to the killing of the children. What happened to you on the day  
48 of the incident?

49 **John:** My life stopped – on Thursday afternoon. The murders were – on Friday evening on  
50 the [REDACTED]. I can’t remember much after that. I totally lost it! I WAS IN THIS WORLD

1 but I was also not in this world. ((Silence)) I was distant. I was – upset when I got home. I felt  
 2 heart sore. I was disturbed. I had too many emotions – when I got home and saw her. A lot of  
 3 emotions came to me. It was anger and sadness. It was heart sore. It's oh fuck man ((hitting  
 4 the table))! Then she came home late. It was always her work, work. I said to her please make  
 5 an appointment with the Psychologist, we need an appointment URGENTLY. I didn't even  
 6 have supper that night. I drank whiskey not brandy throughout the night to feel better. She  
 7 came to the braai room and stood aggressively at the door and said, “yes, you are drinking  
 8 again. I am going to sleep. Put the children in their beds!” That is what she said. I took the  
 9 kids to bed even though I don't remember doing it. It's just a blank. And then I went to the  
 10 garage to check the kilometres of my car. I realised that she drove 18 kilometres to and fro  
 11 work-crèche-home. So she never turned around to buy milk. She lied. She worked late again.  
 12 I apparently confronted her. I sat in the braai room and thought, Ag! Divorce her. You know  
 13 what John hang yourself. But I did not want to leave my children behind ((hitting the table)).  
 14 Don't carry on like this ((hitting the table)). I apparently woke her up and asked her to choose  
 15 between her family and work. I spoke to her about our marriage, to get it right. She just said  
 16 “AG, fuck you John! Just fuckin leave me alone. I want to fuckin sleep man!” I don't  
 17 remember the whole shooting. I took my gun and went to Anna's bedroom and shot her first  
 18 ((crying)). ((Crying)) I cannot remember a shot going off. I cannot remember my hand doing  
 19 that ((pulling the trigger)) – the jerk of the pistol. I don't remember shooting her ((crying)). I  
 20 apparently shot Joy and John Junior ((crying)). It was like I was in an air conditioner room –  
 21 and outside here it was 50 degree Celsius. During this whole process, this blank process, the  
 22 process of shooting them, it felt like my body was exploding with – extreme heat. I went to  
 23 the back yard with my pistol and apparently called my mom and a couple of people, and told  
 24 them that I shot the children. I phoned Lucy as well – I told her that I love you ((crying)).

25 **Interviewer:** Is it something that you planned to do?

26 **John:** ((Crying)) I wanted to commit suicide about three, four times in that year, but I did not  
 27 want to leave my children behind. I think I wanted to take them with me to protect them from  
 28 Lucy. So that evening when I decided to kill myself, that is when I decided to kill them too.  
 29 ((Crying)) It's painful. I just want my kids alive, then I can tell Lucy here are the kids they  
 30 are alive! ((Crying)) But I can't. The Court said that I shot them because I wanted to punish  
 31 Lucy. But if I wanted to punish Lucy why would I kill Anna? ((Crying)) Anna wasn't hers  
 32 and she was tormenting Anna.

33 **Interviewer:** What did you hope to achieve by committing this and also attempting to kill  
 34 yourself?

35 **John:** ((Crying)) I did not plan to kill them. I only planned to kill myself. I just wanted to die.  
 36 I didn't have zest for life ((crying)). My life was meaningless. I thought I was in charge of my  
 37 life but I was not. My work life was in shambles ((crying)). My marriage life was in shambles  
 38 ((crying)). ((Crying)) Every day it felt to me like Lucy is slipping through my hands.  
 39 ((Crying)) I had so many hopes. ((Silence)) I had so many – dreams ((crying)). But one night  
 40 – one damn night it's all shattered ((crying)). The other night the first day after you've been  
 41 here – that day I prayed to God and I cried. ALL I could say is I'm sorry God, I'm sorry.  
 42 What I did to the KIDS as their father, is a shame ((crying)).

43

### Perceiver Element Grid.

44 **Interviewer:** How did you see yourself before the murder?

45 **John:** ((Deep breath)) I saw myself as a failure – keeping up a false front and as a person  
 46 whose life was in shambles. I felt to be out of control of everything. I felt like a lit firecracker  
 47 jumping around. I was edgy and short-tempered the whole time.

48 **Interviewer:** How do you see yourself now after the murder?

- 1 **John:** Uh, I will always hate myself for what I did. A lot of people say “you must start with  
2 self-forgiveness”, but I can’t because I killed my children. I robbed them. ((Silence)) My life  
3 is not in chaos anymore but I have permanent anxiety in me. There’s like a hollow FEELING  
4 like BEFORE YOU WRITE A BIG EXAM and you know you didn’t prepare enough and  
5 then you get that funny feeling for the exam in your stomach. That feeling is always with me.
- 6 **Interviewer:** Where is this feeling of anxiety coming from?
- 7 **John:** I think it is fear of the future. Fear of the unknown of the future. Uh, it’s hope. I think  
8 it’s anxiousness of – I’ve hope for the future.
- 9 **Interviewer:** How did you see your family – before the murder?
- 10 **John:** I loved them all. I never had any problems with them. My biggest mistake is – I kept  
11 my problems to myself and so my advice to people is when you have problems, speak it out!
- 12 **Interviewer:** I remember you said you did not do anything to your wife. Say that your  
13 children were to awake from death, how would you see them and your wife now?
- 14 **John:** My children loved me and I loved them a lot. They looked to me to keep them safe and  
15 I could see that they felt safe around me. So obviously by doing this thing to them, I have  
16 failed them. I don’t think they thought I would one day kill them. They would be very  
17 shocked and maybe not feel safe around me like before. My wife has cut all contacts with me  
18 and wants nothing to do with me. She does not want to talk to me. I am nothing to her. It is  
19 like I was never in her life. I could say I am dead to her now. I last saw her during the trial.  
20 She has never come to visit me. I called her to apologise and she was not interested. She is  
21 very angry with me. I have forgiven her though. When I came here, ((deep breath)) I was –  
22 full of bitterness towards her. (I hated her guts). But now I feel pity for her. She’s a  
23 compulsive liar who has a lot of hatred in her and I understand that she will hate me for her  
24 whole life. It is just – human! But I hope she can get over the bitterness, the hate, the lies,  
25 living a lie, telling lies.
- 26 **Interviewer:** How do you think your nuclear family, your wife and children, saw you before  
27 the incident?
- 28 **John:** ((Deep breath)) I think my wife thought I was a coward – because I walked away from  
29 conflict every time. She saw me as a person with a lot of self-pity because I had a spot – in  
30 the braai room – where I sat and throw myself a brandy when I was stressed. I would have  
31 two or three double brandies and four cigarettes.
- 32 **Interviewer:** How do you think your children saw you before the killing?
- 33 **John:** They saw me as – a person who loved them. They saw me as a safe haven because I  
34 only gave them – love. A lot of people spank their children when they are naughty. Uh, John  
35 was naughty – but it was a boy’s naughtiness. He was (cute) naughty. I never spanked him.
- 36 **Interviewer:** How did you see your extended family before the killing?
- 37 **John:** EXTENDED FAMILY, uh .... The in-laws – no, my relationship with them was not  
38 secure because Lucy did not have a solid relationship with some of her family members.  
39 There were always – fights – between them, but my family was something completely  
40 different. I was very close to them and visited them. They were important people in my life. I  
41 saw my parents as very loving and as – good examples. Uh, they raised me well.
- 42 **Interviewer:** Say that somebody who does not know you asked them what kind of person  
43 you are, what do you think they would say?
- 44 **John:** They saw me as a good person and a loving father who took care of his children. My  
45 brother was very supportive and protective of me, and helped me deal with the problems in  
46 my first marriage. They wanted me to be happy. They saw that I was not a person who liked  
47 fighting. They knew I was patient. But later when I could not take it anymore, my brother  
48 told me that I was becoming short-tempered. My father forgave me before passing away  
49 because he loved me ((crying)). My mom also forgave me but this thing, she is going through  
50 hell. She lost her sister, mother ((crying)), only grandchildren, and my dad in one year. My

1 brother has not ..... He is married and they could not have children and so treated my  
2 children like their own. They were terribly hurt by this thing. He has not forgiven me.

3 **Interviewer:** In your mind what kind of a family did you want or wish to have?

4 **John:** I wanted a family like – I had when I was growing up. That was my example of a  
5 family ((hitting the table)). No fighting. No swearing. Respect. Love. Doing things together. I  
6 can bake. I do can do canned fruit and jam. None of my wives could cook ((hitting the  
7 table)). If my dad .... Whenever my dad and brother went to watch Rugby – because he was  
8 older than me, my mom and I stayed behind and baked. I was very close to my mom. That is  
9 how I wanted my family. I wanted everybody to be like ((joining his hands)). That's my ideal  
10 – family. My family, my home is where my children and my wife are. I wanted my house to  
11 be a place where everybody feels safe and comfortable. A place where you can say anything,  
12 laugh, make jokes, and we love each other.

13 **Interviewer:** Thank you so much. I'm going to move on to the last part.

14 **John:** Ok.

### ABC model.

15 **Interviewer:** This part looks at the advantages and disadvantages of killing your children.  
16 What do you prefer between killing your children and not killing your children?

17 **John:** Not killing my children.

18 **Interviewer:** What are the disadvantages of killing your children?

19 **John:** ((Deep breath)) The jail term because a big part of my life is taken away. The children  
20 we loved so much – are gone forever ((crying)). The children that I loved so much are gone  
21 forever. The children that I wanted to do so many things with – are gone forever ((crying))  
22 and nothing can bring them back. Lucy will never have children again because she was  
23 sterilised after the last child. I robbed her of that. ((Crying)) I robbed – the grandparents – of  
24 their grandchildren. I robbed them of an opportunity to see their grandchildren growing up  
25 and being proud of them when they receive their degrees. I robbed them of so many things  
26 ((crying)). I robbed people of the love and whatever my kids meant to them. Anna had  
27 Cerebral Palsy but ((crying)) gave people love and courage. Anna, John, and Joy, were  
28 examples of love ((crying)). All they wanted was to love and not be abused and definitely not  
29 be shot by their father ((crying)). I took everything away from them by killing them. They  
30 had potential and I took that by not giving them a chance of having a life. Poor Joy was not  
31 even three years old ((crying)). She couldn't even yet speak properly ((crying)) and I took  
32 that away from her. There will never be a John that – competes in Rugby at school, goes to  
33 University, excels in life, gets married, or – turns 21. There will never be ..... It will never be  
34 like that ((crying)). I robbed them and I robbed Lucy ((crying)). I robbed her family. I robbed  
35 and hurt – my children's friends. The Court saw Lucy as being the only victim in this but I  
36 disagree ((crying)). The victims are my children and every person that had contact with and  
37 loved my children. Lucy is not the only victim. By killing my children, I am robbing my  
38 current fiancé of having a life because she is waiting for me. I told her that she can move on  
39 with another man because her life is standing still.

40 **Interviewer:** What do you think are the advantages of not killing your children?

41 **John:** Advantages?

42 **Interviewer:** What do you gain by not killing your children?

43 **John:** My children would be alive today. I would have a family today. I would be divorced  
44 and have a new life with a new woman. I would still have my job. I would have a future. I  
45 would have security. I would still MEAN something to people outside THERE. I would be  
46 doing things for other people.

1 **Interviewer:** What do you think are the advantages of killing your children?

2 **John:** None. There's none at all. You don't gain anything by – KILLING ANYONE! Your  
3 children, anyone – there's no gain.

4 **Interviewer:** What do you think are the disadvantages of not killing your children?

5 **John:** The only disadvantage of not killing my children – is that my family would have split,  
6 divorce was imminent. The way things were going, we would have ended up divorcing – and  
7 the children might have – lived in separate houses. But I would have FOUGHT ((hitting the  
8 table)) – to keep my children.

9 **Interviewer:** I understand. Thank you so much.

10 **John:** Ok.

11

**Sly**

### **Semi-structured interview.**

12 **Interviewer:** Ok. You mentioned a little bit on her family. How do you think her family saw  
13 you?

14 **Sly:** Eish, her family – saw me as a thief ((laughing)). They know that I am ..... after this  
15 case things changed and they also changed towards me. BUT in the first place they saw me as  
16 a – normal person who was driving a taxi. My baby arrived, I am a normal person. I am ok. I  
17 loved my child. But after this case things changed and they also changed.

18 **Interviewer:** What do you mean that they saw you as a thief ((smiling))?

19 **Sly:** Eish, I don't know ((laughing)). I did most things on my own, so maybe they wondered  
20 ((laughing)) “where does this person get money?” Things like that. Plus, they were boys so  
21 they just said, “Ah! Sly is a thief” ((laughing)).

22 **Interviewer:** ((Laughing)) Sir where you involved in crime?

23 **Sly:** Yes, I was involved ((smiling)) in crime.

24 **Interviewer:** What kind of crime?

25 **Sly:** ((Silence)) Uh, cars. I stole cars, not hijacking.

26 **Interviewer:** Mpho's family disliked you because they saw you as a criminal?

27 **Sly:** Yes. Some of my friends were also criminals. So they thought “ah he is also like that, he  
28 is doing crime.” Even her brothers, some of them were involved in things like that. The ones  
29 I said I was acquainted to. So – some of them don't do crime anymore. So you see things like  
30 that. But they knew that I have never hit her. I have never done anything to her.

31 **Interviewer:** Your lifestyle is the only thing that turned them against you?

32 **Sly:** YES, they also expected too much from me. That is how I saw things. They expected  
33 that I am going to marry her.

34 **Interviewer:** How did you feel about her family's expectations of you sir?

35 **Sly:** ((Silence)) Eish ((silence)) eish I don't know what I can say they made me feel. Her  
36 family welcomed me. Eish I thought they would see me as a bad person. The things they  
37 thought about me and knew about me. The reason that I did not want to be with her, I thought  
38 they would say “of course we knew it, we TOLD YOU.” I expected this kind of thing. Like  
39 what happened to the baby, THEY WOULD SAY “of course WE TOLD YOU, WHAT  
40 WERE YOU DOING WITH HIM”. I expected this kind of thing. I once visited the child .....  
41 Mpho and I were not together anymore, I just came to visit the child. I always fetched him  
42 every weekend – and also during the week. Upon my arrival her mother told me “Mpho is  
43 still a child, she is still at school”. She expected that I came to visit Mpho, you see. She told  
44 me those kind of things “Mpho is a child, she is still at school, she has to finish school.” I was  
45 SURPRISED because I was not dating Mpho, I just came to see the child but she is talking to  
46 me about Mpho, you see. I did not argue with her, I just left. They also confused me in a

1 sense that, did they want me or not? Because Mpho told them that we are not dating  
2 anymore. I regularly visited the child and bought him stuff. I asked myself if they wondered  
3 that we are still dating or we are separated. Did Mpho tell them or what?

4 **Interviewer:** When you had a child, Tom, what kind of a father did you expect to be?

5 **Sly:** The child eish made me very happy – because it was the first time that I realised that I  
6 can make children, you see. So that thing made me VERY HAPPY, AND ALSO Tom looked  
7 just like me, EXACTLY. I am the only child at home. I expected that at least he would add to  
8 my family. I planned to take him to stay with me and my mother. He, Tom, would stay with  
9 us. I have never been as happy, plus it was a boy. Eish, I loved Tom a lot. I loved him. Mpho  
10 also knows that and her family, and my family. At that time when Tom was still alive I was  
11 under correctional supervision at Community Corrections. I was doing community service,  
12 but they knew that it did not stop me from seeing him during the weekend. I fetched him and  
13 we did community service together. But the things which surprised me, Mpho told the Court  
14 that she separated with me. Why should Mpho lie? And she also mentioned that she has a  
15 child with another man and she and the baby's father are HAPPY. I was very surprised  
16 because I did not know if her intentions of saying those things were to hurt me or what.  
17 Because she also knows that I also loved Tom. The incident that occurred, the Court also told  
18 them that it was not intentional and it was not planned. It just happened. I did not plan to  
19 commit it. It just happened. IT JUST HAPPENED. So they saw it as I did it. The things they  
20 told people it was as if I did it because I wanted to do it.

21 **Interviewer:** Like you planned it?

22 **Sly:** YES, like I did not love Tom and they know the way I interacted with him. The Court  
23 asked them how I interacted with him.

24 **Interviewer:** Yes.

25 **Sly:** Ah, I just saw the burns as ..... since I had just finished smoking outside, I thought the  
26 burns were minor and not major. I took toothpaste and smeared it on him – and I stayed with  
27 him without taking him to the hospital. Mpho on that day did not come. I just thought it was a  
28 small thing. I stayed with him. We just sat and went to sleep. Um, nobody came – including  
29 Mpho. When we were sleeping, I heard that he was not breathing well. He was breathing  
30 LOUD. It was like he was crying. But he was not crying. I saw that those injuries hurt him.  
31 But I smoked and I was weak. When I woke up in the morning – he was sleeping, Tom. I  
32 woke up and made porridge. Mpho arrived in the morning – at eleven o'clock. After I  
33 finished making him porridge, I fed him. I cooled it, woke him up, and fed him. BUT I saw  
34 that he was WEAK TOO MUCH, TOO MUCH. I also started to panic at that time. I saw that  
35 he did not have ENERGY. I fed him porridge. I fed him porridge, and I put him to sleep.

36 **Interviewer:** What was going through your mind when you heard that your child died?

37 **Sly:** ((Silence)) I did not understand how ((crying)). I did not understand how he died –  
38 because I just thought it was minor injuries. ((Silence)) I just asked myself how this thing  
39 could happen to me ((deep breath)).

40 **Interviewer:** Why do you think it happened, sir?

41 **Sly:** ((Crying)) I was careless – and not quick to act – and also smoking my drugs. If I did not  
42 smoke – I could have seen those injuries and immediately sought assistance ((crying)). This  
43 thing ..... It is not that I am not wrong, I accept that I am wrong. But to say that I killed him, I  
44 want to kill him – it is not what I wanted to happen to him. ((Silence)) But it happened and  
45 what is being said is that I killed him. But I did not want that. But I accept that I am wrong  
46 because if I cared for him none of this would have happened. ((Silence)) But this is not what I  
47 wanted to happen to him.

48 **Interviewer:** Your inability to care for him led to his death.

49 **Sly:** ((Deep breath)) I was not fine about his death. I was trying to understand how he died.  
50 But how did he die? WHY did I not bring him before? Because they told me that if I had

1 brought him in yesterday maybe he would not have died. I asked myself a lot of questions –  
 2 that I lost my child and it is my fault. This thing that happened EISH and I did not believe it  
 3 could happen to me.

4 **Interviewer:** What kind of people did you expect that it would happen to sir?

5 **Sly:** I expected that this kind of thing would happen to evil people like – SATANISTS. The  
 6 way I love him, it would NEVER happen to me, and then I did this kind of thing to him. I did  
 7 not help him. I did not care for him. I did not expect that it would happen, this thing. Not to  
 8 me, the way I loved my child.

9

### Perceiver Element Grid.

10 **Interviewer:** Some of the questions in this interview are similar to the previous interview.

11 How did you see yourself before your son's death?

12 **Sly:** Uh, I think I was normal.

13 **Interviewer:** Normal in what way sir?

14 **Sly:** ((Silence)) I was open and able to talk about a lot of things. There are some things which  
 15 I now cannot discuss with people. It is like I am hiding something. I think if I open up to  
 16 someone it is either he will ENCOURAGE me to not lose hope or talk negatively about me to  
 17 other people. I don't TRUST people the way I trusted them.

18 **Interviewer:** You said that you think you are hiding something. What do you mean?

19 **Sly:** Yes, I often ask myself if I tell this person, how is he going to take me? Will he guide  
 20 me –or share it with other people and turn it into a JOKE?

21 **Interviewer:** How do you see yourself now?

22 **Sly:** The accident happened and I lost my child. I prayed to God – and I think that He forgave  
 23 me and wants to give me another chance because I have another child – who loves me and I  
 24 love her. I talk with her almost every day. ((Silence)) So I don't live to prove to people, but I  
 25 want to show them that this thing that has happened to Tom was not something I wanted to  
 26 do. It was not my intention. It just happened. I want to show them with my other child, Lebo,  
 27 through the way I love her and interact with her. I want to prove people who talk badly about  
 28 me wrong, ONLY.

29 **Interviewer:** How did you see Mpho and your son before he died?

30 **Sly:** ((Silence)) ((Slight laugh)) The thing is that – she was still young. I think that she did not  
 31 know what she wanted at that time. She was not yet sure – of what she wants in her life. I  
 32 think she was not sure if I was the boy that she really loved. She was playful – TOO MUCH.  
 33 She had not ..... I think she did not take a lot of things seriously. But just because I broke up  
 34 with her does not mean I did not want my son. I loved my son a lot and we got along very  
 35 well. I did not have a problem with my son. He was a good child and I was proud to be his  
 36 father and to have him as my son especially since he looked like me.

37 **Interviewer:** Say that your son came back to life, how would you see him and Mpho after  
 38 the incident?

39 **Sly:** Mpho is now mature. I think she knows what she wants. But I wanted to have a chance  
 40 to APOLOGISE to her. Tell her how I feel – about this entire thing. She OBVIOUSLY  
 41 HATES ME. She hated me for ending our relationship and what happened to Tom made the  
 42 hatred worse. There is no way that she loves me and would want to be in a relationship with  
 43 me after this thing. But I must try to explain to her what happened because I think her family  
 44 is turning her against me. I NEVER GOT A CHANCE to talk to her SINCE this thing. I  
 45 loved my son and I was supposed to protect him. I failed to look after him. I was a father who  
 46 was smoking Nyaope and did not get him the help he needed. Even though he was young  
 47 when this thing happened, I don't think he would be as comfortable around me like he was  
 48 before. I don't think he would trust me the way that he did before this thing.

1 **Interviewer:** How do you think Mpho and your son saw you before the incident?

2 **Sly:** ((Deep breath)) Mpho saw me as a good person. She did not think that she would  
3 struggle if she stayed with me. But she saw that I was also naughty in terms of getting  
4 money. But I don't think that she saw me as dangerous to her. She trusted me. My son also  
5 trusted me. He was always happy to see me and cried for me to take him and go with him.

6 **Interviewer:** How do you see your extended family?

7 **Sly:** They knew that I love children because even my uncle's children, they spent a lot of  
8 time with me, we played together, and went for walks. They were surprised by this thing. I  
9 think they see me as a good person with only a problem of drugs. My mother is supportive of  
10 me. She has been there for me from the beginning of this thing. She knows that I loved Tom  
11 and did not want to hurt him. She believes in me. Even now I told her about you, that you  
12 want to talk to me about this thing. She said I must talk to you. But Mpho's family WILL  
13 NEVER TRUST ME because they reported in the newspaper that, "this person is on parole  
14 for murder. He committed murder." They are not thinking about my well-being. They want to  
15 ruin my life. They want people to think about me as a murderer. They have ANGER and I  
16 think that they want people to have THE SAME ANGER. They HATE ME. They are  
17 showing their feelings now because obviously it happened, this thing.

18 **Interviewer:** What kind of a family did you wish to have?

19 **Sly:** ((Silence)) I did not want a family like I had growing up. I wanted to have a family that  
20 had a mother and a father, and the children are happy. There is no child that will feel left out  
21 like he is not loved. A child whose father is distant and this other man is not his biological  
22 father feels somehow. You feel unloved and lonely. You will never disclose to this man some  
23 of the things that you would tell your father. Those are some of the things that made me feel  
24 ..... I was happy because my mother bought me things that I wanted. But there was  
25 something that I lacked inside because my father was not there.

26 **Interviewer:** Like what? What did you lack inside?

27 **Sly:** I could not tell my mother some things. I could not tell her boyfriend those things  
28 because I didn't know him and didn't feel safe around him. I don't ..... That is... How can I  
29 put it? ((Silence)) I didn't trust him. I could not ask him for stuff the same way that I would  
30 ask my father.

31 **Interviewer:** Ok, I understand. I am going to the last set of questions.

### ABC model.

32 **Interviewer:** These questions are looking at the advantages and disadvantages of this crime.  
33 Before we start I want you to know that I understand that you did not intentionally kill your  
34 son. What do you prefer between killing your son and not killing him?

35 **Sly:** Not killing him.

36 **Interviewer:** What do you think are the disadvantages of killing your child?

37 **Sly:** ((Silence)) You lose everything. Your loved ones don't trust you and people don't trust  
38 you. People I was close to have distanced themselves from me. They have never visited me in  
39 prison and I expected that they would come. I asked myself if it is because of what happened  
40 or they have their own reasons. People don't feel comfortable in my presence. THERE IS NO  
41 TRUST and love anymore. You will also never have the FREEDOM that you had because  
42 obviously you will be arrested, be found guilty, and get sentenced. Happiness, it is always in  
43 your mind but this thing takes it.

44 **Interviewer:** What thing sir?

45 **Sly:** Your child. You will never forget him. You can avoid talking about it but deep inside –  
46 you will always be thinking about him. I miss him but this is something that I don't like

1 talking about. Like even you, when you are interviewing me like this ..... I thought about it  
2 – I WANTED TO CHANGE MY MIND because I knew that it would bring up a lot of  
3 issues. But I told myself that IF I have to help other people then I have to do this thing. I  
4 cannot do anything to forget what happened.

5 **Interviewer:** It is something that you cannot wipe away. It will always be with you until the  
6 end of your life.

7 **Sly:** Yes. I just have to accept it.

8 **Interviewer:** What do you think are the advantages of not killing your child?

9 **Sly:** You are a father which gives you a feeling of pride, respect, and love. People learn from  
10 you how to raise their children. Fathers learn from you how to be fathers when they see you  
11 doing good for your child and your family. ((Silence)) You become their a ROLE MODEL.  
12 My child will tell his friends “my father takes me to ..... My father will buy ..... My father  
13 will never hit me.” His friends will tell their fathers who will then be inspired by you when  
14 they see how PROUD your son IS of you. If you are not good to your child obviously – he  
15 will not say all these things about you.

16 **Interviewer:** What are the advantages of killing your child?

17 **Sly:** You don't gain anything. People hate you. They gossip about you. They call you names.  
18 ((Silence)) You don't gain anything.

19 **Interviewer:** What kind of names sir?

20 **Sly:** “Killer”. “This dog”. Other people, even if you are better than them they will think they  
21 are better than YOU. ((Laughing)) Serious, serious. ((Laughing)) They will think “ah this one  
22 is USELESS.” You will find that you – can do a lot of things which he cannot do but because  
23 of this thing now he thinks you are useless. YOU ARE NOT GOING TO BE ANYTHING.  
24 YOU ARE GOING TO BE LIKE AN EMPTY BOTTLE.

25 **Interviewer:** What are the disadvantages of not killing your child?

26 **Sly:** No, there are no disadvantages of not killing your child. You don't lose anything.

27 **Interviewer:** Ok. In conclusion, what are your final comments on this issue?

28 **Sly:** ((Silence)) What I am asking myself ..... I don't know, maybe you can answer me.  
29 ((Silence)) Mpho and her family, can they forgive me? Yes, I did a mistake. I hurt them. I  
30 prayed to God and asked for forgiveness. He will forgive me. But what I want is for them to  
31 forgive me. I was sentenced to 13 years and Mpho and her family were dissatisfied with that.  
32 They were complaining. They thought that the sentence was not ENOUGH. I think that they  
33 are now FIGHTING with me. They don't think the Court was right in the way it passed  
34 judgement. I don't know what to do. Must I apologise to them or what? Because even the  
35 JUDGE said that “this person did not plan what he did.” But they don't seem to ACCEPT  
36 that. They still don't accept that. They think that it is something which OF COURSE I  
37 WANTED TO DO. I sometimes don't understand – and they knew that I loved Tom. I don't  
38 know if they are like this because they still have anger, or if it something that is going to be  
39 inside of them UNTIL forever. Will they forgive me or what? I did not even get a chance to  
40 apologise to Mpho. I don't know how I am going to approach her when I am released and I  
41 meet her. Is she still angry with me or will she forgive me?

42 **Interviewer:** Have you heard about Restorative Justice, sir?

43 **Sly:** The one given at the Correctional Centre? I heard about it.

44 **Interviewer:** Maybe that is a programme you should consider doing. Maybe it will give you  
45 the answers you seek concerning getting forgiveness from Mpho and her family. Maybe it  
46 will help you to understand their feelings towards you.

47

48

**Appendix E2: Family Participants****Mary****Semi-structured interview.**

- 1 **Interviewer:** Mama I am going to start the interview which will be looking at your thoughts  
2 of Joe, his marriage, and the incident he committed.
- 3 **Mary:** Ok.
- 4 **Interviewer:** It is nothing scary so do not be worried.
- 5 **Mary:** Ok. The questions are not scary?
- 6 **Interviewer:** Yes, mama. I just want to have a chat with you about Joe and this case. What  
7 were your expectations for Joe's marriage to Sue?
- 8 **Mary:** I, I was hoping that they would be together until I die so that they could bury me. Yes.  
9 I wished only the best and goodness for their marriage. Yes. ((Silence)) I thought that they  
10 would take good care of each other.
- 11 **Interviewer:** Ok. How were they treating each other during their marriage?
- 12 **Mary:** They hardly fought with each other. I was really shocked when I was called and told  
13 that this thing has happened – because I always found them happy and laughing whenever I  
14 visited them. They had a good marriage. They had a happy marriage. Yes, my child.
- 15 **Interviewer:** How committed were they to their marriage?
- 16 **Mary:** Eish, to be honest they were very serious about each other and also committed to their  
17 marriage. They always welcomed me with happiness. My daughter-in-law welcomed me and  
18 was happy to see me. She did not appear to be unhappy – and my son did not appear to be  
19 unhappy. You know, they did not show that they were having problems with each other. I  
20 have never heard of any problems which they were experiencing, my child. No! All I know is  
21 that they were happy and committed to their marriage.
- 22 **Interviewer:** Ok mama.
- 23 **Mary:** Yes, all I know is that they were happy with each other. They did not tell me their  
24 problems.
- 25 **Interviewer:** Tell me a little bit about the kind of relationship which Sue had with Joe's  
26 cousins?
- 27 **Mary:** You see the boy was staying in the backroom and the girl was supposed to come live  
28 with me the year that their mother died, in 2009. You see? Joe said to me "They have sorted  
29 out their issues so the girl does not have to come to me." Then Joe went to find a school for  
30 this child. The problem was that Sue did not want the girl in the house. I then said 'No, you  
31 can come stay with me and I will find a school for you because it is January.' Joe said "No  
32 mama she does not have to come stay with you, we will stay with her."
- 33 **Interviewer:** What was the centre of the problem between Sue and this girl?
- 34 **Mary:** They were fighting over pocket money. Sue did not want Joe to give his cousin pocket  
35 money. That is all I know. I don't know why she had issues with Joe giving his cousin pocket  
36 money.
- 37 **Interviewer:** So you are saying that they had good communication?
- 38 **Mary:** Yes. Their level of communication with each other was good, very good. So I don't  
39 know – what darkness came over him which – made my child do this thing because they had  
40 good communication. I don't know. ((Silence)) God is the only one who knows because I  
41 don't know anything.
- 42 **Interviewer:** When you talk to your family what do they think happened which led to this  
43 incident?

1 **Mary:** ((Silence)) Ah, my family stays far away. They came to the funeral but – we did not  
2 sit down and talk about this thing. Yes, Sue’s family also came to the funeral but we did not  
3 talk about what my son did. The two families had a good relationship, you know. To be  
4 honest, we had a good relationship. ((Deep breath)) You see my child did this bad thing and I  
5 cannot excuse his behaviour. So Sue’s family were – somehow towards me during the funeral  
6 but I did not fight with them because – my child did this terrible thing.

7 **Interviewer:** If Joe and Sue saw you as approachable, I wonder what made them feel unable  
8 to share with you their problems, even if it is just a little bit.

9 **Mary:** ((Deep breath)) Eish! ((Silence)) After 2005 ... Isn’t it that he told you that he was  
10 staying with her since 2005? They got married on the 16<sup>th</sup> of September 2007. Jack started to  
11 do a lot of different things after we paid lobola such as fighting with his sister, Sue. Sue told  
12 me that her brother is fighting with her. That is what she told me. She also told me that her  
13 brother said that he did not think that she would live very long if she stayed with my son, Joe.  
14 That is what I know and I was shocked. This thing happened after Jack said those things, so I  
15 don’t know. ((Silence)) Jack wanted Sue to divorce my son. Sue had two children from her  
16 previous marriage, Dan and Nick, but Nick was dead when we paid lobola. So Sue had one  
17 child when we married her, Dan, and had two children with Joe. We did not have a problem. I  
18 don’t have a problem even now. Jack ... Sue told me that Jack wanted her to divorce Joe –  
19 and return to her – first husband because Joe – was just a dog and not man enough for her.  
20 That is what Sue told me. I said to her ‘No, your brother – will not do such a thing.’ Sue said  
21 “I am tired because my brother is always taking me out of my marriages and wants me to get  
22 married to another man.” I was shocked and just kept quiet. I just said ‘Haaa!’ Jack then said  
23 to Sue ... Sue was at her home. All these things happened when she was at her home. Jack  
24 then said “I will see how long you are going to stay in that marriage which you are bragging  
25 about.” I was shocked to hear those things.

26 **Interviewer:** Ok.

27 **Mary:** ((Deep breath)) I think that Jack started the problems in Joe’s marriage – because Jack  
28 ... Sue told me that Jack said “I am going to see if you are going to live for a long time in that  
29 small marriage of yours which you are bragging about.” So I don’t know. ((Silence)) Eish!  
30 During all this fighting I was fetched at work and told “Your child killed Sue and his  
31 children.”  
32

### Perceiver Element Grid.

33 **Interviewer:** The following questions will not take as long as the first set of questions. This  
34 interview will only focus on your views of Joe, his marriage, and family.

35 **Mary:** Ok.

36 **Interviewer:** You will see that some of the questions might be similar to the questions from  
37 the previous set.

38 **Mary:** Ok.

39 **Interviewer:** If someone asked you to describe the person Joe was before the incident what  
40 would you say?

41 **Mary:** Um, just like I have already mentioned – he was a good person. He did not have an –  
42 evil heart. He was always a gentle and respectful person. He is still a respectful person even  
43 now. He was not a person who liked fighting.

44 **Interviewer:** How do you see him now after the incident?

45 **Mary:** After the crime?

46 **Interviewer:** Mmm.

- 1 **Mary:** I STILL SEE Joe as the same person I know. He does not have – an evil heart. He is  
2 still the same as before. He is still the same person I know and has the values that I taught  
3 him when he was growing up. Sue was also a good, loving, and caring person just like Joe.  
4 **Interviewer:** How did you see Joe's family?  
5 **Mary:** His family was warm and loving. They were really united. You know Joe and Sue  
6 discussed everything. They advised each other when they were building their house. They  
7 spoke about everything. When Sue and my grandchildren were alive ... Sue welcomed me  
8 with love whenever I visited them. She would kiss and hug me, ijoo. Eish! Death! She was a  
9 good and gentle person. Eish!  
10 **Interviewer:** How do you think Sue saw her husband?  
11 **Mary:** I think Sue saw her husband as a good man. Yes. They were good together. You know  
12 they had warm love for each other.  
13 **Interviewer:** What kind of a family are you?  
14 **Mary:** We are a good family. We are people who discuss issues and find solutions. We guide  
15 each other. You see, we would have help Joe – and Sue if they came to us about their  
16 problems. We were going to give them guidance. You see, the elders in my family and Sue's  
17 family were going to meet and discuss Joe's marital problems. Whatever problems they were  
18 having were going to be fixed. They were going to be fixed. Yes. ((Silence)) We are a  
19 supportive family. We are still united and we are still supporting Joe. My mother sometimes  
20 visits him in prison. YOU KNOW even with Sue's family, we were very close to them. We  
21 were united.  
22 **Interviewer:** What kind of a family do you wish for?  
23 **Mary:** I would like to have a peaceful family. I don't like a family that has a lot of drama. I  
24 wish my family would be peaceful and not have conflict. Conflict does not build a home but  
25 destroys homes.  
26 **Interviewer:** Ok. Thank you, mama. I am going to the last set of questions.  
27 **Mary:** Mmm.  
28

### ABC model.

- 29 **Interviewer:** In this set I will be looking at what you think are the benefits and loses of  
30 committing or not committing this incident.  
31 **Mary:** Ok.  
32 **Interviewer:** What do you prefer between taking action to prevent this incident from  
33 happening and not doing anything therefore just letting it to happen?  
34 **Mary:** Um, what can I say? We would have done something to help them if they told us their  
35 problems. The elders in my family would have guided them and told them 'No, our children  
36 don't fight. You must stop fighting and continue to build your lives together.' So I would say  
37 that I prefer doing something to prevent this situation from happening if only they said  
38 something to us.  
39 **Interviewer:** Ok mama. Please concentrate the following questions can get a bit tricky. What  
40 do you think a person loses by doing something to prevent this incident from happening?  
41 **Mary:** Ok like if I was staying close to them?  
42 **Interviewer:** Yes, mama or even if you were staying far away from them.  
43 **Mary:** I would not be losing anything by doing something to prevent this situation from  
44 happening. If I was staying nearer to them, I was going to talk to my son and daughter-in-law  
45 about their problems. I was not going to lose anything because their problems would be  
46 resolved and they would be together. I was going to help them to solve their problems and  
47 everything was going to be fine.

- 1 **Interviewer:** What do you think a person gains by doing something to prevent this incident  
2 from happening?
- 3 **Mary:** You see by doing something you are giving the person who is in the situation an  
4 opportunity to talk about their issues and they get relieved in the process. Whatever burdens  
5 they are carrying inside will be lessened and they can start to think clearly.
- 6 **Interviewer:** What do you think a person loses by not doing anything to prevent this incident  
7 from happening?
- 8 **Mary:** Obviously if you don't do anything to prevent this crime from happening you will  
9 lose people that you love. Like now, I have lost my son, my daughter-in-law and  
10 grandchildren. You see? But if they told me about their problems obviously, I would not have  
11 allowed the situation to get to this point.
- 12 **Interviewer:** What do you think a person gains by not doing anything to prevent this incident  
13 from happening?
- 14 **Mary:** There is no way that you will gain something if you don't do anything to prevent this  
15 crime. No! You will lose loved ones and you will gain a lot of sadness.
- 16 **Interviewer:** In closing mama, what do you want people to know about this incident?
- 17 **Mary:** ((Deep breath)) Eish! I would say to them that – don't protect your child if he did  
18 something wrong. You see I did not aim to protect my son. YOU SEE IN LIFE there are  
19 some parents who protect their children even though they have committed crime. They will  
20 be like 'No, my child did not do that thing.' So I would like to tell them not to take sides.  
21 ((Silence)) I wish that this thing that happened to me in which my son – killed his wife and  
22 children does not happen to anyone. A man must talk to his friend or a trusted family member  
23 if he is fighting with his wife, or if his wife is fighting with him. The friend or family member  
24 will sit him down and guide him. The wife must also do the same. So they must talk to  
25 trusted people who can keep their problems confidential. That is all I wish for and would like  
26 to say. ((Silence)) Keeping quiet about your issues brings a lot of problems. Those children  
27 were secretive about their problems. They did not even tell me anything when I visited them.
- 28 **Interviewer:** Thank you mama.
- 29 **Mary:** Yes.

## May

### Semi-structured interview.

- 30 **Interviewer:** Um, my first set of questions will focus on Neo's marital relationship with his  
31 wife. When they started their relationship mama, how did you think their relationship would  
32 turn out?
- 33 **May:** Uh, their relationship – according to the way they started it, we thought that they were  
34 people who could build a strong, successful, and good home. This is the way we saw them.  
35 Uh, what I thought about them ... They were still youthful. They were young.
- 36 **Interviewer:** Yes.
- 37 **May:** Yes. But – they got married at the right age. Uh, I saw them as people who ... I could  
38 say ... They were people who appeared to be in love with each other. They seemed to know  
39 what they wanted. They appeared to be on, on the right path regarding their relationship.
- 40 **Interviewer:** So you expected that they would build each other and have a good relationship?
- 41 **May:** That is exactly what I expected – based on the way I saw them.
- 42 **Interviewer:** How did you see their relationship moving forward, mama?
- 43 **May:** Their relationship ma'am ... uh, when I start it ... According to our culture, a woman  
44 stays with her in-laws after she is married and afterwards she can go to their house. So when

1 they moved to their house ... We were not ... Let me say, I, in my case because I thought that  
2 they were young and still growing, I was not – so close to them. That is, I was not visiting  
3 them often. We mostly met each other during family functions either from my family's side  
4 or her family's side. That is when we met. But when we were ... When I was busy looking at  
5 them ... They were people who appeared to be happy. They showed that they were aiming  
6 for a good and successful life. They would have a good life.

7 **Interviewer:** When do you think their relationship changed?

8 **May:** Uh, over the course of time when they were at their place, we started to ... I realised  
9 something. You know although this does not always happen, but people tend to ... come to  
10 functions together when they are staying in the same house, especially when they are newly  
11 married. But I realised that – they were ... There was ... How can I put it ... I could say  
12 almost a slight friction. Because sometimes they did not attend family functions together,  
13 they came separately. It is like you could see that they are not ((holding hands)), so we did  
14 not know what was happening.

15 **Interviewer:** Yes.

16 **May:** Yes. But when I went to their house to visit them, I found them just fine, they were not  
17 raising any concerns and issues. You can sometimes hear from the way people are talking  
18 with each other that they are not happy, but I did not see anything like that. What I realised  
19 was that – my brother sometimes drank too much alcohol. ((Silence)) But I did not know how  
20 his behaviour was like towards his wife and family after he drank alcohol. But his wife never  
21 came to me when I visited them ... maybe she was scared of me, she did not tell me any  
22 complaints. No, no, something like that did not happen.

23 **Interviewer:** The impression that you are giving me is that they kept their marital problems  
24 private. They did not share them with the extended family.

25 **May:** Yes, it means that they were keeping their problems private – because I remember this  
26 other time – uh – Neo – I think he was injured. I went to visit him at his home because I  
27 could not go to the hospital. When I arrived I could see that we were not communicating. It is  
28 like I was not able to talk to him about – his wife. There was no open space to ask how he  
29 was doing and what was happening? When I got to his house, I was told that his wife was  
30 admitted to hospital. I was told the day I visited Neo that she was admitted to hospital. So his  
31 wife's aunt arrived to care for him when I was there. But according to our culture ... Firstly,  
32 we were not told that Neo was back from the hospital. Can you see that if there was good  
33 communication, she could have called and informed us that "Neo is back but I am going to  
34 the hospital, and then Neo does not have anybody who will care for him, but my aunt will  
35 assist him since they get along." You cannot dispute that because everybody can choose who  
36 they want to care for them. So Neo's wife was not too close to us because we were older than  
37 her and therefore she could not relate to us compared to if we were her age. You see even if a  
38 person knows you, they are reluctant to get close to you because they sometimes find you to  
39 be unapproachable.

40 **Interviewer:** You mentioned something at the beginning of the interview which I want to  
41 elaborate on. You said they were young when they started their relationship, their marriage.  
42 What made you to refer to their age in this regard?

43 **May:** According to culture, Neo's wife stayed with my parents after they were married. A  
44 daughter-in-law is expected to cook and perform other domestic chores. So after some time  
45 she and Neo decided to leave my parents' house. My mother told me that they left without  
46 even saying goodbye. So we wanted to know how they could leave without telling my  
47 parents. Was there an argument between them and my parents or what? My mother  
48 responded by saying, "no, I just spoke to her about cooking late and my husband sleeping on  
49 an empty stomach. So I think I might have hurt her by saying those things." Then they just  
50 took the children and left but they went to her parents' house until they got a place of their

1 own. So when I looked at it, I thought when a person is still young they expect that they will  
2 just stay with their husband but things don't work out like that. And then she finds certain  
3 rules when she stays with her parents-in-law, and could not take it. But you see when a  
4 person is older, they will be able to take into consideration somebody's age when they are  
5 talking to them, and they will be selective of what the other person is saying. So when a  
6 person is not yet mature you find that even small things make them angry and then they take  
7 their things and leave. Both of them left, she left with her husband. You see how this thing is  
8 like, it means that there is immaturity somewhere. You see if she and my mother had a  
9 disagreement and they were mature, Neo would have wanted to know what happened. He  
10 would have asked what happened. Not that he is interrogating them but more like they are  
11 decently talking about the problem. But when your wife tells you all those things then you  
12 suddenly agree with her and decide to pack up and go, that means that you are not yet mature  
13 to manage some issues.

14 **Interviewer:** Based on what you have just said, how did you expect them to progress in their  
15 marriage?

16 **May:** No, you see I thought because of – their anger, they would maybe have problems in  
17 their marriage. But I looked at it again and I said NO, because when they started building a  
18 family their actions showed that – they were mature. You can see that they were responsible  
19 and did not carelessly spend their money when they were building a house. They were  
20 focused on building a good life. They planned ahead and thought about their children's  
21 education, financing their studies, and budgeted accordingly. So you could see that these  
22 people are mature and have a vision.

23 **Interviewer:** When thinking about the killing, do you think that it is something that he  
24 planned or did it just suddenly happen?

25 **May:** ((Silence)) Eish, I think that it is something that just suddenly happened. We don't  
26 know. I don't know the extent to which he can become angry, but you see we don't have  
27 evidence that we can tell someone, like maybe they were always in conflict or what. We  
28 don't have that kind of information on how they were living together, like were they fighting  
29 or not, or what was going on? We don't have ... Or they had a disagreement. We don't have  
30 that kind of information. This thing surprised us.

31 **Interviewer:** What do you think Neo wanted to achieve by killing?

32 **May:** Eish! Me you know – the way it was, he shot everybody in the house and if it was not  
33 for God – maybe they would have all died. ((Silence)) It is just that God will protect others –  
34 the way it happened and this one died. ((Silence)) But when you see someone after something  
35 like this has happened – something so painful – that happened to people who don't have ...  
36 who could not fight for themselves. ((Silence)) Eish, we were all shocked at the end. It was  
37 something that hit us in some way. It did not ... It is like we did not take it well – AT ALL.  
38 What surprised me was ... Is it possible that ... We grew up in a family that is religious. Uh,  
39 our family religiously attended church. ((Silence)) You could say that we slept and woke up  
40 in church. We never ... It is like I never thought that something of this nature could happen to  
41 us. We never even paid attention to such things WHEN THEY WERE DISCUSSED in the  
42 radio. It was something that really HIT us. That is why I am saying that my father was so  
43 affected by the incident that he became sick. He was never the same again – SINCE. It  
44 affected him even when we spoke about it. He was like "is it possible – that a person can  
45 commit such a thing? What would we have done if they all died?"

46 **Interviewer:** How were they towards your family, mama?

47 **May:** Uh, the father to – this woman ... ((Silence)) I have never seen someone – with such a  
48 heart – and I am not sure that I will even ever see such a person. We were able to organise the  
49 funeral because of him. You know that person took it – the way it was. He took it the way it  
50 was – that we were ALL not there, we don't know what happened. He was supportive of us

1 throughout the whole process of organising for the funeral until the end. He was the one who  
 2 helped us to move forward, that man. But his wife's family – JESUS! He was the only one  
 3 who could get through to them, this man, our daughter-in-law's father. You could clearly see  
 4 that those people wanted a fight. They were rude to us. But we were able to achieve our goals  
 5 – because of this man. This man was the only who tried to ... You know he was the only one  
 6 who firmly asserted that "the children are mine." That is how we succeeded. That man was –  
 7 fine. Even if something happens, but I still think highly of him until today ((hitting the  
 8 table)). If it was not for him ((hitting the table)) I don't know what would have happened  
 9 because the situation was bad.

10 **Interviewer:** Yes.

11 **May:** Yes. But that man, ijo! You know he was very supportive of us. He was open towards  
 12 us. We went everywhere and did everything with him. He was always there with us. It is like  
 13 – we never had disagreements. But – his wife's family, ijo! They were not good towards us.

14 **Interviewer:** What is it about this case that made you distance yourselves from Neo?

15 **May:** You SEE some things FRIGHTEN you. We blamed him, that WHY did he not do ... If  
 16 they were ... You think of things which could have made him avoid THIS THING. You think  
 17 that he should have just left the house if they angered him and went to our parents' house to  
 18 calm down – rather than – committing something like this. ((Silence)) That is, if he did it  
 19 because he was angry. You understand?

20 **Interviewer:** What do you think Neo learnt from this whole situation?

21 **May:** Eish, I thought that he must learn to be patient so that he can endure whatever  
 22 challenge that comes his way. I think that he learnt to ask for help when he is experiencing  
 23 problems. He must not keep his problems to himself because the problems will eventually  
 24 EXPLODE – and you don't know how they WILL EXPLODE. I thought that he and his wife  
 25 had problems but he was not talking about them. So you see when the situation is like that  
 26 things end up exploding in some way or another. You – become ... It is like those things  
 27 make you somehow when they continuously occupy your mind. You can even act like a mad  
 28 person or something. This crime shows you that there was a period in which – he was mad  
 29 for some time. How can a person just SUDDENLY DECIDE to take a gun and shot people?

### Perceiver Element Grid.

30 **Interviewer:** The second part of the interview session is not going to be as long as the first  
 31 part.

32 **May:** Ok.

33 **Interviewer:** Some of the questions that I will ask in this session will be slightly similar to  
 34 the questions asked in the previous interview. How did you and your family see Neo before  
 35 the incident?

36 **May:** During his childhood or adulthood?

37 **Interviewer:** Both ways mama. What were your views of him? What did you think about  
 38 him?

39 **May:** Me ... According to ... As he was growing up ... To be honest, I did not think that he  
 40 would take a short route of being a law enforcement agent in his education. I expected him to  
 41 ... Because he was very intelligent at school. You know he was excelling in his studies. So I  
 42 thought that maybe he would continue with his studies until – tertiary. That is what I thought  
 43 of him, but instead he chose to complete Grade 12 and become a law enforcement agent.  
 44 When we were growing up ... You see that is why I am saying that my parents had him way  
 45 later after us. He was very young when I got married and he used to come here to my place  
 46 and I saw that he was an intelligent person. I worked near his school when he started high  
 47 school and I saw him to be a child who I thought would pursue his studies further.

- 1 **Interviewer:** You saw him as an ambitious person. What do you think made him to pursue a  
2 career in law enforcement?
- 3 **May:** ((Silence)) When he followed the line of becoming a law enforcement agent – uh when  
4 he pursued it – uh I thought he was just lazy to study further ((laughing)).
- 5 **Interviewer:** ((Laughing))
- 6 **May:** You see because I thought it was a shortcut career to pursue so I saw him as being lazy  
7 to study. You see he cannot say that I did not have enough money to study further. No, he  
8 cannot say that. Even our father did not want him to become a law enforcement agent. It is  
9 just that a person will ... My father wanted him to continue with his studies. But now you  
10 cannot stop a person from doing what they want to do.
- 11 **Interviewer:** What do you think of him now after the shooting and the killing?
- 12 **May:** When I look at him – uh – I don't know if he will come out a changed person or what. I  
13 don't know if he will come out different to the way he was. I don't know how he will be like  
14 when he comes out. When I look at him ... When I saw him – I thought he appeared to have  
15 some form of slight anger. You see that is why I said I did not like to ... I have never asked  
16 him about this thing. You see his wife's family was busy wanting money from him. I am sure  
17 that is what confused and upset him. When I looked at him I thought this person has not come  
18 completely to terms with what happened. But now when I look at him ... I can hear when I  
19 talk to him that he is becoming slightly better because he does not seem to be stubborn like  
20 before. He seems to deal with things as they come.
- 21 **Interviewer:** How did you see his family?
- 22 **May:** Eish! You know I thought it was ... I thought they were going to be successful. I saw  
23 them good together with their children when I visited them. But I think that one of their  
24 daughters, the older one, was a bit slow at school because she repeated a grade twice. But I  
25 saw them to be – a happy family. I am not sure if her poor academic performance had to do  
26 with the fact that she was attending an Afrikaans school so maybe she did not understand the  
27 language. But – I saw her failure as normal for a child and I thought that she would improve.
- 28 **Interviewer:** Ok.
- 29 **May:** Yes. So – I don't know because he bought his older daughter a cell phone during that  
30 week of the incident. So now you will not know what was going on.
- 31 **Interviewer:** How do you think his family saw him? For instance, how do you think his wife  
32 saw him?
- 33 **May:** His wife?
- 34 **Interviewer:** Yes.
- 35 **May:** Eish, that is why I am saying that I don't know. She was secretive and she did not tell  
36 us anything. So we thought they were getting along.
- 37 **Interviewer:** You said that she changed at your family events. For instance, you said that you  
38 saw her as a person who was either forcing or being forced to attend the functions. How did  
39 you observe her behaviour towards her husband then?
- 40 **May:** ((Deep breath)) I saw ... Because they were not coming together to the events. This  
41 one came first and another one followed. Like the wife would come first and he would come  
42 last or he would come first and the wife would follow, but they left together. I remember this  
43 other time when I had an event here, Neo was at work so he came here from work and his  
44 wife came here straight from her home because she was not working – but she came slightly  
45 late at about – 11 and she was coming from her house. But when they left in the evening, they  
46 did not have transport, my daughter's husband left with them when he went back to his  
47 house. They all left together and he dropped them at their place. So you see we did not notice  
48 anything.
- 49 **Interviewer:** Ok. How did and do you and your family see yourselves before and after this  
50 incident?

1 **May:** We were fine before the incident. We have never had ... It is like let me say that my  
2 family and I never had a problem of undermining each other or whatever. We sit and discuss  
3 if there is an issue or if we have a problem. Everybody comes together, nobody is ever absent  
4 from the meetings. And then after this incident – eish I just see life going on, everything is  
5 the same. Although I have to say that the incident shook us. It was not nice in my family. It  
6 took time for us to become – fine again. ((Silence)) You see I can talk about it now but I am  
7 sure if you came in – 2011, I was not going to be able to tell you anything. It was like my  
8 voice just went right there every time I spoke about it. It took time – it took me time to accept  
9 it. You know – I could not understand it. I was like, ‘is it really possible?’ Eish, we read  
10 about some things in the newspapers and we see them in the TV, but you just tell yourself  
11 that they don’t involve you. You don’t associate yourself with such things.

12 **Interviewer:** What made you to distance such things from you and your family?

13 **May:** No not distance. It is like – you don’t THINK that one day something as shocking as  
14 this could happen to our family.

15 **Interviewer:** What made you think in that way?

16 **May:** Uh, you see it is because we hear it happening elsewhere and sometimes we read in the  
17 newspaper that so and so did this and that. Eish, so you find that you don’t think it will  
18 happen to you. You don’t think that one day you will encounter something like this UNTIL it  
19 happens to you, and it is a SHOCK when it happens. I found it to be a ... You know a  
20 SHOCK! You know I remember when they phoned me ... You know I could not ... It was  
21 like I could not think straight. I did not even know who Neo was. You see when you hear,  
22 “EISH Neo killed people. He killed people!” You know I could not think straight. I just said  
23 ‘WHO?’ “Neo!” You understand? When my mind was normal again and I remembered that  
24 one of my siblings is Neo, eish! it was something – SHOCKING to me. But it was like – it  
25 happened.

26 **Interviewer:** Let me also ask the question in this way. Why was it a shock to you when you  
27 heard what Neo had done? Do you get what I am trying to say?

28 **May:** Yes, I understand you. You see I – did not have that thought that someone in my family  
29 – could kill someone. We never ... I have never thought of something like that. Even when  
30 they said “someone killed people, he killed people.” Ah! You know you hear these things,  
31 BUT I never had that thought that something of this nature could happen to my family.

32 **Interviewer:** What made you think so?

33 **May:** Because WE DON’T HAVE ... I investigated the matter. I asked around because I  
34 wanted to know if there was ever a family member who killed themselves – who we maybe  
35 did not know about, or did a family member kill someone? My mother said “no, I have never  
36 heard such a thing ever since I was married into this family.” My father said “I have never  
37 heard such a thing since my childhood! I don’t know anybody who killed others or someone  
38 killed themselves.” So this was something which surprised us.

39 **Interviewer:** So it was an unusual and strange behaviour in your family.

40 **May:** Yes.

41 **Interviewer:** In your mind mama, what kind of family would you like to have?

42 **May:** Eish! My sister to be honest ... It is just that sometimes things don’t work out the way  
43 you want. I wish for a respectable family. It’s like I don’t want us to be involved in things ...  
44 There are things which some people are doing out there which are unacceptable. Uh, I always  
45 tell my son that I don’t like ... It’s like a person – should always show respect not only to  
46 people that you know but also to people that you don’t know. Another person should see the  
47 type of person you are when they look at you. You should have respect, go to church, and do  
48 the right things. I always say that I ... Even now I ... Let me say I feel ... I don’t like it when  
49 I hear people arguing. There was an incident this afternoon at work in which people were  
50 shouting at each other. You know – the altercation did not concern me but I was affected by

1 it. I don't like an unpleasant situation. I am just like that. I like peace. I have also realised that  
 2 sometimes ... I always tell my colleagues that if I hear that a person ... Let's say that I said  
 3 something which was misinterpreted by someone, I want that person to come and talk to me  
 4 about what they think I was saying. They must say, "you know what you said hurt me", so  
 5 that I can apologise and we can have a good relationship and interaction. I don't want a  
 6 person to ... Maybe I said something which I thought was not hurtful but they were hurt by it  
 7 and they are reminded by it every time they see me. In the meantime, I don't know that they  
 8 were hurt by what I said. You see it is not nice when it is like that.

### ABC model.

9 **Interviewer:** This part of the interview will look at the advantages and disadvantage of  
 10 intervening or not intervening to prevent the crime from happening. I want you to please  
 11 choose between the two. Which do you prefer between taking necessary steps to prevent this  
 12 crime from happening and not doing anything, just letting it to happen?

13 **May:** ((Silence)) I prefer taking steps to – prevent it from happening, that is if you are aware  
 14 of the misunderstanding. Let me say that I knew that they had a misunderstanding, I would  
 15 have tried to approach and discuss with them if maybe I knew. It is like we would have tried  
 16 together to solve the problem in such a way that nobody was grieved.

17 **Interviewer:** I am moving on to the advantage and disadvantages, this is the part where I  
 18 want you to concentrate mama. What do you think are the disadvantages of taking steps to  
 19 prevent a father from killing his children?

20 **May:** ((Silence))

21 **Interviewer:** It is like what do you think you will be losing when you do something to  
 22 prevent this kind of crime from happening?

23 **May:** Uh – a disadvantage could be – sometimes you can think that you are intervening only  
 24 to find that another person does not understand your actions. Let us say that I am taking  
 25 measures to bring them together – and then the wife sees it as you are favouring your brother.  
 26 You see it becomes a disadvantage. Yes, maybe when you are discussing you should hear  
 27 both sides of the story before you come to – a conclusion and then you put what they are  
 28 saying in front of them and talk about the issues. But sometimes you find that when someone  
 29 is talking, especially when it is your relative, I wish there could be a – neutral person who  
 30 will be able to interpret correctly what you are saying because another person can say, "Oh!  
 31 This one is siding with her brother." That is why ... She thinks that maybe you are supporting  
 32 your relative. So it is a disadvantage because sometimes you might intent to reduce the  
 33 conflict only to find that you – are causing the problem to become worse.

34 **Interviewer:** What are the advantages of not intervening to prevent this crime?

35 **May:** ((Silence))

36 **Interviewer:** It is like what will you be gaining if you just sit and let it to happen?

37 **May:** I don't think you will gain something by not doing anything. ((Deep breath)) You will  
 38 be gaining feelings of ... You will feel hurt because you did nothing and let it to happen.

39 ((Silence)) At the end you will be affected. So you see that you would have just left it to  
 40 happen, you ignored it and did not care about it even though you could see that the end  
 41 product was not going to be good. If you stopped it maybe ... You know you could advise  
 42 them to seek marriage counselling when you see that they are having problems. I am not a  
 43 professional so my assistance will just be superficial. You can tell them that 'I don't have the  
 44 knowledge to help you, I can only do this much. It is advisable for you to go to professionals  
 45 and discuss with them your problems so that they can be able to help you.' It is better than  
 46 just leaving them to ... Maybe they don't even know about marriage counsellors whereas I

1 know and I am not guiding them, I am just keeping quiet and saying ‘Ah! Let them carry on.’  
2 But in the meantime I can see that the situation is becoming worse.

3 **Interviewer:** You are saying that there are no advantages of not interv.....

4 **May:** Yes.

5 **Interviewer:** What are the advantages of intervening to prevent the crime from happening?

6 **May:** Uh – it is that – a person – will say what is inside of them. You see you will not know  
7 if they keep quiet but if they talk .... You see they can say, “EISH, we had an argument  
8 yesterday.” You will not just keep quiet when you hear something like that. You will involve  
9 yourself through asking questions and want to know why and concerning what? ‘What did  
10 you argue about?’ Maybe they will respond and then you can hear that – somewhere  
11 somehow one of them – is wrong. But you will not say ‘you are wrong!’ You will say ‘eish,  
12 maybe you should discuss this issue again and look at it from this angle. I think that it will be  
13 like this if you address it from this angle. Try it this way.’ You will have opened an  
14 opportunity for them to come back to you if they took your advice and tried it. They can say  
15 “we ended up talking and this and that happened.” ((Silence)) You will have opened –  
16 something. It is like – you will have allowed a means of communication to be possible –  
17 which will allow you to get in and assist them and solve the situation.

18 **Interviewer:** What are the disadvantages of not intervening?

19 **May:** ((Silence)) IT IS THAT, that thing – will continue and if it is an unpleasant situation  
20 the end product will be bad and a lot of things will be destroyed. ((Silence)) Let me say that  
21 you have children who are disagreeing and maybe undermining each other yet you do nothing  
22 and just leave it and think that ‘eish, they will resolve the matter on their own.’ But you can  
23 hear every day that this thing ... So I think that you should sit them both down and intervene.  
24 You should sit them both down – and try to talk to them, try to show them – a way, and try to  
25 guide them. But if I leave them one day they will be throwing things at each other, and will I  
26 be able to manage it when it gets to that point? ((Silence)) I will not be able to manage it.

27 **Interviewer:** And then just in closing is there something that you would like people to know  
28 about this crime mama?

29 **May:** What I want people to know is that – if they are having problems, especially marital  
30 problems, or they are having challenges in their lives, they must try to tell – other people.  
31 You must not keep some things secret especially when they are happening every day, and you  
32 are just keeping them to yourself. But maybe you could find assistance if you talk and you  
33 choose people that you can confide in.

34 **Interviewer:** Ok.

35 **May:** Yes. We must not keep quiet about issues. Let me say it is like when there is someone  
36 in our family who is sick. The person is sick and people are asking “how are doing?” ‘No, we  
37 are fine.’ But in the meantime, someone in the house is sick. “How are you?” ‘No, we are  
38 fine, there is no problem.’ In the meantime – someone is very sick. I cannot even tell  
39 someone that, ‘we are fine but so and so is not doing well.’ You see by saying that I am  
40 allowing that person to one day come and check up on us, and maybe they can say “you will  
41 find help there and there. Go try there and there.” But can you see that I will not get help if I  
42 keep quiet? ((Silence)) Maybe they are not getting the right treatment wherever I am taking  
43 them, at whatever hospital I am taking them. But other people can maybe advise and assist  
44 me when I share with them my problems.

45

46

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Appendix F: Analysis Process of Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis

Appendix F1: Filicidal Participants

Individual Case Analysis

Joe

Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis

|                                 |   | Initial comments  |   |
|---------------------------------|---|---|---|
| Superordinate themes            | Emerging themes   | Codes   | Original transcript   |
| Feeling disappointed and blamed | Feeling despised for caring for aunt's children<br><br>Unwilling to abandon aunt's children | Wanting him to abandon his aunt's kids<br><br>Something that I was not going to be able to do | <p><b>Interviewer:</b> How did your wife think you were handling the situation, sir? How do you think she saw you handling the matter to the point that she did not seem satisfied because she went to inform her brother?</p> <p><b>Joe:</b> "You see, according to my wife neh – she wanted these children ... that I should abandon them and of which it was something that I was not going to be able to do. Because I remember when I gave my aunt's</p> |
|                                 |   |   | Exploratory comments<br><br>Wife disapproving of him caring for aunt's kids   |

|  |  |   |  |  |
|--|--|---|--|--|
| <p>Feeling disappointed and blamed</p> | <p>Feeling despised for caring for aunt's children</p>   | <p>He is spoiling cousin by giving her money</p>  | <p>daughter pocket money, because she attended school, she said that I am spoiling her maybe by giving her money, rather maybe uh she should take lunch to school. Alright, I stopped giving her pocket money – and then I would buy food for lunch. After I bought the food neh, you would find that my wife would complain again that the food finishes quickly before month end or that the money is finishing, things like that. So then I asked her how did you want us to deal with the matter? Should the child go to school on an empty stomach or should she go to school without pocket money? So it was something difficult for me to leave them because my aunt gave me a lot of support and helped me to be successful when she was working. She was a domestic worker, so ....</p> | <p>Not prepared to abandon aunt's kids</p> <p>Wife disapproving of husband financially supporting cousin</p> |
| <p>Feeling disappointed and blamed</p> | <p>Feeling despised for caring for aunt's children</p>   | <p>Wife complaining again – the food and money are finishing quickly</p>  | <p>Wife having a problem with him looking after his cousin</p>   | <p>Confused about how to look after aunt's kids without upsetting his wife</p>                               |
| <p>Feeling disappointed and blamed</p> | <p>Torn between caring for aunt's children vs. keeping wife happy</p> <p>Caring for aunt's children out of gratitude</p> | <p>How did you want us to deal with the matter?</p> <p>Difficult to abandon aunt's kids – she helped him to succeed</p> | <p>Confused about how to look after aunt's kids without upsetting his wife</p>   | <p>Feeling obliged to care for aunt's kids because she supported him</p>                                     |

|   |   |  |   |  |
|---|---|--|---|--|
|   |   |  | <p>but she was able to buy clothes for me and pay for my school fees.” (p. 390)</p>   |  |
| <p>The spark of marital bliss is dying</p> <p>Feeling disappointed and blamed</p> | <p>Feeling overwhelmed by family problems</p> <p>A close father-daughter relationship</p> | <p>This whole situation was beginning to serious affect me</p> <p>Having a close bond with his older child</p> | <p><b>Interviewer:</b> But also at the same time you had a family in which you had to fulfil your responsibilities as a man, a husband, and a father. I can only imagine that you must have felt stuck somewhere in between and you did not know what to do. How did you feel when all of this was going on?</p> <p><b>Joe:</b> “Well – I can remember that I started feeling that this whole situation – was beginning to <u>seriously</u> affect me, because these two children of mine .... I was very close to the oldest one because she was a bit wiser because to her age, so .....</p> <p><b>390)</b></p> |  |
|   |   |  |   |  |
|   |   |  |   | <p>Family situation – overwhelming.</p> <p>Struggling to cope</p> <p>Close relationship with daughter – getting along well</p> |

| Initial comments                      |  |   |  |  |
|---------------------------------------|--|---|--|--|
| Superordinate themes                  | Emerging themes  | Codes   | Original transcript  | Exploratory comments   |
| The spark of marital bliss is dying   | Seeing self as good vs. others seeing me as bad  | Felt disappointed – thought he fulfilled his responsibilities as a family man               | <b>Interviewer:</b> Sir, when you started thinking that you are not man enough, how did that make you feel?<br><br><b>Joe:</b> “Well, I felt <u>disappointed</u> because deep inside I knew that I was fulfilling all the requirements that were set in the house and I also tried to fulfil my wife’s needs. But the way that he also approached us ..... I think that it was one of the things that made my relationship with his sister to be sour. So it was like – he is taking his sister’s side, and he was not maybe giving advice or a solution that me and my wife could use. So it appeared that he was | Feeling sad – thought he took good care of his family<br><br>Maybe brother-in-law making him to be a bad family man<br><br>Brother-in-law causing more problems in his marriage<br><br>Feeling that brother-in-law and wife were against him<br><br>Brother-in-law not helping them fix problems |
| Feeling ambivalent about finding help | Disapproving of brother-in-law’s approach to problems<br><br>He is making us fight more      | The way that he also approached us<br><br>Brother-in-law making relationship with wife sour |  |  |
| Feeling ambivalent about finding help | Self seen as wrong and wife as right<br><br>Brother-in-law failing to help save our marriage | He was siding with his sister<br><br>His advice not helping in solving their problems       |  |  |

|  |   |  |  |   |
|--|---|--|--|---|
| <p>Feeling ambivalent about finding help</p> | <p>Self seen as wrong and wife as right</p> | <p>He was siding with his sister</p>                             | <p>siding with his sister.” (p. 394)</p>   | <p>Feeling that brother-in-law and wife were against him</p>            |
| <p>Feeling ambivalent about finding help</p> | <p>Grandmother eager to make peace</p>      | <p>Interested in knowing what is happening</p>                   | <p><b>Interviewer:</b> Your grandmother, Norah?</p>  | <p>Grandmother trying to resolve the conflict</p>                       |
| <p>Feeling ambivalent about finding help</p> | <p>Grandmother fuelling the fight</p>       | <p>Wife shouting at grandmother out of anger</p>                 | <p><b>Joe:</b> “Yes, and she asked “WHAT IS HAPPENING?” you see. So my wife replied ..... she was talking loud because she was angry. She said “YOU DON’T KNOW WHAT IS HAPPENING, YOU DON’T KNOW WHAT IS HAPPENING”, you see. So I told her that she must not involve my grandmother and disrespect her when we are disagreeing about something – that is what I told her. I told her that she must confront me if she maybe has a problem and <u>talk to me decently</u>, but that she must not disrespect me and then don’t shout at me – in the</p> | <p>Wife venting out her anger on the grandmother</p>                    |
| <p>Feeling ambivalent about finding help</p> | <p>Grandmother fuelling the fight</p>       | <p>Defending grandmother against his wife</p>                    | <p>Disrespect her when we are disagreeing about something – that is what I told her. I told her that she must confront me if she maybe has a problem and <u>talk to me decently</u>, but that she must not disrespect me and then don’t shout at me – in the</p>   | <p>Angered by the way in which wife was taking to grandmother</p>       |
| <p>Feeling ambivalent about finding help</p> | <p>Grandmother fuelling the fight</p>       | <p>Displeased by wife involving grandmother into their fight</p> | <p>Disrespect her when we are disagreeing about something – that is what I told her. I told her that she must confront me if she maybe has a problem and <u>talk to me decently</u>, but that she must not disrespect me and then don’t shout at me – in the</p>   | <p>Wanting wife to direct her anger towards him and not grandmother</p> |
| <p>The spark of marital bliss is dying</p>   | <p>Demanding spousal respect</p>            | <p>Wanting her to talk to him with respect</p>                   | <p>Disrespect her when we are disagreeing about something – that is what I told her. I told her that she must confront me if she maybe has a problem and <u>talk to me decently</u>, but that she must not disrespect me and then don’t shout at me – in the</p>   | <p>Feeling ridiculed by wife in the way she is addressing him</p>       |

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|--|--|---|---|---|
| <p>The spark of marital bliss is dying</p> | <p>Wife pushing for a fight<br/>An explosive fight spiralling out of control<br/>Walking away from an uncontrollable fight</p> | <p>What will you do to me?<br/><br/>We fought again<br/><br/>This thing is getting worse and then I went to the bedroom</p>         | <p>middle of people as if we are the same age. So she said “what will you do to me?” She was saying things like that with her voice still loud. We fought again and they tried to stop us, you see. So right there – I decided that this thing is getting worse and then I went to the bedroom, you see. I went to the bedroom and then I looked for the car keys so that I can go. I did not find them.”</p> | <p>Wife provoking him, maybe feeling untouchable<br/><br/>Fighting on-and-off<br/><br/>Wanting to end the fight by leaving</p>  |
| <p>The spark of marital bliss is dying</p> | <p>Feeling frustrated by an unending fight<br/>Desperate to stop a frustrating fight</p>                                       | <p>She was still busy swearing and swearing<br/><br/>Giving her a warning to stop talking<br/><br/>She still continued shouting</p> | <p>“She was still busy swearing, swearing, you see. So I ended up talking to her .... giving her a warning. I told her to stop talking about this matter and to stop talking to me. But she still continued shouting and raising her voice. I warned her again and told her that I am speaking for the last time – please don’t make me lose control and make a decision which I will</p>                     | <p>Wife continuing to insult and fight with him<br/><br/><i>Warning</i> – feeling overwhelmed, sensing he will do something regrettable<br/>Wife not listening to the warning</p> |
| <p>The spark of marital bliss is dying</p> | <p>Feeling frustrated by an unending fight</p>   | <p>She still continued shouting</p>   | <p>Unbearable</p>   | <p>fight –</p>  |

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|--|--|--|---|---|
| <p>The spark of marital bliss is dying</p> | <p>Feeling engulfed by rage</p> <p>Losing grip of self</p> <p>Wife pushing for a fight</p> | <p>Please don't make me lose control</p> <p>Concerned about making a regrettable decision</p> <p>Provoking him to hit her</p>    | <p>regret maybe for the rest of my life, or making a bad decision. So she continued to provoke me saying that I must hit her, things like that. She said "hit me so that I can get you arrested."</p> <p>"So right there ..... she did not see it ..... I took out my gun. They just saw me taking out my gun and then I shot her. I immediately left ..... I was aware that she was dead after I shot her, you see. So I had this thought that, this thing has happened, it is above my powers. I realised that obviously this thing has happened, I don't have another alternative, besides the one of coming to prison. So I just told myself that I am not going to prison. After I shot her, I decided to ..... because our daughter attends crèche which is not far away from our place ..... I</p> | <p>maybe overwhelmed with anger</p> <p>Fearing he will do something impulsive/wrong</p> <p>Wife wanting the situation to escalate to violence</p> <p>Wife was unaware of the gun</p> <p>Shot wife suddenly</p> <p>Intended to kill her</p> <p>He does not have control over the consequences of the shooting</p> <p>He is destined to be a prisoner</p> <p>Not prepared to be a prisoner</p> <p>Emotional maybe not</p> |
| <p>The family killing: A disaster</p>      | <p>She did not see it coming</p>   | <p>She did not see it</p> <p>Took out the gun and shot her</p> <p>I was aware that she was dead</p> <p>It is above my powers</p> |   |   |
| <p>The family killing: A disaster</p>      | <p>Shooting to kill</p> <p>No longer in control of what happens</p>                        | <p>No other alternative besides going to prison</p> <p>I am not going to prison</p>  |   |   |
| <p>The family killing: A disaster</p>      | <p>Prison is not part of the plan</p> <p>Prison is not part of the plan</p>                |  |   |   |

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| <p>The spark of marital bliss is dying</p> | <p>Failing to reason after killing my wife</p> <p>I have had enough of my problems</p> | <p>I went to crèche in a bad state</p> <p>I feel I cannot cope with this issue</p> | <p>went to crèche in a bad state .... I was crying .... I took her from crèche and returned to the house. So when I returned home I closed the burglar door. I left my son in the house because he was young, he was there when all of this was happening. Then I shut the burglar and took a book and wrote all my problems .... what is happening .... what happened, and also maybe that I – feel I cannot cope with this issue.” (p. 396)</p> <p><b>Interviewer:</b> What year was this?</p> <p><b>Joe:</b> “It was on the [redacted]. It was on Friday around 8 o’clock or half past seven or so. I even took leave from work on that day and thought that my family and I will go on an</p> | <p>thinking right when he fetched daughter</p> <p>Overwhelmed – cannot take the situation anymore</p> |
|  |  |  |   | <p>Didn’t plan to kill family – planned to</p>  |

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| <p>The family killing: A disaster</p> | <p>Making good vs. deadly plans for my family</p> <p>Ending an annoying family problem</p> | <p>Intended to go out with his family</p> <p>Annoyed by this situation – the best way was to end it</p> | <p>outing. But it did not happen like that, but instead this incident happened. So I wrote the suicide letter and asked my family and also close family friends to forgive me because I am really <u>ANNOYED</u> by this situation, so the <u>best way</u> was to end it. So when I was busy somebody alerted the police ..... then the police arrived when I was busy writing this thing ..... the suicide letter. I had not yet shot the children. They were sitting there with me.”<br/><b>(p. 397)</b></p> | <p>have a good time with them</p> <p>Angry – problems not ending – homicide-filicide = answer to problems</p> | <p><b>Interviewer:</b> The doors were still locked?</p> <p><b>Joe:</b> “Yes. Our house was like .... it was a garage which had a veranda which had burglars .... you could sit there but it was secured because it had burglars, and then there was a door leading to the dining</p> |
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| <p>The family killing: A disaster</p> | <p>Ending an annoying family problem<br/>Failing to kill myself</p> | <p>It is the end<br/>Survived the suicidal attempt</p> | <p>room .... so I was sitting there writing this thing and the police van arrived. So I took the children ..... finished writing. After a few seconds there was a helicopter above the house. And then after I finished writing I – I – I killed my daughter and son, and then I ended up maybe .... I thought to myself that it is the end and I tried to commit suicide. But anyway, here I am ..... I survived.” (p. 397)</p> | <p><i>It is the end</i> = achieved goal to kill his family<br/>Intended to also kill himself</p> |
| <p>The family killing: A disaster</p> | <p>Feeling ashamed of the suicidal attempt</p>                      | <p>Not proud that he tried to kill himself</p>         | <p><b>Interviewer:</b> You also shot yourself sir?<br/><b>Joe:</b> “Yes, I shot myself. ((crying))” (p. 397)</p>   | <p>Maybe feeling ashamed at an attempt to take his life</p>                                      |
|                                       |   |  | <p><b>Interviewer:</b> What else do you think you could have done when you realised that the situation was getting out of control</p>  |  |

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|--|--|--|---|---|
| <p>The spark of marital bliss is dying</p> | <p>Feeling hopeless of an irresolvable problem</p> <p>Feeling sick and tired of being blamed</p> <p>Ending an overwhelming family problem</p> <p>Killing my family: A wrong decision</p> | <p>I saw that all my efforts were unsuccessful</p> <p>The persistent problems making him lose hope</p> <p>Tired of being blamed</p> <p>So that is when I did that</p> <p>I know what I did was wrong</p> | <p>rather than taking out your gun?</p> <p><b>Joe:</b> “Eish, you know to be honest – I saw that all my efforts were unsuccessful. So I did not have hope anymore, especially after – the way things went in the morning. I thought to myself that whatever I have tried to do was unsuccessful. It seemed <u>to me</u> that I was always blamed ..... I was too tired. So that is when I did that. Well, I know what I did was wrong, it was not the right thing to do, you see.” (p. 397)</p> | <p>Unable to fix the situation</p> <p>Realising that he cannot overcome his problems</p> <p>Felt people considered him to be the cause of problems</p> <p>Thought homicide-filicide = way out of a tiring situation</p> <p>Aware that killing his family = bad decision</p> |
|  |  |  | <p><b>Interviewer:</b> What made you decide to also kill the children sir?</p> <p><b>Joe:</b> “You see, what got to me was my realisation that the mother of my children was dead. So I thought maybe – that they were still young, so</p>  |   |

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| <p>The family killing: A disaster</p> | <p>Saving my children by killing them</p> <p>Saving my children by killing them</p> <p>Suicide a solution to problems</p> | <p>Don't want children to grow up without parents</p> <p>Killed his kids so that they don't suffer</p> <p>Also saw suicide as a solution to problems</p> | <p>there was no option. I thought there was no option ..... because I thought – if maybe I spare their lives and mine, I am still going to be imprisoned and they will still not have parents. So according to me ..... maybe under the influence of SATAN was that the other option ..... these children were going to suffer, so I decided to kill them and myself, and that was my solution. So that is why I am saying that it was not the right decision – and also it was wrong of me to kill my wife.” (p. 397)</p> | <p>No choice but to kill his kids so that they don't become parentless</p> <p>Thinking his kids will struggle in life if they don't have parents</p> <p>Maybe wanted to kill himself so that he does not suffer from guilt and going to prison</p> <p>Regretting killing wife – led him to commit filicide and attempt suicide</p> |
| <p>The family killing: A disaster</p> | <p>Killing my wife: A wrong vs. right decision</p>  | <p>It was wrong of me to kill my wife</p>  | <p><b>Interviewer:</b> What you are telling me is that your solution did not work for you?</p>   |  |

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|---------------------------------------|---|--|--|---|
| <p>The family killing: A disaster</p> | <p>Killing my family not working out</p> <p>Destroying the meaning of fatherhood</p> <p>Feeling ashamed of joining the club of harmful men</p> <p>Killing my family not working out</p> | <p>It did not work at all</p> <p>Family and non-family members were affected by the killing</p> <p>It also painted all fathers badly</p> <p>Ashamed to be part of the men who hurt their families/women</p> <p>My plan did not work for me</p> | <p><b>Joe:</b> “Yes, <u>it did not work AT ALL</u>. Because it did not only affect my wife’s extended family or mine, BUT I could say that it affected people that I was close to, my community and colleagues. It also painted all <u>fathers</u> badly, you see, that why are fathers the ones doing this? Even now I don’t feel well that we are talking about this. I feel ashamed that I also form <u>PART</u> of the men that hurt or I have hurt my family or women. So I don’t think it is a right thing. My plan did not work for me.” (p. 397)</p> | <p>Realising that killing his family was not an answer to problems</p> <p>Homicide-filicide hurt a lot of people</p> <p>Homicide-filicide showing fathers as harmful to their families</p> <p>Not proud to be one of the men that perpetuate family/woman violence</p> <p>Regretting the decision to killing his family</p> |
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### List of Themes

Feeling bewildered by expectations for a new romance  
 Expecting an eternal union: "Separated by death"  
 Enjoying the fruits of marriage: Growing old and having children  
 Feeling uncertain about the shared spousal expectations  
 "A person that I was very close to": My wife, my life partner  
 Starting our marriage well  
 No more happiness only sourness  
 Feeling obliged to care for aunt's children  
 Defending a two-way spousal communication relationship  
 Talking to wife concerning the care of aunt's children  
 Making a joint spousal decision to care for aunt's children  
 Experiencing sourness in my marriage  
 A bitter wife and cousin relationship  
 Talking to wife about a bitter wife-cousin conflict  
 Feeling offended by how wife talks to self  
 Wife feeling interrogated by self  
 Wife's feelings of bitterness towards aunt's children  
 The frustrations of parenting a troublesome step-son  
 Feeling concerned about step-son's behaviour  
 Step-son's bad behaviour spiralling out of control  
 Working with wife to manage step-son's behaviour  
 Step-son's bad behaviour spiralling out of control  
 Feeling consoled by brother in-law concerning step-son's defiance  
 Experiencing step-son's bad behaviour as uncontrollable  
 Moving step-son to brother in-law's house  
 Loving aunt's children vs. hating step-son  
 Hoping to restore marital happiness  
 The usual ups and downs of love  
 Hoping to restore marital happiness  
 Feeling saddened by problems not resolved as hoped  
 Talking about marital problems  
 Seeking marital counselling  
 Defending a two-way spousal communication relationship  
 No need for marital counselling  
 Having a respectful wife  
 Talking to wife about marital problems  
 Apologising during marital conflict  
 Marital problems "becoming slightly right"  
 Being oblivious to an on-and-off wife-aunt's children conflict  
 Wife's feelings of bitterness towards cousin  
 Talking to wife about a bitter wife-cousin conflict  
 Cousin's feelings of bitterness towards my wife  
 Talking to cousin about a bitter wife-cousin conflict  
 Cousin feeling ill-treated by my wife  
 Feeling frustrated by an on-and-off wife-aunt's children conflict  
 Wife's disinterest in fixing wife-aunt's children conflict  
 Telling family my marital problems too late  
 Wife disclosing marital problems to brother  
 Brother in-law disapproving of conflict resolution strategy

### Clustering of Themes and Developing Subordinate Themes

#### **Finding marital happiness turning violently sour**

Feeling bewildered by expectations for a new romance  
 Expecting an eternal union: "Separated by death"  
 Enjoying the fruits of marriage: Growing old and having children  
 Feeling uncertain about the shared spousal expectations  
 "A person that I was very close to": My wife, my life partner  
 Starting our marriage well  
 No more happiness only sourness  
 Experiencing sourness in my marriage  
 Hoping to restore marital happiness  
 The usual ups and downs of love  
 Feeling saddened by problems not resolved as hoped  
 Having a respectful wife  
 Marital problems "becoming slightly right"

#### **Arguing all the time**

Defending a two-way spousal communication relationship  
 Talking to wife concerning the care of aunt's children  
 Making a joint spousal decision to care for aunt's children  
 Talking to wife about a bitter wife-cousin conflict  
 Feeling offended by how wife talks to self  
 Wife feeling interrogated by self  
 Talking to wife about marital problems  
 Apologising during marital conflict  
 Forcing wife to respect me  
 Poor communication causing suspicion of adultery  
 We are failing to communicate

#### **Feelings of loyalty causing problems**

Feeling obliged to care for aunt's children  
 A bitter wife and cousin relationship  
 Wife's feelings of bitterness towards aunt's children  
 The frustrations of parenting a troublesome step-son  
 Feeling concerned about step-son's behaviour  
 Step-son's bad behaviour spiralling out of control  
 Experiencing step-son's bad behaviour as uncontrollable  
 Moving step-son to brother-in-law's house  
 Loving aunt's children vs. hating step-son  
 Unwilling to abandon aunt's children  
 Feeling despised for caring for aunt's children  
 Feeling angered by the pressure to abandon aunt's children  
 Torn between caring for aunt's children vs. keeping wife happy

#### **Feeling angry and unappreciated**

Feeling ridiculed for being a good father  
 Feeling unappreciated as a father  
 Exploding with rage  
 I hurt my daughter

A close father-son relationship  
 My son feeling love for self  
 A good father-children relationship  
 Taking care of my children no matter what

### **Feeling culturally unacceptable as a father**

A man: "The head of the house"  
 Being entitled to respect  
 Taking care of the family  
 A father bringing home the bacon for his children  
 A father and son reciprocating feelings of love  
 Feeling safe around my father  
 I played my part very well  
 No longer a good family man

### **Welcoming and rejecting family intervention**

Feeling consoled by brother in-law concerning step-son's defiance  
 Telling family my marital problems too late  
 Brother in-law disapproving of conflict resolution strategy  
 Brother in-law siding with my wife concerning our problems  
 Feeling compelled to choose between aunt's children vs. family  
 Brother in-law controlling me  
 Brother in-law's involvement in problems making me angry  
 Brother in-law's threat to take my wife  
 Disapproving of brother in-law's approach to problems  
 Self seen as an incompetent husband  
 Grandmother fuelling the fight

### **Regretting not following advice**

Talking about marital problems  
 Seeking marital counselling  
 No need for marital counselling

### **Feeling desperate to find a solution**

Not thinking of killing my family  
 Ending an annoying family problem  
 Failing to kill myself  
 Ending an overwhelming family problem  
 Saving my children by killing them  
 Suicide a solution to problems  
 The killing: Ending irresolvable problems  
 Looking for a solution to an uncontrollable problem  
 Ending a problem that is shaming the family

### **Creating a "disaster"**

Feeling ashamed of the suicidal attempt  
 Killing my family not working out  
 Destroying the meaning of fatherhood  
 Feeling ashamed of joining the club of harmful men  
 Feeling judged for my crime

The rejection is hurting me

### Clustering of Themes and Developing Superordinate Themes

#### **The spark of marital bliss is dying**

Finding marital happiness turning violently sour

Arguing all the time

#### **Feeling disappointed and blamed**

Feelings of loyalty causing problems

Feeling angry and unappreciated

Feeling culturally unacceptable as a father

#### **Feeling ambivalent about finding help**

Welcoming and rejecting family intervention

Regretting not following advice

#### **The family killing: A disaster**

Feeling desperate to find a solution

Creating a “disaster”

**Table of Superordinate and Subordinate Themes**

| <b>SUPERORDINATE THEMES</b>                  | <b>SUBORDINATE THEMES</b>                        |
|--|--|
| <b>THE SPARK OF MARITAL BLISS IS DYING</b>   | Finding marital happiness turning violently sour |
|  | Arguing all the time                             |
| <b>FEELING DISAPPOINTED AND BLAMED</b>       | Feelings of loyalty causing problems             |
|  | Feeling angry and unappreciated                  |
|  | Feeling culturally unacceptable as a father      |
| <b>FEELING AMBIVALENT ABOUT FINDING HELP</b> | Welcoming and rejecting family intervention      |
|  | Regretting not following advice                  |
| <b>THE FAMILY KILLING: A DISASTER</b>        | Feeling desperate to find a solution             |
|  | Creating a “disaster”                            |

## Themes, Brief Quotations, and References

| SUPERORDINATE THEMES  | BRIEF QUOTATIONS                                | REFERENCES |
|---|---|------------|
| <p style="text-align: center;"><b>THE SPARK OF MARITAL<br/>BLISS IS DYING</b></p> | “grow old together”                             | 386.17     |
|   | “achieve in life”                               | 386.17     |
|   | “same thought like me”                          | 386.23     |
|   | “I was very close to”                           | 386.24     |
|   | “we have a problem”                             | 386.31     |
|   | “be slightly sour”                              | 386.40     |
|   | “interrogate her in her house”                  | 387.14     |
|   | “things will be fine again”                     | 388.38     |
|   | “problems would be resolved”                    | 388.39     |
|   | “sad at the way things turned out”              | 388.40     |
|   | “we were open to discuss”                       | 389.6      |
|   | “seriously affect me”                           | 390.27     |
|   | “I am not a responsible man”                    | 391.9      |
|   | “made me fight with her”                        | 391.23     |
|   | “performed her domestic responsibilities”       | 393.26     |
|   | “communication <u>breakdown</u> ”               | 393.28     |
|   | “I am not <u>man enough</u> ”                   | 394.44     |
|   | “take charge of my own home”                    | 394.44     |
|   | “I felt <u>disappointed</u> ”                   | 394.49     |
|   | “fulfilling all the requirements”               | 394.49     |
|   | “disappointed after we fought”                  | 395.23     |
| “that made me lose control”   | 396.2   |            |
| “second physical fight”   | 396.12  |            |
| “cannot cope with this issue”   | 396.48  |            |
| “efforts were unsuccessful”   | 397.20  |            |
| “not have hope anymore”   | 397.20  |            |
| “I was always blamed”   | 397.22  |            |
| “did not have discipline”   | 398.30  |            |
| <p style="text-align: center;"><b>FEELING DISAPPOINTED AND<br/>BLAMED</b></p>     | “I was forced”                                  | 386.29     |
|   | “not get along with those children”             | 386.40     |
|   | “I liked uh children who <u>were not hers</u> ” | 388.29     |
|   | “one of our problems”                           | 388.30     |
|   | “a problem with the children again”             | 389.25     |
|   | “wife did not want to discuss”                  | 389.28     |
|   | “I should abandon them”                         | 390.1      |
|   | “difficult for me to leave them”                | 390.10     |
|   | “did not take me well”                          | 390.40     |
|   | “complete hatred for him”                       | 391.5      |
|   | “choosing my aunt’s children”                   | 391.42     |
|   | “not feel well about the issue”                 | 391.45     |
|   | “a lot of love for my children”                 | 393.35     |
|   | “I fulfilled their expectations of me”          | 394.13     |

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|  | “WHAT MADE US FIGHT”                         | 395.35 |
|  | “erases the good that I did”                 | 399.9  |
|  | “I played my part very well”                 | 399.9  |
| <b>FEELING AMBIVALENT<br/>ABOUT FINDING HELP</b> | “console me”                                 | 388.23 |
|  | “supervisor was aware”                       | 388.44 |
|  | “not to continue with the<br>counselling”    | 389.2  |
|  | “not able to deal with the<br>situation”     | 389.46 |
|  | “you are now controlling me”                 | 391.8  |
|  | “physically violent”                         | 391.19 |
|  | “already <u>worse</u> ”                      | 392.43 |
|  | “I was not able to resolve it”               | 392.45 |
|  | “relationship with his sister to be<br>sour” | 395.2  |
|  | “taking his sister’s side”                   | 395.2  |
|  | “was not maybe giving advice”                | 395.3  |
|  | “not involve my grandmother”                 | 396.25 |
| “she must confront me”                           | 396.26                                       |        |
| <b>THE FAMILY KILLING: A<br/>DISASTER</b>        | “I never had this thought”                   | 395.27 |
|  | “it is above <u>my powers</u> ”              | 396.40 |
|  | “don’t have another alternative”             | 396.41 |
|  | “ <u>ANNOYED</u> by this situation”          | 397.5  |
|  | “ <u>best way</u> was to end it”             | 397.5  |
|  | “I was too tired”                            | 397.23 |
|  | “what I did was wrong”                       | 397.23 |
|  | “children were going to suffer”              | 397.30 |
|  | “that was my solution”                       | 397.31 |
|  | “painted all <u>fathers</u> badly”           | 397.36 |
|  | “I feel <u>ashamed</u> ”                     | 397.37 |
|  | “ <u>PART</u> of the men that hurt”          | 397.38 |
|  | “plan did not work for me.”                  | 397.39 |
|  | “distance themselves from you”               | 397.45 |
|  | “ <u>THAT IS HURTFUL</u> ”                   | 397.45 |
|  | “overwhelmed by <u>anger</u> ”               | 398.5  |
|  | “created a <u>DISASTER</u> .”                | 398.8  |
|  | “I am not a violent person”                  | 398.14 |
|  | “saw that there was no solution”             | 398.16 |
|  | “situation is out of control”                | 398.26 |
|  | “better if there is a <u>SOLUTION</u> ”      | 398.26 |
|  | “community respected me a lot”               | 399.22 |
|  | “the <u>pain</u> that I caused”              | 399.23 |
| “it changed everything”                          | 399.25                                       |        |
| “seeing yourself as alone”                       | 399.26                                       |        |

Neo

### List of Themes

Looking forward to a joyous and fruitful marriage  
Desiring family to live comfortably  
Hoping to give my children the best in life  
Wanting the good life for our family  
Ensuring that our family has a good life  
Solving problems together as a team  
Working together as a team  
Advising each other concerning the family's well-being  
Achieving in life together as a team  
Not getting along with my wife  
Experiencing the ups and downs of a marriage  
Having a communication breakdown  
Talking openly with each other  
Work is destroying my marriage  
Feeling frustrated by wife's work schedule  
Failing to understand wife's work schedule  
I feel I don't have a wife  
Feeling angered by wife's work schedule  
Feeling confused by wife's work schedule  
I feel I don't have a wife  
I am forced to be a woman  
Trusting my wife  
Becoming suspicious of wife's work schedule  
Feeling deceived by wife  
Work is destroying my marriage  
Demanding answers on wife's whereabouts  
Wife keeping her affairs private  
I just left it  
Not talking about problems  
Feeling fine with problems  
Not dwelling on problems  
Not losing focus amidst problems  
Experiencing marriage as normal amidst problems  
Marital problems are piling up  
Slight problems causing a big fight  
Monitoring wife's behaviour  
Happiness turning into sourness  
Not talking to each other  
Acting normal in a troubled marriage  
Keeping problems secret from family  
Wife informing family about problems  
Father in-law taking my wife's side  
Alcohol reminding me of problems  
Fighting over old issues  
Keeping problems secret from family  
Wife informing family about problems

**Clustering of Themes and Developing Subordinate Themes****Feeling frustrated about the impact of work**

Looking forward to a joyous and fruitful marriage  
Desiring family to live comfortably  
Wanting the good life for our family  
Ensuring that our family has a good life  
Solving problems together as a team  
Working together as a team  
Achieving in life together as a team  
Not getting along with my wife  
Experiencing the ups and downs of a marriage  
Working through problems together  
Not expecting my marriage to end in sorrow  
Expecting to enjoy the fruits of marriage  
Not expecting overwhelming marital problems  
Work is destroying my marriage  
I am forced to be a woman

**Growing increasingly suspicious about infidelity**

Having a communication breakdown  
Talking openly with each other  
Advising each other concerning the family's well-being  
I just left it  
Not talking about problems  
Trusting my wife  
Not talking to each other  
Seeing wife's lies late  
Wife is endlessly lying  
Wife keeping her affairs private  
Exchanging bitter words with wife

**Failing to control my anger**

Stopping self from losing control  
I don't hit my wife  
Exploding with rage  
I am becoming violent  
Work is making me aggressive  
Changing for the worst  
Changing into a violent self  
Losing temper easily  
Alcohol reminding me of problems  
Comforting an overwhelmed self with alcohol

**Failing as a father now**

Hoping to give my children the best in life  
Our fights are troubling the children  
Taking care of my children  
My children expecting the best from me  
Wanting my children to be proud of me

My child is making me feel sad  
 Blaming self for my child's sorrow  
 Failing my child is hurting me  
 Feeling ashamed of my family's problems

**Feeling culturally unacceptable as a family man**

Providing for the family  
 A wife taking care of the home  
 Bringing home the bacon  
 Looking after his children  
 Fulfilling his wife's needs  
 Doing things right  
 Cannot tell wife what to do  
 Wanting to do things for herself  
 The family killing is not my culture  
 Not doing right by my culture  
 Encouraging family intervention concerning problems  
 Using culture to resolve marital problems

**Feeling rejected by family**

Keeping problems secret from family  
 Wife informing family about problems  
 Father in-law taking my wife's side  
 Experiencing bitterness between self and the in-laws  
 Feeling eager to end a family feud  
 Protecting my child from a family feud  
 Letting my family down  
 Unwilling to listen to people  
 Nobody tells me how to run my home  
 Fighting with people offering help

**Feeling no control: "It attacked me fast"**

Taking a gun for protection vs. shooting family  
 Experiencing a blackout amidst chaos  
 The situation is becoming messy  
 Seen as shooting family out of spousal hatred  
 Experiencing unexplainable feelings amidst chaos  
 Struggling to make sense of my loss of control  
 Making impulsive decisions concerning problems  
 Killing family out of impulse  
 Don't know why I am shooting my family  
 Intending to kill my whole family  
 Struggling to understand the family shooting

**Seeing other options now**

No other solution to my problem  
 Realising other solutions to my problem  
 Talking vs. keeping quiet a solution to problems  
 Killing myself by keeping quiet  
 Divorce a way out of problems

Staying for the children's sake  
 Feeling bombarded by annoying thoughts  
 Feeling confused by conflicting thoughts  
 I am going out of my mind  
 My mind is telling me to go  
 Seeing her reminds me of our problems

**Intending to make things right**

Wishing to make things right  
 Hoping to get my life back  
 I am an achiever not a failure  
 Changing for the better

**Clustering of Themes and Developing Superordinate Themes**

**My happy marriage is falling apart**

Feeling frustrated about the impact of work  
 Growing increasingly suspicious about infidelity  
 Failing to control anger

**No longer a good family man**

Failing as a father now  
 Feeling culturally unacceptable as a family man  
 Feeling rejected by family

**I committed a "big mistake"**

Feeling no control: "It attacked me fast"  
 Seeing other options now  
 Intending to make things right

**Table of Superordinate and Subordinate Themes**

| <b>SUPERORDINATE THEMES</b>               | <b>SUBORDINATE THEMES</b>                        |
|---|--|
| <b>MY HAPPY MARRIAGE IS FALLING APART</b> | Feeling frustrated about the impact of work      |
|   | Growing increasingly suspicious about infidelity |
|   | Failing to control anger                         |
| <b>NO LONGER A GOOD FAMILY MAN</b>        | Failing as a father now                          |
|   | Feeling culturally unacceptable as a family man  |
|   | Feeling rejected by family                       |
| <b>I COMMITTED A "BIG MISTAKE"</b>        | Feeling no control: "It attacked me fast"        |
|   | Seeing other options now                         |
|   | Intending to make things right                   |

## Themes, Brief Quotations, and References

| SUPERORDINATE THEMES                          | BRIEF QUOTATIONS   | REFERENCES   |
|---|--|--|
| <b>MY HAPPY MARRIAGE IS<br/>FALLING APART</b> | “we were so committed”<br>“breakdown of communication”<br>“ <u>serious</u> problem”<br>“I could not understand”<br>“it did not take me well”<br>“become a woman in the house”<br>“we argued – and <u>a lot</u> ”<br>“I JUST LEFT IT”<br>“I was only positive”<br>“ <u>seeing other problems</u> ”<br>“coming back to my mind”<br>“consoled himself with it”<br>“kept his <u>problems to himself.</u> ”<br>“ <u>I thought about everything</u> ”<br>“not able to spend a lot of time at home”<br>“had a lot of different thoughts”<br>“I was still <u>positive</u> ”<br>“ <u>but</u> I saw it becoming <u>worse</u> ”<br>“hope started to slowly, slowly finish”<br>“ <u>hurt me</u> ”<br>“BECAME                      excessively <u>AGGRESSIVE</u> ”<br>“ <u>affected</u> me a lot”<br>“no longer <u>interested in me</u> ”<br>“ <u>slowly</u> developing anger”<br>“slipping through my fingers”<br>“not expect that my marriage will end like this” | 404.27<br>405.16<br>405.25<br>406.19<br>406.21<br>406.23<br>406.44<br>407.1<br>407.5<br>407.8<br>407.29<br>407.40<br>407.42<br>408.2<br>408.5<br>408.5<br>408.25<br>408.29<br>408.43<br>408.46<br>411.14<br>411.19<br>415.26<br>415.26<br>416.29<br>418.29 |
| <b>NO LONGER A GOOD FAMILY<br/>MAN</b>        | “got anything that they wanted”<br>“ <u>knew</u> that they are <u>protected</u> ”<br>“I tried my <u>outmost best</u> ”<br>“ <u>show</u> like having a family”<br>“she would be living well”<br>“my heart becomes painful”<br>“I am the one – to be <u>blamed</u> ”<br>“did everything that they wanted”<br>“the situation is restrictive”<br>“it is not taking me well”<br>“she will blame me”<br>“I am <u>always</u> blaming myself”<br>“how do you want me to <u>run</u> my family”<br>“disappointed other people”   | 412.12<br>413.7<br>413.21<br>413.44<br>414.1<br>414.7<br>414.9<br>414.17<br>414.18<br>414.21<br>414.24<br>414.26<br>418.1<br>418.44  |

|                                    |   |        |
|------------------------------------|---|--------|
|                                    | “not able to be responsible for her”                    | 419.21 |
|                                    | “prove myself as a father”                              | 419.24 |
|                                    | “A <u>father</u> is a provider”                         | 420.7  |
|                                    | “not encourage physical violence”                       | 420.23 |
| <b>I COMMITTED A “BIG MISTAKE”</b> | “stayed for the sake of the children”                   | 408.17 |
|                                    | “inform other people”                                   | 410.34 |
|                                    | “ <u>concluded things</u> – without consultation”       | 415.14 |
|                                    | “a lot of things came to my mind”                       | 415.43 |
|                                    | “ended up making me angry”                              | 415.45 |
|                                    | “ <u>thought about leaving forever</u> ”                | 415.46 |
|                                    | “things came back to my mind”                           | 415.49 |
|                                    | “ATTACKED me FAST”                                      | 416.17 |
|                                    | “I don’t know what came after”                          | 416.23 |
|                                    | “this situation lead me to this?”                       | 416.33 |
|                                    | “better if there is nobody”                             | 416.41 |
|                                    | “happened in a short period of time”                    | 416.45 |
|                                    | “why did I do such a thing?”                            | 417.14 |
|                                    | “ <u>tired</u> in life”                                 | 417.17 |
|                                    | “this and that will happen”                             | 418.18 |
|                                    | “it would still be me”                                  | 418.26 |
|                                    | “disappointed in myself”                                | 418.39 |
|                                    | “I feel ashamed”  | 418.39 |
|                                    | “I can <u>RECTIFY</u> things”                           | 418.50 |
|                                    | “unable to <u>achieve</u> the <u>WAY</u> I told myself” | 419.6  |
| “I will <u>prove</u> myself”       | 419.30  |        |

**John****List of Themes**

Caring about my child’s well-being  
 Suspecting wife of cheating  
 Feeling shocked by wife’s cheating  
 Suspecting wife of cheating  
 The affair is ruining my marriage  
 Making me a villain to my step-son  
 Wanting out of the marriage  
 Fixing our marriage  
 Being a responsible working father  
 Feeling angered by wife causing money problems  
 Getting out of a bad marriage  
 Feeling angered by wife causing money problems  
 Having big money problems

Money problems are tearing us apart  
I have had it!  
Feeling angered by wife causing money problems  
“I have had it!”  
Suspecting me of cheating  
Not cheating on my wife  
Suspecting me of cheating  
Not getting along with my wife  
Being controlling and possessive of my things  
Fighting over the infidelity  
Suspecting wife of having malicious intentions  
Wanting to kill me  
Being violent towards each other  
Wife intending to kill us  
Having a bitter break up  
Protecting myself from my abusive wife  
Getting out of a bad marriage  
Comforting each other  
Falling in love  
Looking for love  
Looking for a peaceful relationship  
Making me a villain to my step-son  
Distrusting wife with money  
Feeling overwhelmed by the fighting  
Being violent towards each other  
It is not me  
Exploding with rage  
Not used to a home of violence  
Yearning to feel supported  
Hoping to find love  
Looking for a loving mother-figure  
Looking for love  
Making me feel safe  
Growing our love  
The family approving of our love  
Growing our love  
Not having sex  
Taking time to grow our love  
Comforting each other  
Our love growing stronger  
Not having sex  
Our happy marriage turning sour  
Bringing problems into new marriage  
Not coping financially  
Wife and step-daughter not getting along  
Fighting over childcare  
Experiencing anxiety over parenting a sick child  
Not knowing how to care for a sick child  
Wife abusing step-daughter

**Clustering of Themes and Developing Subordinate Themes****Feeling rejected**

Suspecting wife of cheating  
Feeling shocked by wife's cheating  
The affair is ruining my marriage  
Fixing our marriage  
Feeling angered by wife causing money problems  
Getting out of a bad marriage  
Having big money problems  
I have had it!  
Suspecting me of cheating  
Not cheating on my wife  
Not getting along with my wife  
Being controlling and possessive of my things  
Fighting over the infidelity  
Suspecting wife of having malicious intentions  
Wanting to kill me  
Being violent towards each other  
Wife intending to kill me and rumoured lover  
Having a bitter break up  
Wanting to leave me  
Protecting myself from my abusive wife  
Distrusting wife with money  
Exploding with rage  
Comforting each other  
Falling in love  
Looking for love  
Not wanting us  
Feeling unloved by my wife

**Feeling frustration building up**

Communication is breaking down  
Not talking about problems  
Not knowing how to talk about problems  
Not talking with each other  
Being cold towards each other  
Not able to address problems without fighting  
Failing to communicate about problems

**Feeling robbed of my manhood**

A head of the family  
Not the head of my house  
My wife heading our family  
Not listening to me  
Feeling like I am not a man  
Not having full control in the house

**Loving my children**

Caring about my child's well-being  
Being a responsible working father  
Experiencing anxiety over parenting a sick child  
Wanting my children to be happy  
Wanting us to raise our children well  
Wanting my children looking after each other  
Wanting to have children

**Failing my children**

Wife and step-daughter not getting along  
Wife abusing step-daughter  
Talking about the abuse hurts  
Wife is abusing us daily  
I cannot take the abuse  
Regretting allowing the abuse  
The abuse is getting worse  
Not a good mother for my child  
Failing to protect my children

**Experiencing my problems as unbearable**

Not coping with problems  
Addressing problems alone vs. as a couple  
Feeling frustrated by problems  
Regretting keeping problems inside  
I just snapped  
Becoming an aggressive person  
Walking away from conflict  
My withdrawal is frustrating my wife  
Feeling overwhelmed by work  
Feeling overwhelmed by piling problems  
Feeling overwhelmed by the conflict  
Losing my temper easily  
Attacking my wife back  
Doing things without thinking  
Struggling to cope with problems  
Wanting to be alone  
My life is falling apart

**Struggling to leave**

Not divorcing for the sake of people  
Feeling obliged to wedding vows  
Wanting my family back

**Feeling blamed**

The family approving of our love  
Coalescing against me  
Resenting the family's involvement in problems  
Engaging in a bitter family fight  
Treating me as a villain

Defending myself against them  
Resenting wife for involving the family

**Thinking I was saving my children from suffering**

Suicide an answer to problems  
Not wanting to leave my children behind  
Losing control of myself  
Feeling like I am in a daze  
Feeling overwhelmed by anger and sorrow  
It's just a blank  
Not remembering shooting my children  
Exploding with extreme rage  
Killing my children to protect them  
Filicide-suicide a way out of problems

**Feeling culturally unacceptable as a father**

I am seen as a bad father  
Failing to be a good father  
A good father turned bad

**Wanting my children alive**

Yearning to bring my children back  
Regretting killing my children  
Feeling ashamed to be a filicidal father

**Clustering of Themes and Developing Superordinate Themes**

**FEELING DISAPPOINTED ABOUT THE MARRIAGE**

Feeling rejected  
Feeling frustration building up  
Feeling robbed of my manhood

**LOVING BUT FAILING MY CHILDREN**

Loving my children  
Failing my children

**MY LIFE IS IN SHAMBLES**

Experiencing my problems as unbearable  
Struggling to leave  
Feeling blamed

**FILICIDE-SUICIDE NOT A SOLUTION**

Thinking I was saving my children from suffering  
Feeling culturally unacceptable as a father  
Wanting my children alive

Table of Superordinate and Subordinate Themes

| SUPERORDINATE THEMES                           | SUBORDINATE THEMES                               |
|--|--|
| <b>FEELING DISAPPOINTED ABOUT THE MARRIAGE</b> | Feeling rejected                                 |
|  | Feeling frustration building up                  |
|  | Feeling robbed of my manhood                     |
| <b>LOVING BUT FAILING MY CHILDREN</b>          | Loving my children                               |
|  | Failing my children                              |
| <b>MY LIFE IS IN SHAMBLES</b>                  | Experiencing my problems as unbearable           |
|  | Struggling to leave                              |
|  | Feeling blamed                                   |
| <b>FILICIDE-SUICIDE NOT A SOLUTION</b>         | Thinking I was saving my children from suffering |
|  | Feeling culturally unacceptable as a father      |
|  | Wanting my children alive                        |

Themes, Brief Quotations, and References

| SUPERORDINATE THEMES                           | BRIEF QUOTATIONS                          | REFERENCES |
|--|---|------------|
| <b>FEELING DISAPPOINTED ABOUT THE MARRIAGE</b> | “SHE WANTED TO <u>KILL ME</u> ”           | 426.11     |
|  | “We had big <u>verbal fights</u> ”        | 426.42     |
|  | “I HIT HER WITH A <u>FIST</u> ”           | 427.3      |
|  | “ <u>It is not me</u> ”                   | 427.4      |
|  | “with the <u>ANGER</u> ”                  | 427.4      |
|  | “a (house) that I am not used to”         | 427.6      |
|  | “I wanted LOVE”                           | 427.13     |
|  | “never a guy of <u>verbal conflict</u> ”  | 429.3      |
|  | “wanted to fight <u>with me</u> ”         | 429.9      |
|  | “walked away or ignored her”              | 429.9      |
|  | “problems will <u>IMPROVE</u> ”           | 429.40     |
|  | “a lot of <u>conflict</u> ”               | 429.50     |
|  | “not good between me and Lucy”            | 432.33     |
|  | “we had <u>no communication</u> ”         | 432.38     |
|  | “I retaliated”                            | 433.13     |
|  | “in charge <u>in my house</u> ”           | 434.11     |
|  | “her <u>family was nothing</u> to her.”   | 434.12     |
|  | “Lucy is slipping through my hands”       | 436.1      |
| “it’s <u>all shattered</u> ”                   | 436.3                                     |            |
| “not the head of my house”                     | 436.24                                    |            |
| “felt weak and <u>ROBBED!</u> ”                | 436.30                                    |            |
|  | “ <u>really</u> hard to talk about these” | 428.47     |

|  |  |        |
|--|--|--------|
| <b>LOVING BUT FAILING MY CHILDREN</b>  | “fighting with Anna and John Junior”         | 429.13 |
|  | “It hurts me”                                | 429.16 |
|  | “had enough of the <u>abuse</u> ”            | 429.19 |
|  | “were disappointed”                          | 429.26 |
|  | “ <u>I failed</u> my children”               | 430.8  |
|  | “loved my children and I loved her”          | 431.10 |
|  | “I was a <u>coward.</u> ”                    | 431.11 |
|  | “I did not protect them”                     | 431.28 |
|  | “ <u>go into myself</u> ”                    | 431.29 |
| <b>MY LIFE IS IN SHAMBLES</b>          | “It was tiring me”                           | 427.1  |
|  | “I kept things – <u>inside</u> ”             | 430.20 |
|  | “FRUSTRATED <u>at that stage</u> ”           | 430.29 |
|  | “ <u>kept</u> my frustrations inside”        | 430.29 |
|  | “feelings built up”                          | 430.33 |
|  | “started to <u>explode</u> ”                 | 430.40 |
|  | “Problems piled up”                          | 432.22 |
|  | “very <u>patient</u> , I was – <u>edgy</u> ” | 432.31 |
|  | “ <u>I can’t take it anymore</u> ”           | 434.32 |
|  | “wanted to leave all my problems”            | 434.37 |
|  | “not coping anymore”                         | 434.37 |
|  | “I’m <u>fuckin fed-up</u> ”                  | 434.38 |
|  | “worrying about my <u>marriage</u> ”         | 434.40 |
|  | “worry about my work”                        | 434.41 |
| “don’t want to live anymore”           | 435.28                                       |        |
| “life was in shambles”                 | 437.3  |        |
| <b>FILICIDE-SUICIDE NOT A SOLUTION</b> | “I will <u>change</u> it”                    | 432.19 |
|  | “will happen to my children”                 | 434.24 |
|  | “leave the children behind with her”         | 434.26 |
|  | “ <u>stay alive</u> to be with the children” | 434.28 |
|  | “I <u>totally</u> lost it!”                  | 434.48 |
|  | “I was distant”                              | 434.49 |
|  | “ <u>upset</u> when I <u>got home</u> ”      | 434.49 |
|  | “anger and sadness”                          | 435.1  |
|  | “I don’t remember doing it”                  | 435.7  |
|  | “John hang yourself”                         | 435.11 |
|  | “take them with me to protect them”          | 435.40 |
|  | “It’s painful”                               | 435.42 |
|  | “not plan to kill them”                      | 435.48 |
|  | “planned to kill myself”                     | 435.48 |
|  | “wanted to <u>die</u> ”                      | 435.48 |
|  | “didn’t have zest for life”                  | 435.49 |
|  | “My life was meaningless”                    | 435.49 |
|  | “as their <u>father</u> , is a shame”        | 436.5  |
|  | “I am seen as a <u>failure.</u> ”            | 436.36 |
| “don’t see me as a good father”        | 436.39                                       |        |

**Sly****List of Themes**

Starting a relationship for fun  
Not expecting much from partner  
Wanting a relationship with me  
Not my ideal partner  
Failing to make me happy  
Lacking compatibility between us  
She is boring me  
The family disapproving of our love  
She is too clingy for me  
Ending a fruitless relationship  
She is too clingy for me  
She is useless in my life  
Not my ideal partner  
Not planning to have a baby with her  
Keeping the pregnancy from me until late  
Feeling enticed into the relationship  
She is in love with me  
Ex-partner expecting an everlasting commitment  
Expecting too much from me  
Not playing with her feelings  
Expecting too much from me  
Speaking highly of me  
Feeling guilty about the unreciprocated love  
Not planning to marry her  
Ending a fruitless relationship  
Feeling pursued by ex-partner  
Keeping the pregnancy from me until late  
Loving another woman vs. my son's mother  
Distrusting to have fathered her baby  
Accepting to be the father  
Loving another woman vs. my son's mother  
Acting to be fine with the separation  
Finding new love  
Having a good relationship  
No bitterness between us  
Not my ideal partner  
Having a problem-free relationship  
Associating with her brothers  
The family disapproving of our love  
Losing interest in partner  
Not my ideal partner  
Wanting a woman I can love  
Not in love with my partner  
Wanting a woman I can communicate with  
Showing me right from wrong  
Building each other in life  
She is useless in my life

**Clustering of Themes and Developing Subordinate Themes****Feeling trapped**

Starting a relationship for fun  
Not expecting much from partner  
Wanting a relationship with me  
Not my ideal partner  
Failing to make me happy  
Lacking compatibility between us  
She is boring me  
Feeling enticed into the relationship  
Expecting too much from me

**Feeling confused**

The family disapproving of our love  
The family seeing me as a thief  
The family is rejecting me  
The family seeing as a good man  
Knowing I am not harmful to partner  
Expecting too much from me  
The family expecting marriage  
The family approving of me  
Fearing being judged by the family  
The family expecting me to do wrong  
Doing the badness they expected  
The family disapproving of me  
Feeling confused by the family

**Failing as a father**

Loving my son  
A close father-son relationship  
Providing for my son  
He is making me happy  
Feeling like I am a man  
Planning to raise my son  
Feeling proud to be his father  
Nyaope making me a bad father  
Blaming Nyaope for my negligence  
Feeling guilty about son's death  
Struggling to understand my careless decisions  
Feeling shocked for causing son's death  
Expecting evil people to kill their children

**Seeing disbelief turning into anger and judgement**

Perceiving people as shocked by the filicide  
People perceiving the filicide as an accident  
Wanting me seen as my son's killer  
Turning to my mother for support  
Being blamed for son's injuries

Seen as my son's killer  
 Deserving the family's feelings of anger  
 The family seeing me as a loving father  
 Hating my son  
 My family hates my son  
 My family is untouched by the death  
 My family wants my son dead  
 Resenting having a child with ex-partner  
 Defending my love for my son  
 Empathising with my mother  
 Worrying about the impact of the death on my mother  
 Detests talking about the filicide  
 Worrying about being judged for the filicide  
 Worrying about fighting over the filicide  
 Judging me for son's death

### Clustering of Themes and Developing Superordinate Themes

#### Experiencing both the joys and sorrows of love

Feeling trapped  
 Feeling confused

#### Killing the one I love

Failing as a father  
 Seeing disbelief turning into anger and judgement

Table of Superordinate and Subordinate Themes

| SUPERORDINATE THEMES                                  | SUBORDINATE THEMES                                |
|---|---|
| <b>EXPERIENCING BOTH THE JOYS AND SORROWS OF LOVE</b> | Feeling trapped                                   |
|   | Feeling confused                                  |
| <b>KILLING THE ONE I LOVE</b>                         | Failing as a father                               |
|   | Seeing disbelief turning into anger and judgement |

### Themes, Brief Quotations, and References

| SUPERORDINATE THEMES | BRIEF QUOTATIONS                   | REFERENCES |
|----------------------|------------------------------------|------------|
|                      | "make myself happy ... for fun"    | 440.12     |
|                      | "not expect much from her"         | 440.13     |
|                      | "I was <u>bored</u> "              | 440.21     |
|                      | "not giving me space"              | 440.32     |
|                      | "better for us to separate"        | 440.34     |
|                      | "not see her as my type"           | 440.44     |
|                      | "get married to her"               | 441.11     |
|                      | "expected a lot of things from me" | 441.11     |

|  |   |   |
|--|---|---|
| <p><b>EXPERIENCING BOTH THE JOYS AND SORROWS OF LOVE</b></p> | <p>“I did not feel good”<br/>         “We never fought”<br/>         “not have any problems”<br/>         “made me less interested in her”<br/>         “I was not doing the right things”<br/>         “hurt her by breaking up”<br/>         “guilty for hurting her”<br/>         “I was not committed to her”<br/>         “<u>not building each other</u>”<br/>         “They also confused me”<br/>         “EISH love is somehow”<br/>         “I did not love Mpho”<br/>         “Gigi and I loved each other”<br/>         “she ended up hurting me”</p>   | <p>441.16<br/>         441.36<br/>         441.38<br/>         441.46<br/>         442.14<br/>         442.26<br/>         442.26<br/>         442.27<br/>         442.40<br/>         443.28<br/>         448.39<br/>         448.39<br/>         448.40<br/>         448.40</p>   |
| <p><b>KILLING THE ONE I LOVE</b></p>                         | <p>“made me very happy”<br/>         “I loved Tom a lot”<br/>         “I did not <u>plan to commit it</u>”<br/>         “<u>I wanted to do it.</u>”<br/>         “<u>I did not love Tom</u>”<br/>         “very proud to be his father”<br/>         “they were <u>surprised</u>”<br/>         “it was a mistake”<br/>         “it was a small thing”<br/>         “not understand <u>how he died</u>”<br/>         “I was <u>careless</u>”<br/>         “I accept that I am wrong”<br/>         “not what I wanted to happen to him”<br/>         “a father who was smoking Nyaope”<br/>         “<u>it is my fault</u>”<br/>         “happen to <u>evil people</u>”<br/>         “I did this kind of thing <u>to him</u>”<br/>         “not expect that it would happen”<br/>         “It also <u>eish</u> surprised me”<br/>         “see me as bad”<br/>         “wanted people to <u>hate me</u>”<br/>         “I have never <u>wanted him</u>”<br/>         “<u>my family never wanted Tom</u>”<br/>         “is not <u>disturbing us</u>”<br/>         “<u>it is what we exactly wanted</u>”<br/>         “<u>NOT WANT TO HAVE A CHILD</u>”<br/>         “they <u>judged me</u>”<br/>         ““he killed his child.””</p> | <p>443.38<br/>         443.42<br/>         444.1<br/>         444.3<br/>         444.5<br/>         444.34<br/>         444.36<br/>         444.37<br/>         446.10<br/>         446.44<br/>         446.47<br/>         447.2<br/>         447.3<br/>         447.8<br/>         447.21<br/>         447.24<br/>         447.25<br/>         447.26<br/>         447.32<br/>         447.42<br/>         447.45<br/>         447.50<br/>         448.1<br/>         448.4<br/>         448.6<br/>         448.6<br/>         448.15<br/>         448.16</p> |

## Cross-case Analysis

### List of Themes

The spark of marital bliss is dying  
 Marital happiness turning violently sour  
 Losing our ability to communicate  
 A good family man seen as bad  
 Loyalty to aunt's children causing problems  
 Lacking appreciation as a good father  
 No longer a culturally acceptable family man  
 People defusing and aggravating the conflict  
 Family making things worse vs. helping  
 Feeling ambivalent about finding help  
 The family killing: A disaster not a solution  
 Finding a solution to an overwhelming problem  
 It was not a good solution  
 My happy marriage is falling apart  
 Work is destroying my happy marriage  
 Losing our ability to communicate  
 Failing to control my anger  
 No longer a good family man  
 I am now failing as a father  
 Not a culturally acceptable family man anymore  
 Not on good terms with my family  
 I committed a "big mistake"  
 Making an impulsive decision to kill my family and myself  
 It was not the only way out of problems  
 Intending to make things right  
 Not a wife I am looking for  
 Wife not wanting us  
 Not communicating about our problems  
 Robbing me of my manhood  
 Loving and hating our children  
 Loving my children too much  
 The children mean nothing to her  
 My life is in shambles  
 Experiencing my problems as unbearable  
 Struggling to leave an overwhelming marriage  
 It is me against them  
 Filicide-suicide not a solution to problems  
 Relieving my wife of her burdens  
 Wanting my children alive  
 The filicide is making me a bad father  
 The joys and sorrows of love  
 Not intending to settle down with her  
 Loving another woman vs. my son's mother  
 The family approving and disapproving of our love  
 Killing the one I love  
 Nyaope making me fail as a father

Recklessness leading to son's death  
Son's death triggering feelings of compassion and anger

### **Clustering of Themes and Developing Superordinate Themes**

#### **Sensing that the love is dying**

The spark of marital bliss is dying  
Marital happiness turning violently sour  
My happy marriage is falling apart  
Not a wife I am looking for  
The joys and sorrows of love  
Loving another woman vs. my son's mother  
Not intending to settle down with her  
Robbing me of my manhood

#### **Feeling frustrated by communication breakdown**

Work is destroying my happy marriage  
Wife not wanting us  
Losing our ability to communicate  
Not communicating about our problems

#### **Feeling confused and trapped**

Loyalty to aunt's children causing problems  
Lacking appreciation as a good father  
Loving and hating our children  
Loving my children too much  
The children mean nothing to her

#### **Losing reputation as a good father**

Nyaope making me fail as a father  
I am now failing as a father  
The filicide is making me a bad father  
A good family man seen as bad

#### **Failing to be the man I am expected to be**

No longer a culturally acceptable family man  
No longer a good family man  
Not a culturally acceptable family man anymore

#### **Feeling frustrated and overwhelmed**

Failing to control my anger  
My life is in shambles  
Experiencing my problems as unbearable  
Struggling to leave an overwhelming marriage  
Feeling ambivalent about finding help

**Welcoming and rejecting help**

People defusing and aggravating the conflict  
Family making things worse vs. helping  
Not on good terms with my family  
It is me against them  
The family approving and disapproving of our love

**Turning into a ‘monster’**

The family killing: A disaster not a solution  
Finding a solution to an overwhelming problem  
It was not a good solution  
I committed a “big mistake”  
Son’s death triggering feelings of compassion and anger  
Making an impulsive decision to kill my family and myself  
It was not the only way out of problems  
Filicide-suicide not a solution to problems  
Relieving my wife of her burdens

**I did a “big mistake”**

Killing the one I love  
Recklessness leading to son’s death

**Regretting killing**

Intending to make things right  
Wanting my children alive

**Clustering of Themes and Developing Master Themes**

**Feeling hurt and disappointed by love**

Sensing that the love is dying  
Feeling frustrated by communication breakdown

**Failing as a family man**

Feeling confused and trapped  
Losing reputation as a good father  
Failing to be the man I am expected to be

**Sensing a volcano about to erupt**

Feeling frustrated and overwhelmed  
Welcoming and rejecting help

**Creating a “disaster”**

Turning into a ‘monster’  
I did a “big mistake”  
Regretting killing

**Table of Master and Superordinate Themes**

| <b>MASTER THEMES</b>                         | <b>SUPERORDINATE THEMES</b>                   |
|--|---|
| <b>FEELING HURT AND DISAPPOINTED BY LOVE</b> | Sensing that the love is dying                |
|  | Feeling frustrated by communication breakdown |
| <b>FAILING AS A FAMILY MAN</b>               | Feeling confused and trapped                  |
|  | Losing reputation as a good father            |
|  | Failing to be the man I am expected to be     |
| <b>SENSING A VOLCANO ABOUT TO ERUPT</b>      | Feeling frustrated and overwhelmed            |
|  | Welcoming and rejecting help                  |
| <b>CREATING A "DISASTER"</b>                 | Turning into a 'monster'                      |
|  | I did a "big mistake"                         |
|  | Regretting killing                            |

Table of Master Themes, Brief Quotations, and References

| MASTER THEMES  | REFERENCES |
|--|------------|
| <b>Feeling Hurt and Disappointed by Love</b>                 |            |
| <i>Feeling frustrated by communication breakdown</i>         |            |
| <b>Joe:</b> Communicated with my wife that we have a problem | 386.30     |
| Confront my wife and told her                                | 387.10     |
| I cannot interrogate her                                     | 387.14     |
| Not want to discuss the matter                               | 389.28     |
| I was not successful   | 392.13     |
| We had a communication <u>breakdown</u>                      | 393.28     |
| <u>I will no longer listen to you</u>                        | 395.40     |
| <b>Neo:</b> COMMUNICATION BREAKDOWN                          | 405.5      |
| I could tell her that no I feel                              | 405.10     |
| We did not get time to sit and talk                          | 405.32     |
| Well we argued – and <u>a lot</u>                            | 406.44     |
| We disagree on something – I just leave you                  | 407.1      |
| It turned into an argument                                   | 410.2      |
| <b>John:</b> We confided in each other <u>a lot</u> .        | 427.28     |
| We fought about it and I walked away                         | 429.35     |
| We communicated <u>past</u> each other                       | 429.47     |
| NOT that we ever <u>discussed it</u>                         | 430.19     |
| I don't easily <u>share</u> my problems                      | 430.21     |
| Shouting at me   | 431.38     |
| <b>Sly:</b> If she was also honest with me                   | 442.40     |
| <u>We were not building each other</u>                       | 442.40     |
|  |            |
| <i>Sensing that the love is dying</i>                        |            |
| <b>Joe:</b> Thinking that maybe things will be fine again    | 388.38     |
| I am very sad at the way things turned out to be             | 388.40     |
| I am not <u>man enough</u>                                   | 394.44     |
| I felt <u>disappointed</u>                                   | 394.49     |
| Made me lose control   | 396.2      |
| That did not go down well with me                            | 396.7      |
| She took that knife and chased me with it                    | 396.15     |
| <b>Neo:</b> Not being happy – at home                        | 406.50     |
| Things are <u>changing at home</u>                           | 407.7      |
| All of these things will end                                 | 408.26     |
| Could not become fine  | 408.39     |
| My hope was reduced  | 408.41     |
| No longer happy in the house                                 | 409.19     |
| We were FIGHTING   | 409.38     |

|   |        |
|---|--------|
| Not treating me like her husband                                    | 415.24 |
| No longer <u>interested in me</u>                                   | 415.26 |
| <u>Slowly</u> developing anger                                      | 415.26 |
| My wife was slipping through my fingers                             | 415.29 |
| <b>John:</b> We had big <u>verbal fights</u>                        | 426.42 |
| Made a BIG thing of a <u>small</u> thing, which led to – conflict   | 429.8  |
| I wanted to get out of the marriage                                 | 429.39 |
| I believed that our problems will IMPROVE                           | 429.40 |
| Problems piled up   | 432.23 |
| She was <u>ice-cold</u> towards me                                  | 432.24 |
| She got an interdict against me                                     | 434.3  |
| Her <u>family was nothing</u> to her                                | 434.12 |
| <u>Nothing was acceptable</u> to me or her                          | 434.20 |
| Lucy is slipping through my hands                                   | 436.1  |
| <b>Sly:</b> When I was with her most of the time I was <u>bored</u> | 442.17 |
| It was better for us to separate                                    | 440.34 |
| There was nothing meaningful  | 440.38 |
| I did not see her as my type  | 440.44 |
| She expected a lot of things from me                                | 441.11 |
| We never fought   | 441.36 |
| We did not have any problems  | 441.38 |
| I felt guilty for hurting her                                       | 442.26 |
| I did not love Mpho   | 448.39 |
| <b>Failing as a Family Man</b>                                      |        |
| <i>Feeling confused and trapped</i>                                 |        |
| <b>Joe:</b> I was forced  | 386.29 |
| She did not get along with those children                           | 386.40 |
| I liked uh children who <u>were not hers</u>                        | 388.29 |
| Issues regarding the children started again                         | 389.14 |
| I should abandon them   | 390.1  |
| Difficult for me to leave them                                      | 390.10 |
| I am not responsible  | 391.42 |
| I am choosing my aunt's children                                    | 391.42 |
| <b>Neo:</b> I did everything that they wanted                       | 414.17 |
| The situation is restrictive  | 414.18 |
| My heart becomes painful  | 414.7  |
| <b>John:</b> DAILY CONFLICT. There was – ABUSE                      | 429.18 |
| She is <u>stabbing me</u> in the <u>heart</u>                       | 429.21 |
| There I <u>failed</u> my children ((crying))                        | 430.8  |
| Not being able to choose between my children and my wife            | 431.9  |
| I withdrew more   | 431.12 |
| I was a COWARD to CHOOSE  | 431.23 |
| I couldn't say <u>stop this now</u> Lucy                            | 431.24 |
| Your marriage is <u>gone</u>  | 431.25 |

|   |        |
|---|--------|
| <b>Sly:</b> She expected that I came to visit Mpho      | 443.25 |
| I just came to see the child                            | 443.27 |
| They also confused me                                   | 443.28 |
| <u>Did they want me or not?</u>                         | 443.29 |
| <br>  |        |
| <i><b>Losing reputation as a good father</b></i>        |        |
| <b>Joe:</b> Very determined to raise them up very well  | 393.36 |
| Give them all the <u>best</u>                           | 393.38 |
| Know my responsibilities as their father                | 394.14 |
| Erases the good that I did                              | 399.9  |
| I was responsible – for my family                       | 399.10 |
| Community respected me a lot                            | 399.22 |
| <br>  |        |
| <b>Neo:</b> I was raising my children well              | 441.47 |
| I was able to do everything for them                    | 441.50 |
| They got anything that they wanted                      | 412.12 |
| She will blame me                                       | 414.24 |
| I will prove myself as a father                         | 419.24 |
| <br>  |        |
| <b>John:</b> I did not act like a good father           | 431.27 |
| I loved them  | 437.15 |
| But I did not protect them                              | 431.28 |
| I am seen as a <u>failure</u>                           | 436.36 |
| They don't see me as a good father                      | 436.39 |
| <br>  |        |
| <b>Sly:</b> People saw that I was his father            | 444.34 |
| People who know me very well see me as bad              | 447.42 |
| I have never loved him                                  | 447.50 |
| I have never <u>wanted him</u>                          | 447.50 |
| People consider me to be a <u>killer</u>                | 448.16 |
| <br>  |        |
| <i><b>Failing to be the man I am expected to be</b></i> |        |
| <br>  |        |
| <b>Joe:</b> I am not <u>man enough</u>                  | 394.44 |
| I am not a responsible man                              | 391.9  |
| <br>  |        |
| <b>Neo:</b> I have become a woman in the house          | 406.23 |
| <u>She found everything done</u>                        | 406.25 |
| I was always in the kitchen                             | 406.30 |
| Not something that I was <u>used to</u>                 | 406.30 |
| <br>  |        |
| <b>John:</b> Saw me as weak and <u>a coward</u>         | 430.6  |
| <i>Don't be a <u>moffie</u></i> <sup>18</sup>           | 431.1  |

<sup>18</sup> Italicised quotes are the participant's interpretations of his family's interpretations and experience.

|  |        |
|--|--------|
| I was not the head of my house                                 | 436.24 |
| She dominated me by not listening to me                        | 436.26 |
| I felt weak and ROBBED!  | 436.30 |
| I'm supposed to be the leader                                  | 436.30 |
| Did not have control over her work                             | 436.33 |
| <b>Sly:</b> Supposed to be respected                           | 449.15 |
| Makes decisions at home  | 449.16 |
| You have to be <u>HONEST WITH HIM</u>                          | 449.17 |
| <b>Sensing a Volcano about to Erupt</b>                        |        |
| <i>Feeling frustrated and overwhelmed</i>                      |        |
| <b>Joe:</b> <u>seriously affect me</u>                         | 390.27 |
| I cannot deal with this thing                                  | 392.44 |
| Giving her a warning   | 396.33 |
| Stop talking about this matter                                 | 396.33 |
| Stop talking to me   | 396.33 |
| I – feel I cannot cope with this issue                         | 396.48 |
| All my efforts were unsuccessful                               | 397.20 |
| I was always blamed ... I was too tired                        | 397.22 |
| <b>Neo:</b> <u>Thought about everything</u> that was happening | 408.2  |
| Not able to spend a lot of time at home                        | 408.5  |
| Had a lot of different thoughts WHEN I sometimes looked at her | 408.5  |
| The BEST <u>thing</u> was to leave                             | 408.6  |
| It hurt me <u>a lot</u> and which – I ended controlling myself | 409.23 |
| <u>Eish</u> a lot of things came to my mind                    | 415.43 |
| They ended up making me angry                                  | 415.45 |
| I went home and left, I went home and left                     | 415.46 |
| Problems came when <u>she came back</u>                        | 415.48 |
| <b>John:</b> It was tiring me                                  | 427.1  |
| I HIT HER WITH A <u>FIST</u>                                   | 427.3  |
| The pain and everything ...with the <u>ANGER</u>               | 427.5  |
| I just snapped   | 430.34 |
| I started to <u>attack back</u>                                | 430.38 |
| THE <u>BUILD UP</u> of frustrations                            | 430.38 |
| Became like a pressure cooker                                  | 430.39 |
| It was like a volcano that started to <u>erupt</u>             | 430.40 |
| I thought of committing suicide many times                     | 434.27 |
| I'm now fuckin fed-up <u>of you.</u>                           | 434.31 |
| <u>I can't take it anymore</u>                                 | 434.32 |
| I <u>totally</u> lost it!                                      | 434.48 |
| I had too many <u>emotions</u>                                 | 435.50 |
| Don't carry on like this                                       | 435.12 |
| I just wanted to <u>die</u>                                    | 435.48 |

|  |        |
|--|--------|
| <b><i>Welcoming and rejecting help</i></b>                           |        |
| <b>Joe:</b> Her brother would come to console me                     | 388.23 |
| <i>Not happy with the way that I was handling things</i>             | 389.44 |
| <i>I was not able to deal with the situation</i>                     | 389.46 |
| You are now controlling me   | 391.8  |
| I don't think I need your permission                                 | 391.10 |
| We ended being physically violent                                    | 391.19 |
| Telling uh maybe my mother or my uncles                              | 392.39 |
| The matter was already <u>worse</u>                                  | 392.43 |
| Made my relationship with his sister to be sour                      | 395.1  |
| He is taking his sister's side                                       | 395.2  |
| Not maybe giving advice or a solution that me and my wife could use  | 395.3  |
| <b>Neo:</b> I don't remember <u>telling</u> any of my family members | 407.20 |
| My father-in-law when he came to my house – to confront me           | 407.24 |
| I did not <u>listen</u>  | 417.47 |
| Nobody who is going to tell me anything <u>inside my house</u>       | 417.48 |
| <b>John:</b> We had problems, she ran <u>to them</u>                 | 433.32 |
| Confront me with half the truth                                      | 433.33 |
| I grabbed him and said I want to <u>hit you</u>                      | 433.35 |
| Just FUCK OFF my property  | 433.39 |
| I was their <u>villain</u>   | 433.39 |
| YOU'RE NOT MY FAMILY   | 433.41 |
| You want to interfere – <u>GO</u>                                    | 433.41 |
| <b>Creating a "Disaster"</b>   |        |
| <b><i>Turning into a 'monster'</i></b>                               |        |
| <b>Joe:</b> I never had this thought – it never came to me           | 395.27 |
| It drew a lot of people's attention                                  | 396.16 |
| It is above <u>my powers</u>   | 396.40 |
| I just told myself that I am not going to prison                     | 396.42 |
| <u>ANNOYED</u> by this situation                                     | 397.5  |
| They were still young, so there was no option                        | 397.27 |
| They will still not have parents                                     | 397.29 |
| Going to suffer, so I decided to kill them and myself                | 397.30 |
| This situation is out of control                                     | 398.26 |
| It is better for me to end it  | 398.31 |
| <b>Neo:</b> I cannot tell you what came and ATTACKED me FAST         | 416.16 |
| <i>You did this thing because you did not love her</i>               | 416.30 |
| It is better if there is nobody in the family                        | 416.41 |
| There was not going to be anybody who is alive, <u>including me</u>  | 416.44 |
| Happened in a short period of time                                   | 416.45 |
| You have made me <u>tired</u> in life                                | 417.16 |
| I also did not see what was happening                                | 417.18 |
| I did not have those options   | 417.30 |
| <u>On such and such a day I will do such a thing</u>                 | 418.20 |

|   |        |
|---|--------|
| <u>What is the thing that came?</u>   | 418.25 |
| <b>John:</b> My <u>life stopped</u>   | 434.47 |
| I don't remember the whole shooting   | 435.15 |
| It was 50 degrees Celsius   | 435.19 |
| This blank process  | 435.19 |
| <u>My body was exploding</u> with – extreme heat                            | 435.20 |
| I wanted to take them with me to protect them                               | 435.40 |
| Decided to kill myself, that is when I decided to kill them too             | 435.41 |
| <i>Shot them because I wanted to punish Lucy</i>                            | 435.43 |
| I did not plan to kill them   | 435.48 |
| I only planned to kill myself   | 435.48 |
| I didn't have zest for life   | 435.49 |
| My life was meaningless   | 435.49 |
| <b>Sly:</b> It was not intentional and it was not <u>planned</u>            | 444.1  |
| I did not <u>plan to commit it</u>  | 444.1  |
| <u>IT JUST HAPPENED</u>   | 444.2  |
| <br>  |        |
| <b><i>I did a “big mistake”</i></b>   |        |
| <b>Joe:</b> Build something good but a slight mistake can erase all of that | 399.13 |
| <br>  |        |
| <b>Neo:</b> I can <u>RECTIFY</u> things                                     | 418.50 |
| People can <u>TRUST ME AGAIN</u>  | 419.1  |
| <i>No at least this person can see that he did – a big mistake</i>          | 419.1  |
| <br>  |        |
| <b>Sly:</b> <u>How could he have done this?</u>                             | 444.37 |
| <i>Unless it was a mistake</i>  | 444.37 |
| Would happen to <u>evil people</u>  | 447.24 |
| Not to me, the way I loved my child   | 447.26 |
| <br>  |        |
| <b><i>Regretting killing</i></b>  |        |
| <br>  |        |
| <b>Joe:</b> I know what I did was wrong, it was not the right thing to do   | 397.23 |
| It was wrong of me to kill my wife  | 397.32 |
| <u>It did not work AT ALL</u>   | 397.34 |
| It did not only affect my wife's extended family or mine                    | 397.34 |
| It affected people that I was close to                                      | 397.35 |
| It also painted all <u>fathers</u> badly                                    | 397.36 |
| I don't feel well that we are talking about this                            | 397.37 |
| I feel <u>ashamed</u> that I also form <u>PART</u> of the men that hurt     | 397.37 |
| My plan did not work for me   | 397.39 |
| They start to – discriminate you  | 397.44 |
| They distance themselves from you   | 397.45 |
| THAT IS HURTFUL   | 397.45 |
| Rush to saying – that person EISH killed                                    | 397.47 |
| <u>NO</u> at the end it only created a <u>DISASTER</u>                      | 398.7  |

|   |        |
|---|--------|
| The <u>pain</u> that I caused   | 399.23 |
| It changed everything   | 399.25 |
| Seeing yourself as alone  | 399.26 |
| Turned their backs on me by distancing themselves   | 399.37 |
| <b>Neo:</b> It becomes painful  | 414.9  |
| I am the one – to be <u>blamed</u>  | 414.9  |
| <i>My child feels that she would have a sister, she would have a mother</i>   | 414.10 |
| EVEN ME maybe I would be involved in – the whole situation  | 414.11 |
| If I took the <u>right</u> steps – right now it would still be me   | 418.25 |
| <u>EISH</u> I feel – disappointed in myself. I feel ashamed   | 418.39 |
| It means I was not <u>responsible</u>   | 418.40 |
| I could not handle my problems  | 418.41 |
| I am more <u>disappointed a lot</u> – in <u>me</u>  | 418.44 |
| Disappointed other people   | 418.44 |
| I am NOT <u>PROUD</u> of the situation  | 418.49 |
| I was a person who achieved in life   | 419.4  |
| <b>John:</b> I ask God, ‘please can’t you just <u>bring back that day?</u> <u>Bring it back</u> , I will <u>change</u> it’ ((crying))! But I can’t. | 432.18 |
| ((Crying)) It’s painful. I just want my kids <u>alive</u>   | 435.42 |
| ALL I could say is I’m sorry God, I’m sorry   | 436.44 |
| What I did to the KIDS as their <u>father</u> , is a shame  | 436.5  |
| I should have left her, but I was a <u>coward</u>   | 436.8  |
| <b>Sly:</b> ((Crying)) I was <u>careless</u> – and not <u>quick to act</u>  | 446.48 |
| If I was not a father who was smoking Nyaope  | 447.8  |
| None of these things could not have happened to him ((crying))  | 447.9  |
| WHY did I not bring him <u>before?</u>  | 447.19 |
| <u>I lost my child</u> and <u>it is my fault</u>  | 447.21 |
| I should have <u>immediately</u> looked for help  | 447.35 |

**Appendix F2: Family Participants****The Mothers****Individual Case Analysis****Mary – Joe’s mother****List of Themes**

Hoping for a lifelong love  
Hoping for a good marriage  
Feeling shocked by love turning deadly  
Feeling deceived  
Denying knowing problems  
Imagining them to be loving parents  
Feeling proud of their parenting  
Fulfilling the expectations of being a father  
Imagining him to be a loving father  
Imagining them to have a good parenting relationship  
Feeling disappointed and shocked by the killing  
Feeling disappointed: Loving but killing  
Feeling proud of their parenting  
Feeling frustrated by the deception  
Feeling concerned about the resentment  
Feeling disappointed by help being rejected  
Feeling confused by the resentment  
Defending son’s love for the children  
Accepting the child  
Feeling bitterness towards the in-laws  
Feeling concerned about the fight  
Defending son’s love for the children  
Defending the parents from restricting the child  
Defending son from planning the killing  
Seeing son as losing control  
Feeling shocked by the killing  
Feeling confused by the killing  
Feeling confused and denying knowing problems  
Feeling frustrated by not understanding the killing  
Feeling overwhelmed by the killing  
Feeling confused and frustrated by the killing  
Feeling hurt by the killing  
Feeling disappointed by the killing  
Feeling proud of their communication  
Feeling confused by problems not fixed  
Defending a good relationship  
Feeling helpless to defend son  
Feeling helpless amidst the bitterness  
Feeling frustrated by not being told problems  
Feeling disappointed about not being told problems  
Sensing to be seen as intimidating

**Clustering of Themes and Developing Subordinate Themes****Expecting their love to be eternal**

Hoping for a lifelong love  
Hoping for a good marriage  
Feeling proud of their communication  
Feeling certain about love  
Feeling reassured about love

**Discovering their love to be deceptive**

Feeling deceived  
Denying knowing problems  
Feeling frustrated by the deception  
Feeling confused and denying knowing problems  
Feeling disappointed by help being rejected  
Feeling disappointed by help not sought  
Feeling frustrated by not being told problems  
Feeling disappointed about not being told problems  
Feeling angry at not being told problems  
Feeling frustrated by not knowing problems  
Feeling confused by not being told problems  
Feeling shocked by problems

**Observing feelings of love**

Imagining them to be loving parents  
Feeling proud of their parenting  
Fulfilling the expectations of being a father  
Imagining him to be a loving father  
Imagining them to have a good parenting relationship  
Defending son's love for the children  
Accepting the child  
Defending the parents from restricting the child

**Noticing the fight to be about the children**

Feeling concerned about the resentment  
Feeling confused by the resentment  
Feeling concerned about the fight

**Failing to understand the sudden hatred**

Defending a good relationship  
Feeling surprised by the in-laws' bitterness  
Feeling shocked by the in-laws' resentment  
Feeling shocked by the in-laws' rejection  
Feeling unworried about the in-laws' rejection  
Feeling shocked by the in-laws' threats and rejection  
Feeling shocked and confused by the in-laws' rejection  
Feeling confused by the in-laws' bitterness

Feeling scared of the in-laws  
Feeling disappointed by the in-laws

**Seeing the in-laws as causing chaos**

Suspecting the in-laws  
Blaming the in-laws  
Feeling bitterness towards the in-laws  
Feeling angry with the in-laws

**Not expecting their love to be deadly**

Feeling confused by problems not fixed  
Feeling shocked by love turning deadly  
Defending son from planning the killing  
Seeing son as losing control  
Feeling shocked by the killing  
Feeling confused by the killing  
Feeling frustrated by not understanding the killing  
Feeling overwhelmed by the killing  
Feeling confused and frustrated by the killing  
Feeling hurt by the killing  
Feeling disappointed by the killing  
Feeling hurt by the loss  
Feeling shocked but accepting son  
Feeling shocked and disappointed by son  
Feeling hurt and disappointed by son  
Feeling disappointed and shocked by the killing  
Feeling disappointed: Loving but killing

**Worrying about son being culturally unacceptable**

Defending the cultural perception of manhood  
Providing for the family  
Maintaining a happy marriage  
Protecting the family  
Feeling disappointed by son failing  
Feeling uncertain and worried about rejection

**Coping but feeling helpless**

Feeling helpless to defend son  
Feeling helpless amidst the bitterness  
Feeling helpless amidst the insults  
Feeling puzzled by the in-laws' hostility  
Feeling hurt by the in-laws  
Coping with the animosity  
Feeling overwhelmed by the fighting  
Feeling annoyed but helpless

### Clustering of Themes and Developing Superordinate Themes

#### Feeling surprised by the failing marriage

Expecting their love to be eternal

Discovering their love to be deceptive

#### No longer seeing love

Observing feelings of love

Noticing the fight to be about the children

#### Seeing happiness turning into bitterness

Failing to understand the sudden hatred

Seeing the in-laws as causing chaos

#### Feeling strong and helpless in a “powerful tornado”

Not expecting their love to be deadly

Worrying about son being culturally unacceptable

Coping but feeling helpless

**Table of Superordinate and Subordinate Themes**

| <b>SUPERORDINATE THEMES</b>                                | <b>SUBORDINATE THEMES</b>                        |
|--|--|
| <b>FEELING SURPRISED BY THE FAILING MARRIAGE</b>           | Expecting their love to be eternal               |
|  | Discovering their love to be deceptive           |
| <b>NO LONGER SEEING LOVE</b>                               | Observing feelings of love                       |
|  | Noticing the fight to be about the children      |
| <b>SEEING HAPPINESS TURNING INTO BITTERNESS</b>            | Failing to understand the sudden hatred          |
|  | Seeing the in-laws as causing chaos              |
| <b>FEELING STRONG AND HELPLESS IN A “POWERFUL TORNADO”</b> | Not expecting their love to be deadly            |
|  | Worrying about son being culturally unacceptable |
|  | Coping but feeling helpless                      |

### Themes, Brief Quotations, and References

| <b>SUPERORDINATE THEMES</b> | <b>BRIEF QUOTATIONS</b>         | <b>REFERENCES</b> |
|-----------------------------|---------------------------------|-------------------|
|                             | “be together until I die”       | 453.8             |
|                             | “take good care of each other”  | 453.10            |
|                             | “hardly fought with each other” | 453.12            |
|                             | “found them happy and laughing” | 453.13            |
|                             | “serious about each other”      | 453.16            |
|                             | “never heard of any problems”   | 453.20            |
|                             | “committed to their marriage”   | 453.21            |

|  |  |  |
|--|--|--|
| <b>FEELING SURPRISED BY THE FAILING MARRIAGE</b>           | “always found them happy”<br>“they had good communication” “<br>“I don’t feel good”<br>“not tell me their problems”<br>“did not give me that chance”   | 454.13<br>455.33<br>455.46<br>456.4<br>456.24  |
| <b>NO LONGER SEEING LOVE</b>                               | “raise their children well”<br>“took good care of their children”<br>“give him fatherly love”<br>“wanted the best for their children”<br>“Sue did not want the girl”<br>“not want Joe to give his cousin pocket money”<br>“don’t know why she had issues”<br>“Joe loved Dan”<br>“Joe did not ill-treat Dan”  | 462.14<br>453.35<br>453.41<br>454.10<br>454.20<br>454.24<br>454.25<br>454.29<br>454.40   |
| <b>SEEING HAPPINESS TURNING INTO BITTERNESS</b>            | “we also loved him”<br>“not want Dan to stay with Joe”<br>“families had a good relationship”<br>“fighting with his sister”<br>“I was shocked”<br>“This thing happened”<br>“Jack <u>wanted Sue to divorce</u> ”<br>“We did not have a problem”<br>“Joe – was just a dog”<br>“not man enough for her”<br>“Jack started the problems”<br>“he was maybe shouting at them”<br>“it was very frightening”<br>“made me angry when Jack phoned”<br>“Jack hit him and took his money”<br>“I am scared of those people”   | 454.29<br>454.31<br>455.39<br>456.36<br>456.39<br>456.39<br>456.40<br>456.42<br>456.44<br>456.44<br>457.2<br>457.21<br>457.22<br>458.10<br>458.22<br>458.27        |
| <b>FEELING STRONG AND HELPLESS IN A ‘POWERFUL TORNADO’</b> | “I was really shocked”<br>“happened like a <u>powerful tornado</u> ”<br>“don’t think that he planned it”<br>“suddenly happened”<br>“This thing really scared me”<br>“Joe could commit something like this”<br>“not know that he was having problems”<br>“I am still shocked even now”<br>“what made him to do this thing”<br>“asking myself different questions”<br>“I don’t find answers”<br>“Eish! It is everything. I lost”<br>“they would be far in life”<br>“don’t know – what darkness came”<br>“my child did this bad thing”<br>“I cannot excuse his behaviour”<br>“family were somehow towards me” | 453.12<br>454.7<br>454.48<br>454.49<br>455.1<br>455.7<br>455.8<br>455.17<br>455.18<br>455.18<br>455.21<br>455.27<br>455.28<br>455.32<br>455.40<br>455.41<br>455.41 |

|  |                                    |        |
|--|------------------------------------|--------|
|  | “I did not fight with them”        | 455.42 |
|  | “my child did this terrible thing” | 455.42 |
|  | “there was nothing I could do”     | 457.28 |
|  | “It was painful.”                  | 457.34 |
|  | “I could not take it anymore”      | 458.16 |
|  | “did something that is wrong”      | 458.34 |
|  | “against my culture”               | 458.35 |
|  | “see him as a bad person”          | 458.36 |
|  | “I still see him as a good”        | 458.36 |
|  | “shocked by this thing”            | 458.37 |
|  | “now he did this thing ((crying))” | 458.40 |

### June – Sly’s mother

#### List of Themes

Denying knowledge of the relationship  
 Feeling surprised by the pregnancy  
 Accepting the child  
 Feeling proud of son being responsible  
 Feeling surprised by son’s care for his child  
 Feeling concerned about the child  
 Worrying about their parenting  
 Feeling concerned about the child  
 Feeling surprised by the child’s death  
 Defending a conflict-free relationship  
 Denying knowledge of problems  
 Feeling surprised by the pregnancy  
 Feeling forced to accept the pregnancy  
 Defending a conflict-free relationship  
 Defending lacking knowledge of problems  
 Feeling frustrated by son concealing problems  
 Feeling surprised by problems  
 Feeling disappointed by not being told problems  
 Defending son from problems  
 Defending son against the family  
 Feeling angered by son being blamed  
 Feeling confused about the injuries  
 Feeling annoyed by the family  
 Defending role in childcare  
 Feeling angered by childcare  
 Feeling trapped in the relationship  
 Doubting the love  
 Failing to see love  
 Sensing no love  
 Failing to see love  
 Disapproving of the family  
 Feeling annoyed by the family  
 Feeling angered by childcare  
 Resenting the family

Defending son's parenting  
Feeling hurt by son seen as a killer  
Feeling concerned by son losing reputation  
Feeling certain about son being judged

### **Clustering of Themes and Developing Subordinate Themes**

#### **Not wanting to be involved**

Denying knowledge of the relationship  
Defending a conflict-free relationship  
Denying knowledge of problems  
Defending lacking knowledge of problems

#### **Feeling uncertain and puzzled**

Doubting the love  
Failing to see love  
Sensing no love  
Feeling puzzled by the separation

#### **Having no choice**

Feeling surprised by the pregnancy  
Accepting the child  
Feeling forced to accept the pregnancy  
Regretting the pregnancy  
Defending the feelings of acceptance

#### **Feeling controlled**

Expecting a man to head the family  
Expecting a woman to submit  
Feeling expected to comply  
Expecting obedience  
Feeling abused  
Feeling silenced  
Not feeling free  
Feeling forced to comply  
Feeling controlled

#### **Sharing feelings of resentment**

Disapproving of the family  
Disapproving of the family's values  
Rejecting the family  
Resenting the family  
Feeling confused by the family

Feeling deceived by the family  
Feeling trapped in the relationship  
Feeling deceived by son

**Doubting their ability to parent**

Feeling concerned about the child  
Worrying about their parenting

**Defending son's parenting**

Defending role of childcare  
Defending son from problems  
Defending son against the family  
Defending son's innocence  
Defending son's decision  
Feeling forced to give Sly the child  
Trusting Sly with the child  
Feeling confused about the injuries  
Blaming the family of negligence  
Defending son's parenting  
Defending ways of parenting

**Feeling angry**

Feeling angered by childcare  
Feeling annoyed by the family  
Feeling angered by son being blamed

**Blaming Nyaope**

Blaming Nyaope for son's anger  
Feeling uncertain about the cause of anger  
Feeling confused by the anger  
Failing to understand the anger  
Feeling confused by son's defiance  
Feeling desperate to understand son's anger  
Feeling frustrated with son  
Feeling relieved by son being taught a lesson  
Worrying about the impact of Nyaope  
Disapproving of Nyaope

**Desperately seeking understanding**

Feeling surprised by the child's death  
Feeling shocked by the injuries  
Feeling surprised by the mother  
Feeling surprised by son's negligence  
Feeling desperate to find the motives

Feeling desperate to understand the death  
 Blaming Nyaope for the child's death  
 Blaming Nyaope for son's negligence  
 Blaming the family for the child's death  
 Blaming the child  
 Blaming Sly of negligence  
 Feeling overwhelmed by the death  
 Feeling angry with Sly for smoking Nyaope  
 Worrying about safety  
 Feeling uncertain about Sly's consciousness  
 Feelings of blame and anger erupting  
 Feeling angered by the death  
 Feeling angry with Sly concerning Nyaope  
 Feeling angry with the family  
 Feeling angry with Sly  
 Feeling angry with the mother

### **Suspecting the intent to kill**

Feeling confused by son's behaviour  
 Feeling confused by the child's death  
 Feeling uncertain about the intention to kill  
 Feeling distrustful of son  
 Feeling frustrated and distrustful of son  
 Suspecting Sly of assault

### **Worrying about son's identity**

Feeling hurt by son seen as a killer  
 Feeling concerned by son losing reputation  
 Feeling certain about son being judge

### **Seeing feelings of regret**

Feeling certain about son experiencing guilt  
 Feeling it is too late to worry

## **Clustering of Themes and Developing Superordinate Themes**

### **Not knowing the relationship**

Not wanting to be involved  
 Feeling uncertain and puzzled

### **Sharing feelings of being trapped**

Having no choice  
 Feeling controlled  
 Sharing feelings of resentment

### **Feeling defensive**

Doubting their ability to parent

Defending son's parenting  
 Feeling angry  
 Blaming Nyaope

**The killing a big mess**

Desperately seeking understanding  
 Suspecting the intent to kill  
 Worrying about son's identity  
 Seeing feelings of regret

**Table of Superordinate and Subordinate Themes**

| <b>SUPERORDINATE THEMES</b>              | <b>SUBORDINATE THEMES</b>         |
|--|-----------------------------------|
| <b>NOT KNOWING THE RELATIONSHIP</b>      | Not wanting to be involved        |
|  | Feeling uncertain and puzzled     |
| <b>SHARING FEELINGS OF BEING TRAPPED</b> | Having no choice                  |
|  | Feeling controlled                |
|  | Sharing feelings of resentment    |
| <b>FEELING DEFENSIVE</b>                 | Doubting their ability to parent  |
|  | Defending son's parenting         |
|  | Feeling angry                     |
|  | Blaming Nyaope                    |
| <b>THE KILLING A BIG MESS</b>            | Desperately seeking understanding |
|  | Suspecting the intent to kill     |
|  | Worrying about son's identity     |
|  | Seeing feelings of regret         |

**Themes, Brief Quotations, and References**

| <b>SUPERORDINATE THEMES</b>         | <b>BRIEF QUOTATIONS</b>                      | <b>REFERENCES</b> |
|-------------------------------------|--|-------------------|
| <b>NOT KNOWING THE RELATIONSHIP</b> | "HE WAS NOT fighting with Mpho"              | 509.42            |
|                                     | "I have never heard complaints"              | 509.42            |
|                                     | " <u>I DON'T KNOW THEIR RELATIONSHIP</u> "   | 510.5             |
|                                     | "I DID NOT see those serious issues"         | 510.11            |
|                                     | "There were <u>no issues</u> "               | 510.14            |
|                                     | "never told me anything"                     | 510.17            |
|                                     | "Sly maybe – did not <u>like this lady</u> " | 511.11            |
|                                     | "I did not see him being committed"          | 511.13            |
|                                     | "He was never – INTERESTED"                  | 511.15            |

|  |   |        |
|--|---|--------|
|  | “there was no relationship”                 | 511.41 |
|  | “don’t know how he removed himself”         | 511.43 |
| <b>SHARING FEELINGS OF BEING TRAPPED</b> | “But there is nothing I can do”             | 510.7  |
|  | “they do a mistake”                         | 511.9  |
|  | “people that I don’t quite understand”      | 511.31 |
|  | “I don’t understand them”                   | 511.34 |
|  | “not people that I can have a relationship” | 511.36 |
|  | “But we accepted this child”                | 511.37 |
|  | “happy to be a father”                      | 511.47 |
|  | “But he was not in love”                    | 511.47 |
|  | “careful not to get her pregnant”           | 512.3  |
|  | “not a family that he would like”           | 512.9  |
|  | “DETERMINED to be a father”                 | 512.11 |
| <b>FEELING DEFENSIVE</b>                 | “Sly was <u>very close</u> to him”          | 509.27 |
|  | “this child to come stay with us”           | 509.32 |
|  | “not well cared for <u>there</u> ”          | 509.32 |
|  | “claimed to have seen – WOUNDS”             | 510.30 |
|  | “don’t ever give Sly the child”             | 510.36 |
|  | “my son is hurting the child”               | 510.48 |
|  | “They always liked complaining”             | 510.49 |
|  | “I took care of the child”                  | 511.2  |
|  | “they are <u>DEMANDING</u> people”          | 511.23 |
|  | “fought with them”                          | 511.27 |
|  | “will not grow up well there”               | 512.29 |
|  | “not want him to <u>suffer</u> ”            | 513.14 |
|  | “he said was not intentional”               | 515.32 |
|  | “not looking after the child”               | 515.36 |
|  | “follow our set of rules”                   | 518.37 |
|  | “way of living was <u>not the same</u> ”    | 518.39 |
|  | “the child listened to him”                 | 519.5  |
|  | “never witnessed Sly hitting him”           | 519.11 |
| <b>THE KILLING A BIG MESS</b>            | “it is so surprising”                       | 509.40 |
|  | “How could you commit this thing”           | 512.37 |
|  | “not find any issues”                       | 512.40 |
|  | “could not understand it”                   | 512.44 |
|  | “I lost my son now”                         | 513.30 |
|  | “commit this mistake”                       | 513.35 |
|  | “ <u>smoking</u> made him do WRONG”         | 513.49 |
|  | “I don’t know if he wanted to hurt him”     | 515.17 |
|  | “We don’t know what happened”               | 515.19 |
|  | “it is a lot of things”                     | 516.2  |
|  | “seeing him as a killer”                    | 519.15 |
|  | “they will ever see him as a loving”        | 519.15 |
|  | “see him as bad”                            | 519.17 |
|  | “not encourage men to kill”                 | 519.18 |

## Cross-case Analysis

### List of Themes

Not knowing the relationship  
 Not wanting to be involved  
 Feeling uncertain and puzzled  
 Sharing feelings of being trapped  
 Having no choice  
 Feeling controlled  
 Sharing feelings of resentment  
 Feeling defensive  
 Doubting their ability to parent  
 Defending son's parenting  
 Feeling angry  
 Blaming Nyaope  
 The killing a big mess  
 Desperately seeking understanding  
 Suspecting the intent to kill  
 Worrying about son's identity  
 Seeing feelings of regret  
 Feeling surprised by the failing marriage  
 Expecting their love to be eternal  
 Discovering their love to be deceptive  
 No longer seeing love  
 Observing feelings of love  
 Noticing the fight to be about the children  
 Seeing happiness turning into bitterness  
 Failing to understand the sudden hatred  
 Seeing the in-laws as causing chaos  
 Feeling strong and helpless in a "powerful tornado"  
 Not expecting their love to be deadly  
 Worrying about son being culturally unacceptable  
 Coping but feeling helpless

### Clustering of Themes and Developing Superordinate Themes

#### **Discovering their love to be a façade**

Feeling uncertain and puzzled  
 Discovering their love to be deceptive

#### **Feeling disappointed by shattered love**

Feeling surprised by the failing marriage  
 Expecting their love to be eternal

#### **Seeing us not having a way out**

Sharing feelings of being trapped  
 Having no choice

Feeling controlled  
Feeling strong and helpless in a “powerful tornado”  
Coping but feeling helpless

**Sharing feelings of disapproval**

Seeing happiness turning into bitterness  
Seeing the in-laws as causing chaos  
Sharing feelings of resentment  
Failing to understand the sudden hatred

**Perceiving us parenting amidst chaos**

Feeling defensive  
Doubting their ability to parent  
Defending son’s parenting  
Observing feelings of love  
Feeling angry  
Blaming Nyaope

**Seeing the children now rejected**

No longer seeing love  
Noticing the fight to be about the children

**Never expecting him to kill**

Suspecting the intent to kill  
Not expecting their love to be deadly  
Desperately seeking understanding

**Worrying about son being rejected**

Worrying about son’s identity  
Worrying about son being culturally unacceptable

**Clustering of Themes and Developing Master Themes**

**Experiencing their love as confusing**

Discovering their love to be a façade  
Feeling undisturbed vs. disappointed

**Feeling defensive**

Perceiving us parenting amidst chaos  
Sensing us seen as rejecting the children

**Sharing feelings of being trapped**

Sharing feelings of disapproval  
Seeing us not having a way out

**Caught unprepared by a “powerful tornado”**

Never expecting him to kill

Worrying about son being rejected

**Table of Master and Superordinate Themes**

| MASTER THEMES                                    | SUPERORDINATE THEMES                      |
|--|---|
| <b>EXPERIENCING THEIR LOVE AS CONFUSING</b>      | Discovering their love to be a façade     |
|  | Feeling undisturbed vs. disappointed      |
| <b>FEELING DEFENSIVE</b>                         | Perceiving us parenting amidst chaos      |
|  | Sensing us seen as rejecting the children |
| <b>SHARING FEELINGS OF BEING TRAPPED</b>         | Sharing feelings of disapproval           |
|  | Seeing us not having a way out            |
| <b>CAUGHT UNPREPARED BY A “POWERFUL TORNADO”</b> | Never expecting him to kill               |
|  | Worrying about son being rejected         |

**Table of Master Themes, Brief Quotations, and References**

| MASTER THEMES   | REFERENCES |
|---|------------|
| <b>Experiencing their Love as Confusing</b>                                 |            |
| <i>Discovering their love to be a façade</i>                                |            |
| <b>Mary:</b> I always found them happy and laughing                         | 453.13     |
| They had a happy marriage   | 453.14     |
| Did not show that they were having problems                                 | 453.19     |
| I have never heard of any problems  | 453.20     |
| Happy and committed to their marriage                                       | 453.21     |
| Joe and I have a good and open relationship but he did not tell me anything | 456.13     |
| They should have come to me   | 456.17     |
| <b>June:</b> I DID NOT see those serious issues                             | 510.11     |
| There were no issues – it’s like DEEP ISSUES                                | 510.13     |
| They had some <u>disagreements</u>  | 510.16     |
| He never told me anything about his relationship issues                     | 510.17     |
| I kept on bringing them stuff for the baby                                  | 511.38     |
| Sly removed himself from them, even though he did not show me               | 511.39     |
| There was no relationship between them                                      | 511.41     |
| <i>Feeling undisturbed vs disappointed</i>                                  |            |
| <b>Mary:</b> Hoping that they would be together until I die                 | 453.8      |

|   |        |
|---|--------|
| I wished only the best and goodness for their marriage  | 453.9  |
| They would take good care of each other   | 453.10 |
| <i>This is where I am staying until – I become a grandmother<sup>19</sup></i>                               | 458.5  |
| I am really shocked   | 458.37 |
| I expected that he would build a good family with his wife  | 458.38 |
| They would grow old together  | 458.38 |
| Raise their grandchildren together  | 458.39 |
| Care for me   | 458.39 |
| But now he did this thing ((crying))  | 458.40 |
| <b>June:</b> I did not see him being committed to her   | 511.13 |
| Never – INTERESTED in having a relationship <u>with this lady</u>   | 511.15 |
| I will see you guys together  | 511.19 |
| <u>I have never seen</u> that with Sly and this lady  | 511.20 |
| He was not in love with his partner   | 511.48 |
| <b>Feeling Defensive</b>  |        |
| <i>Perceiving us parenting amidst chaos</i>   |        |
| <b>Mary:</b> Made me angry when Jack phoned   | 458.10 |
| <i>You are sitting there at your home while Joe and Sue are fighting</i>                                    | 458.11 |
| He said to me “You will see!”   | 458.12 |
| It was the first time I heard that she filed a case against him   | 458.13 |
| <b>June:</b> <i>I want this child to come stay with us. It seems he is not well cared for <u>there</u>.</i> | 509.32 |
| Claimed to have seen – WOUNDS on the child  | 510.30 |
| If you saw something wrong with the child, please don’t ever give Sly the child                             | 510.35 |
| My son is hurting the child. That is what they said   | 510.48 |
| They are <u>DEMANDING</u> people  | 511.23 |
| I fought with them a lot over the issue of demanding  | 511.27 |
| I was taking care of that child   | 511.27 |
| You could see that he was a father to his child   | 512.15 |
| He had nappy rash because they were not changing his nappies  | 515.34 |
| <i>Sensing us seen as rejecting the children</i>  |        |
| <b>Mary:</b> The problem was that Sue did not want the girl in the house                                    | 454.20 |
| They were fighting over pocket money  | 454.24 |
| Sue did not want Joe to give his cousin pocket money  | 454.24 |
| That is all I know  | 454.25 |
| I don’t know why she had issues   | 454.25 |
| He did everything for him and cared for him like he was his own son   | 454.28 |
| We also loved him   | 454.29 |
| We took him with his mother when we paid lobola   | 454.29 |
| Dan stopped staying with his mother and Joe because of Sue’s parents  | 454.30 |

<sup>19</sup> Italicised quotes indicate the participants’ interpretations of the offenders’, family members’, and other people’s interpretations and experiences.

|   |        |
|---|--------|
| We did not have a problem   | 456.42 |
| <b>June:</b> I accepted it  | 509.14 |
| It was fine the baby will be my grandchild especially since I, I only have one child  | 509.15 |
| We never had a problem with that  | 509.16 |
| We bought some stuff which we took to Mpho's family to show them that we were happy for the birth of the child and to have a grandson | 509.18 |
| <b>Sharing Feelings of being Trapped</b>  |        |
| <i>Sharing feelings of disapproval</i>  |        |
| <b>Mary:</b> Jack started to do a lot of different things after we paid lobola  | 456.35 |
| Fighting with his sister  | 456.36 |
| <i>He did not think that she would live very long if she stayed with my son</i>   | 456.38 |
| That is what I know and I was shocked   | 456.39 |
| Jealous because Joe and Sue were very close   | 457.18 |
| Her parents had a problem with the lobola payment   | 457.42 |
| Treating Sue's marriage as an investment for them   | 457.46 |
| <i>Jack is annoying me mama – because he did the same thing in my first marriage</i>  | 457.47 |
| Jack destroys her marriages so that she could be married elsewhere  | 457.48 |
| Jack hit him and took his money to support his family   | 458.22 |
| He was scared of Jack   | 458.24 |
| I am scared of those people   | 458.27 |
| <b>June:</b> <i>Eish, that family. Eish those people are not right</i>  | 511.21 |
| EISH, Sly likes acquainting us with people that I don't quite understand  | 511.31 |
| <i>EISH, those people are somehow and I don't understand them</i>   | 511.34 |
| Oh! This family is like this.' They are not people that I can have a relationship with  | 511.35 |
| A family that he would like to have a relationship with   | 512.9  |
| <i>Seeing us not having a way out</i>   |        |
| <b>Mary:</b> My child did this bad thing and I cannot excuse his behaviour  | 455.40 |
| Sue's family were – somehow towards me during the funeral   | 455.41 |
| I did not fight with them because – my child did this terrible thing  | 455.42 |
| They used all the offensive words   | 457.36 |
| What could I say because my child did a <u>bad thing</u> ?  | 457.36 |
| I was just sitting there and they were <u>fighting me</u>   | 458.16 |
| <b>June:</b> There is nothing I can do  | 510.7  |
| He did not have a problem with being a father. However, he was not in love with his partner   | 511.47 |
| He should have been careful not to get her pregnant   | 512.3  |
| <i>He told himself that he was going to be a father to his child</i>  | 512.7  |
| However, on the other side, he was looking at his ex-girlfriend's family and found that it is not a family that he would like to have | 512.8  |
| <b>Caught Unprepared by a "Powerful Tornado"</b>  |        |

|  |        |
|--|--------|
| <i>Never expecting him to kill</i>   |        |
| <b>Mary:</b> They hardly fought with each other. I was really shocked when I was called and told that this thing has happened    | 453.12 |
| Happened like a <u>powerful tornado</u>  | 454.7  |
| I did not know that Joe could commit something like this   | 455.7  |
| I also did not know that he was having problems which could lead him to do something like this                                   | 455.8  |
| I am still shocked even now because I don't know what made him to do this thing  | 455.17 |
| I am still asking myself different questions even now  | 455.18 |
| I am always asking myself questions – but I don't have the answers to what happened which led him to kill his family ((tearful)) | 455.22 |
| Eish! It is everything. I lost my son, my daughter-in-law, and my grandchildren  | 455.27 |
| Their level of communication with each other was good, <u>very good</u> . So I don't know – what darkness came over him          | 455.31 |
| <b>June:</b> <i>The Judge was surprised and said “How could you commit this thing because you cared for your child?”</i>         | 512.36 |
| You did not have – <u>serious</u> issues with Mpho   | 512.38 |
| They could not find any issues which could have led Sly to kill his child  | 512.40 |
| Wanted to know what he and Mpho were fighting over   | 512.42 |
| We could not understand it and find – serious issues   | 512.43 |
| The thing that made him commit this mistake – <u>is smoking</u>  | 513.35 |
| He would not have died   | 515.13 |
| Eish! It was a lot of things that we were thinking. It's too many things   | 516.28 |
| YOU SMOKED SO MUCH that you could not even see that the child was so severely injured  | 516.46 |
| <i>Worrying about son being rejected</i>   |        |
| <b>Mary:</b> Eish! I don't know what to say. He did something that is wrong.   | 458.34 |
| My culture does not encourage men to kill their wives and children   | 458.35 |
| Xhosa people would see him as a bad person   | 458.36 |
| But I still see him as a good person – even though I am shocked  | 458.36 |
| <b>June:</b> Eish! It is tough because they are seeing him as a killer   | 519.15 |
| I don't think they will ever see him as a loving and caring father   | 519.15 |
| He was a good father but this thing is making people see him as a killer   | 519.16 |
| They are obviously going to see him as bad   | 519.17 |
| My culture does not encourage men to kill their children   | 519.17 |

**The Sisters****Individual Case Analysis****April – Joe’s sister****List of Themes**

Hoping the relationship bears fruits  
Hoping for a close relationship  
Feeling happy and cared for  
Feeling proud of the relationship  
Not worrying about the relationship  
Feeling loved and cared for  
Respecting sister-in-law  
Feeling certain about the happy love  
Feeling disappointed by the fighting  
Feeling disappointed by the rejection  
Feeling angered by the rejection  
Fighting over the children  
Disapproving of the support  
Defending brother to be non-aggressive  
Sympathising with the children  
Feeling angered by the act of concern  
Feeling angered by the rejection  
Denying other problems  
Feeling uncertain about problems  
Seeing the children as the problem  
Defending the good relationship  
Defending the perceived happiness  
Loving each other  
Treating each other well  
Feeling impressed by the couple’s care  
Feeling impressed by the open communication  
Defending the open communication  
Feeling impressed by the ability to solve issues  
Expecting them to be responsible parents  
Expecting the children to be self-reliant  
Feeling impressed by their way of living  
Feeling confused by the killing  
Not expecting problems in love  
Feeling impressed by the parents’ love  
Feeling surprised by the protection  
Trusting brother to be protective  
Feeling cared for and protected  
Resenting the children  
Disapproving of the support  
Resenting the children  
Worrying about the children’s wellbeing  
Feeling puzzled by the rejection

**Clustering of Themes and Developing Subordinate Themes****Feeling impressed by their marriage**

Hoping the relationship bears fruits  
Hoping for a close relationship  
Feeling proud of the relationship  
Not worrying about the relationship  
Feeling certain about the happy love  
Loving each other  
Defending the good relationship  
Defending the perceived happiness  
Treating each other well  
Feeling impressed by the couple's care  
Feeling impressed by their way of living  
Not expecting problems in love

**Seeing the couple addressing issues**

Feeling impressed by the open communication  
Defending the open communication  
Feeling impressed by the ability to solve issues

**Observing them acting happy**

Feeling deceived  
Feeling shocked by problems  
Feeling angered by the deception  
Keeping issues a secret  
Wanting to be an ideal family  
Pretending to be happy  
Blaming the sister-in-law of escalating conflict  
Defending brother to be non-aggressive  
Lacking respect  
Seeing the marriage as engulfed by conflict  
Blaming the couple for not seeking help  
Feeling uncertain about problems  
Unwilling to talk about the violence  
Lacking evidence of the violence  
Feeling desperate to know problems  
Regretting not being involved  
Feeling helpless amidst problems  
Defending not intervening  
Feeling uncertain about family knowing problems  
Feeling excluded from issues  
Feeling disappointed by not consulting  
Defending lacking knowledge of problems  
Failing to solve problems

**Seeing them failing to follow culture**

Heading the family  
Making decisions in the house  
Disregarding culture  
Feeling angered by the disregard of values  
Failing to follow culture  
Seen as failing as a man  
Losing reputation

**Seeing the parents responsible**

Expecting them to be responsible parents  
Expecting the children to be self-reliant  
Feeling impressed by the parents' love  
Feeling surprised by the protection  
Trusting brother to be protective  
Accepting step-son  
Defending the parents' love  
Guiding the children  
Caring about the children  
Feeling confident about the parents' love  
Fulfilling the children's needs

**Perceiving the parents failing**

Failing to discipline the children  
Making the decision to send the child away  
Removing the child from the house

**Seeing the children now rejected**

Feeling angered by the rejection  
Sympathising with the children  
Feeling angered by the act of concern  
Resenting the children  
Feeling puzzled by the rejection  
Feeling shocked by the resentment  
Hating the children  
Feeling shocked and confused by the bitterness  
Feeling confused by the hatred  
Feeling confused by the anger  
Feeling angered by the bitterness  
Seeing cousin as feeling unwelcome  
Feeling saddened by the rejection  
Resenting the rejection  
Rejecting the children  
Feeling saddened by the bitterness  
Feeling confused by the anger  
Feeling confused by the fight  
Failing to understand the rejection  
Feeling disappointed by the rejection

**Observing them fighting over parenting**

Feeling disappointed by the fighting  
Fighting over the children  
Seeing the children as the problem  
Disapproving of the support  
Blaming family discord for the sour marriage  
Denying other problems  
Defending efforts to solve problems  
Blaming sister-in-law for problems  
Reaching a mutual decision concerning the children  
Wanting the children to be accepted  
Feeling obliged to care for the children  
Worrying about the children's wellbeing

**Not getting along anymore**

Feeling happy and cared for  
Respecting sister-in-law  
Feeling cared for and protected  
Loving sister-in-law  
Being a close family  
Defending the family relationship  
Feeling proud of the close relationship  
Having a close sibling relationship  
Defending the sibling relationship  
Feeling proud of the sibling relationship  
Enjoying being together  
Sensing us drifting apart

**Succeeding in helping**

Disapproving of ways of managing conflict  
Helping solve the conflict

**Unwilling to reject family**

Supporting brother  
Not rejecting brother

**Perceiving the killing as impulsive**

Blaming family discord for the killing  
Suspecting an inability to control anger  
Failing to understand anger  
Experiencing problems as unbearable  
Blaming the couple for the killing  
The killing a sudden act versus planned  
Defending the killing being unplanned  
Feeling uncertain about the reason of killing  
Feeling angered by the killing  
Feeling confused by the killing

**Feeling shocked and scared**

Sensing danger about to happen  
Feeling shocked and scared by the killing  
Experiencing the killing as unbelievable  
Not expecting brother to kill  
Not finding the precipitants of the killing  
Feeling shocked by the killing  
Feeling shocked by the intent to kill

**Seeing feelings of remorse**

Feeling sympathy for brother  
Defending brother's good nature  
Regretting the killing  
Feeling guilty for killing  
Not feeling proud of killing  
Feeling ashamed of being an offender

**Clustering of Themes and Developing Superordinate Themes**

**Perceiving them wanting to be 'perfect' but failing**

Feeling impressed by their marriage  
Seeing the couple addressing issues  
Observing them acting happy  
Seeing them failing to follow culture

**Observing chaos in parenting**

Seeing the parents responsible  
Perceiving the parents failing  
Seeing the children now rejected  
Observing them fighting over parenting

**Not seeing us close anymore**

Succeeding in helping  
Unwilling to reject family  
Not getting along anymore

**Seeing him losing control and killing**

Perceiving the killing as impulsive  
Feeling shocked and scared  
Seeing feelings of remorse

Table of Superordinate and Subordinate Themes

| SUPERORDINATE THEMES                                       | SUBORDINATE THEMES                     |
|--|--|
| <b>PERCEIVING THEM WANTING TO BE 'PERFECT' BUT FAILING</b> | Feeling impressed by their marriage    |
|  | Seeing the couple addressing issues    |
|  | Observing them acting happy            |
|  | Seeing them failing to follow culture  |
| <b>OBSERVING CHAOS IN PARENTING</b>                        | Seeing the parents responsible         |
|  | Perceiving the parents failing         |
|  | Seeing the children now rejected       |
|  | Observing them fighting over parenting |
| <b>NOT SEEING US CLOSE ANYMORE</b>                         | Succeeding in helping                  |
|  | Unwilling to reject family             |
|  | Not getting along anymore              |
| <b>SEEING HIM LOSING CONTROL AND KILLING</b>               | Perceiving the killing as impulsive    |
|  | Feeling shocked and scared             |
|  | Seeing feelings of remorse             |

Themes, Brief Quotations, and References

| SUPERORDINATE THEMES  | BRIEF QUOTATIONS                         | REFERENCES |
|---|--|------------|
| <b>PERCEIVING THEM AS WANTING TO BE 'PERFECT' BUT FAILING</b> | “They did not have problems”             | 461.22     |
|   | “never say bad things to sis Sue”        | 461.33     |
|   | “not tell people their domestic issues”  | 461.41     |
|   | “were <u>private</u> people”             | 461.42     |
|   | “always happy”                           | 461.46     |
|   | “to be <u>united</u> and in love”        | 462.5      |
|   | “respect each other”                     | 462.5      |
|   | “he was committed”                       | 462.9      |
|   | “discussed his plans with his wife”      | 462.9      |
|   | “they lived a good life”                 | 462.17     |
|   | “I did not know their problems”          | 463.11     |
|   | “should have involved <u>my mother</u> ” | 464.8      |
|   | “family did not know”                    | 464.13     |
|   | “hiding their problems”                  | 464.18     |
|   | “Sis Sue liked shouting”                 | 464.48     |
|   | “brother was cool and soft-spoken”       | 464.49     |
| “they have physically fought”                                 | 465.8                                    |            |
| “pretending to be happy”                                      | 465.20                                   |            |
| “see them as a good family”                                   | 465.27                                   |            |

|   |  |   |
|---|--|---|
|   | <p>“not practice culture”<br/> “should not have excluded the elders”<br/> “see him as having failed as a man”<br/> “He is now a FAILURE”</p>   | <p>466.5<br/> 466.14<br/> 466.18<br/> 466.19</p>  |
| <b>OBSERVING CHAOS IN PARENTING</b>             | <p>“Sis Sue did not want Nomsa”<br/> “did not want my aunt’s children”<br/> “not want my brother to give them money”<br/> “not have any other problems”<br/> “raise their children well”<br/> “treated his children very well”<br/> “protective of his children”<br/> “problem with Joe giving Nomsa pocket money”<br/> “not want Nomsa to stay with them”<br/> “He did not outcast him”<br/> “should not look after Nomsa”<br/> “I will not discriminate”<br/> “sis Sue ill-treated her”<br/> “caused a fight”<br/> “not know why she was angry”<br/> “not <u>know what happened</u>”<br/> “I could not understand”</p>   | <p>461.25<br/> 467.15<br/> 461.31<br/> 461.40<br/> 462.14<br/> 462.22<br/> 462.27<br/> 462.33<br/> 462.33<br/> 462.47<br/> 463.19<br/> 463.19<br/> 463.20<br/> 463.30<br/> 464.1<br/> 464.1<br/> 464.2</p>  |
| <b>NOT SEEING US CLOSE ANYMORE</b>              | <p>“Sis Sue was good to us”<br/> “we were all happy”<br/> “close to sis Sue and her family”<br/> “were very close”<br/> “very happy together”<br/> “I loved her!”</p>  | <p>461.11<br/> 461.11<br/> 465.2<br/> 465.3<br/> 465.5<br/> 465.6</p>   |
| <b>SEEING HIM AS LOSING CONTROL AND KILLING</b> | <p>“don’t know what led to this incident”<br/> “caused this thing”<br/> “he had <u>anger</u>”<br/> “I was also <u>scared</u>”<br/> “I <u>could not believe</u>”<br/> “he is a quiet person”<br/> “not a person who <u>does bad things</u>”<br/> “first time he became violent”<br/> “I don’t know where his anger came from”<br/> “<u>not plan to commit this thing</u>”<br/> “don’t know what happened”<br/> “not able to cope with the situation”<br/> “I was also <u>shocked</u>”<br/> “he was ending the conflict”<br/> “shot everybody including himself”<br/> “They had serious problems”<br/> “keep their problems <u>locked inside</u>”<br/> “None of this would have happened”<br/> “He is very regretful”<br/> “feeling very guilty”</p> | <p>462.18<br/> 463.30<br/> 464.24<br/> 464.29<br/> 464.30<br/> 464.31<br/> 464.31<br/> 464.32<br/> 464.36<br/> 464.40<br/> 464.41<br/> 464.43<br/> 464.45<br/> 465.13<br/> 465.14<br/> 465.15<br/> 465.16<br/> 465.17<br/> 465.30<br/> 465.30</p> |

|  |                                      |        |
|--|--------------------------------------|--------|
|  | “why did I commit this thing?”       | 465.31 |
|  | “not happy that he did this THING”   | 465.32 |
|  | “I don’t like committing this crime” | 465.36 |

### May – Neo’s sister

#### List of Themes

Hoping for a successful family  
 Doubting their love to last  
 Defending their decision to marry  
 Feeling confident about their love  
 Feeling confident about their love  
 Feeling distant to the couple  
 Feeling confident about their love  
 Expecting the couple to succeed  
 Feeling confident about the couple succeeding  
 Feeling surprised and proud of their success  
 Feeling certain about the couple’s commitment  
 Feeling proud of the couple  
 Feeling puzzled by their behaviour  
 Sensing “slight friction”  
 Feeling concerned and confused by their behaviour  
 Feeling uncertain about the couple’s problems  
 Feeling unsure about abuse  
 Feeling uncertain about being unapproachable  
 Feeling puzzled by problems being kept private  
 Feeling concerned by the loss of interest  
 Feeling puzzled by problems being kept private  
 Feeling concerned and suspecting problems  
 Feeling uncertain but suspecting problems  
 Feeling uncertain about the cause of problems  
 Defending lacking knowledge of problems  
 Expecting to be told problems  
 Feeling surprised by problems being kept private  
 Not feeling free to ask about the marriage  
 Feeling hurt by being told issues late  
 Feeling hurt by the in-laws involved in issues  
 Feeling angry by not being told problems  
 Feeling hurt by not being told problems  
 Feeling forced to accept the preference of the in-laws  
 Feeling concerned about being unapproachable  
 Feeling concerned about being a nuisance  
 Defending the distant but happy relationship  
 Feeling concerned about being a nuisance  
 Feeling surprised by happiness turning into dislike  
 Defending attendance of family gatherings  
 Feeling concerned about them leaving

**Clustering of Themes and Developing Subordinate Themes****No longer doubting the marriage**

Doubting their love to last  
Feeling disappointed by their immaturity  
Feeling disappointed by their incompetence  
Suspecting them to be unable to solve issues  
Expecting a troubled marriage  
Seeing them as mature now  
Feeling proud of their responsibility  
Feeling confident about the couple's maturity  
Expecting marital problems  
Hoping for a successful family  
Defending their decision to marry  
Feeling confident about their love  
Expecting the couple to succeed  
Feeling confident about the couple succeeding  
Feeling surprised and proud of their success  
Feeling certain about the couple's commitment  
Feeling proud of the couple

**Observing "friction" exploding**

Feeling puzzled by their behaviour  
Sensing "slight friction"  
Feeling concerned and confused by their behaviour  
Feeling uncertain about the couple's problems  
Feeling unsure about abuse  
Suspecting domestic violence  
Defending lacking knowledge of violence  
Defending brother's non-violent behaviour  
Feeling uncertain about a change in behaviour  
Feeling concerned about the change in behaviour  
Denying knowledge of brother's behaviour  
Defending knowledge of good behaviour  
Feeling puzzled by problems being kept private  
Feeling concerned and suspecting problems  
Feeling uncertain but suspecting problems  
Feeling uncertain about the cause of problems  
Defending lacking knowledge of problems  
Expecting to be told problems  
Feeling uncertain about the nature of the marriage  
Hoping the couple looked for help  
Feeling disappointed in the couple  
Feeling disappointed by being deceived  
Blaming them for not seeking help  
Hoping for help to be sought  
Feeling disappointed by not asking for help  
Feeling angered by the deception  
Feeling confused by not asking for help

Feeling disappointed by the management of conflict  
Blaming the couple for the killing  
Feeling surprised by the need to forgive  
Feeling concerned about an explosion of problems  
Seeing hidden problems exploding  
Hoping to learn to address issues  
Hoping to learn to ask for help

**Seeing the family failing**

Expecting a man to be the head  
Expecting a mutual relationship  
Feeling entitled to challenge a man  
Expecting a mutual relationship  
Condoning mutual respect  
Blaming the couple for leaving  
Failing to be a family man

**Trusting them to be loving parents**

Not worrying about parenting  
Feeling impressed by parenting style  
Feeling proud of parenting style  
Trusting them to be loving parents  
Feeling uncertain about their love  
Defending the father-child bond  
Not doubting the parental love  
Defending parenting roles  
Feeling impressed by parental roles  
Feeling happy with parenting style  
Defending parental expectations  
Defending parenting style

**Seeing the parents failing**

Disapproving of involving the children in the fight  
Feeling disappointed by their parenting

**Feeling hurt by favouritism**

Feeling distant to the couple  
Feeling uncertain about being unapproachable  
Feeling concerned by the loss of interest  
Not feeling free to ask about the marriage  
Feeling hurt by being told issues late  
Feeling hurt by the in-laws involved in issues  
Feeling angry by not being told problems  
Feeling forced to accept the preference of the in-laws  
Feeling concerned about being unapproachable  
Feeling concerned about being a nuisance  
Distancing self from them  
Worrying about becoming a nuisance

Defending the distant but happy relationship  
Feeling surprised by happiness turning into dislike  
Defending attendance of family gatherings  
Feeling concerned about them leaving  
Feeling desperate to understand their leaving  
Suspecting the couple to feel hurt  
Suspecting the couple to prefer the in-laws  
Defending preference of the in-laws  
Feeling hurt by them preferring the in-laws

### **Worrying about the effects of the conflict**

Feeling pleased by brother being rehabilitated  
Feeling certain about brother's rehabilitation  
Worrying about the effects of the custody battle  
Defending brother's efforts to be better

### **Not knowing how to protect him**

Feeling confused by the family conflict  
Feeling surprised and confused by the family conflict  
Feeling helpless amidst the family conflict  
Feeling desperate to end the custody battle  
Feeling confused by the custody battle

### **Not deserving to be blamed**

Feeling blamed by the in-laws  
Being unfairly blamed  
Defending the feelings of blame and resentment  
Feeling shocked by the blame and resentment

### **Feeling shocked and overwhelmed**

Feeling puzzled by the killing  
Feeling shocked by the killing  
Feeling distressed by the killing  
Feeling shocked and hurt by the killing  
Feeling shocked and disappointed by the killing  
Feeling frightened by the killing  
Feeling hurt by the killing  
Feeling overwhelmed by the killing  
Feeling concerned about the effect of the killing  
Avoiding issues concerning the killing

### **Feeling confused**

Struggling to understand the killing  
Feeling desperate to understand the killing  
Feeling confused by the killing  
Failing to understand the killing

Failing to understand wrong behaviour  
 Feeling disappointed by not knowing  
 Feeling desperate but reluctant to know  
 Feeling scared to ask about the killing

### **Understanding the ‘madness’**

Feeling indifferent to family killings  
 Rejecting wrongdoings  
 Feeling disappointed and ashamed of the killing  
 Feeling disappointed by the killing  
 Wronging our culture  
 Expecting Christians to kill now  
 Seeing brother as losing control  
 Feeling uncertain about the ability to control anger  
 Feeling uncertain about the triggers of anger  
 Suspecting the intention to kill the family  
 Accepting the killing  
 Suspecting brother of becoming “mad”

### **Not feeling angry anymore**

Feeling angered by the decision to kill  
 Feeling angry and rejecting brother  
 Not feeling anger anymore  
 Feeling guilty for rejecting brother  
 Experiencing anger as meaningless  
 Worrying about brother’s anger  
 Blaming brother  
 Feeling anger and blame  
 Accepting and supporting brother now  
 Feeling concerned about distressing brother

## **Clustering of Themes and Developing Superordinate Themes**

### **Seeing a successful marriage failing**

No longer doubting the marriage  
 Observing “friction” exploding  
 Seeing the family failing

### **Perceiving loving parents failing**

Trusting them to be loving parents  
 Seeing the parents failing

### **Feeling helpless amidst favouritism and conflict**

Feeling hurt by favouritism  
 Not deserving to be blamed  
 Worrying about the effects of the conflict  
 Not knowing how to protect him

**The killing an act of ‘madness’**

Feeling shocked and overwhelmed

Feeling confused

Understanding the ‘madness’

Not feeling angry anymore

**Table of Superordinate and Subordinate Themes**

| <b>SUPERORDINATE THEMES</b>                             | <b>SUBORDINATE THEMES</b>                  |
|---|--|
| <b>SEEING A SUCCESSFUL MARRIAGE FAILING</b>             | No longer doubting the marriage            |
|   | Observing “friction” exploding             |
|   | Seeing the family failing                  |
| <b>PERCEIVING LOVING PARENTS FAILING</b>                | Trusting them to be loving parents         |
|   | Seeing the parents failing                 |
| <b>FEELING HELPLESS AMIDST FAVOURITISM AND CONFLICT</b> | Feeling hurt by favouritism                |
|   | Not deserving to be blamed                 |
|   | Worrying about the effects of the conflict |
|   | Not knowing how to protect him             |
| <b>THE KILLING AN ACT OF ‘MADNESS’</b>                  | Feeling shocked and overwhelmed            |
|   | Feeling confused                           |
|   | Understanding the ‘madness’                |
|   | Not feeling angry anymore                  |

**Themes, Brief Quotations, and References**

| <b>SUPERORDINATE THEMES</b>                 | <b>BRIEF QUOTATIONS</b>                      | <b>REFERENCES</b> |
|---|--|-------------------|
| <b>SEEING A SUCCESSFUL MARRIAGE FAILING</b> | “ <u>strong</u> , successful, and good home” | 496.10            |
|   | “slight friction”                            | 496.43            |
|   | “not know what was happening”                | 496.45            |
|   | “I found them just fine”                     | 497.1             |
|   | “not know how his behaviour was like”        | 497.4             |
|   | “what is making them to argue”               | 497.24            |
|   | “never heard uh a complaint”                 | 497.24            |
|   | “keeping their problems private”             | 497.31            |
|   | “small things make them angry”               | 498.26            |
|   | “not yet mature to manage some issues”       | 498.32            |
|   | “ <u>their anger</u> ”                       | 498.36            |
|   | “have problems in their marriage”            | 498.36            |
|   | “carrying problems inside”                   | 499.4             |

|   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
|   | <p>“issues in their relationship led to this thing”</p> <p>“<u>why</u> did he not tell us”</p> <p>“problems will eventually EXPLODE”</p> <p>“what he did is wrong”</p> <p>“not seen as a good family man”</p>   | <p>500.2</p> <p>500.16</p> <p>503.11</p> <p>504.24</p> <p>504.24</p>  |
| <b>PERCEIVING LOVING PARENTS FAILING</b>                | <p>“She was <u>well-cared-for</u>”</p> <p>“a happy child”</p> <p>“I was pleased”</p> <p>“loved their children”</p> <p>“close to his children”</p> <p>“not see them as bad parents”</p> <p>“nothing wrong that they did”</p> <p>“involved their children”</p>  | <p>499.12</p> <p>499.13</p> <p>499.15</p> <p>499.28</p> <p>499.27</p> <p>499.48</p> <p>499.49</p> <p>504.15</p>   |
| <b>FEELING HELPLESS AMIDST FAVOURITISM AND CONFLICT</b> | <p>“not too close to us”</p> <p>“we were not communicating”</p> <p>“no open space to ask”</p> <p>“wife’s aunt arrived to care for him”</p> <p>“called and informed us”</p> <p>“not want to interfere”</p> <p>“went to her parents’ house”</p> <p>“took them to her parents’ place”</p> <p>“the other family <u>treats you</u>”</p> <p>“don’t know what happened”</p> <p>“<u>wanted a fight</u>”</p> <p>“<u>rude</u> to us”</p> <p>“not knowing what to do”</p> <p>“surprised and confused”</p> <p>“what will we do?”</p>                                    | <p>497.42</p> <p>497.33</p> <p>497.34</p> <p>497.37</p> <p>497.39</p> <p>498.6</p> <p>498.20</p> <p>499.45</p> <p>501.30</p> <p>501.32</p> <p>501.42</p> <p>501.42</p> <p>502.34</p> <p>502.37</p> <p>502.38</p>        |
| <b>THE KILLING AN ACT OF ‘MADNESS’</b>                  | <p>“never heard that they had a fight”</p> <p>“<u>shocked</u> us a lot”</p> <p>“<u>How did it happen?</u>”</p> <p>“good and seemed untroubled”</p> <p>“suddenly happened”</p> <p>“become angry”</p> <p>“not take it well – <u>AT ALL</u>”</p> <p>“never even paid attention to such things”</p> <p>“really HIT us”</p> <p>“a person can commit such a thing”</p> <p>“<u>angry with him</u>”</p> <p>“blamed him”</p> <p>“I was scared”</p> <p>“he was mad”</p> <p>““EISH but how can he do this?””</p> <p>“Why should something like this happen to us?”</p> | <p>500.6</p> <p>500.8</p> <p>500.9</p> <p>500.11</p> <p>500.21</p> <p>500.22</p> <p>500.49</p> <p>501.3</p> <p>501.4</p> <p>501.6</p> <p>501.28</p> <p>502.5</p> <p>503.4</p> <p>503.16</p> <p>503.37</p> <p>503.39</p> |

|  |                                    |        |
|--|------------------------------------|--------|
|  | “ <u>not support</u> such a crime” | 504.11 |
|--|------------------------------------|--------|

### Cross-case Analysis

#### List of Themes

Seeing a successful marriage failing  
 No longer doubting the marriage  
 Observing “friction” exploding  
 Seeing the family failing  
 Perceiving loving parents failing  
 Trusting them to be loving parents  
 Seeing the parents failing  
 Feeling helpless amidst favouritism and conflict  
 Feeling hurt by favouritism  
 Not deserving to be blamed  
 Worrying about the effects of the conflict  
 Not knowing how to protect him  
 The killing an act of ‘madness’  
 Feeling shocked and overwhelmed  
 Feeling confused  
 Understanding the ‘madness’  
 Not feeling angry anymore  
 Perceiving them wanting to be ‘perfect’ but failing  
 Feeling impressed by their marriage  
 Seeing the couple addressing issues  
 Observing them acting happy  
 Seeing them failing to follow culture  
 Observing chaos in parenting  
 Seeing the parents responsible  
 Perceiving the parents failing  
 Seeing the children now rejected  
 Observing them fighting over parenting  
 Not seeing us close anymore  
 Succeeding in helping  
 Unwilling to reject family  
 Not getting along anymore  
 Seeing him losing control and killing  
 Perceiving the killing as impulsive  
 Feeling shocked and scared  
 Seeing feelings of remorse

**Clustering of Themes and Developing Superordinate Themes****Feeling worried**

Seeing a successful marriage failing  
Seeing them failing to follow culture

**Feeling excluded**

Feeling helpless amidst favouritism and conflict  
Feeling hurt by favouritism

**Seeing them acting happy amidst chaos**

Perceiving them wanting to be 'perfect' but failing  
Observing them acting happy

**Gradually feeling disappointed**

Trusting them to be loving parents  
Seeing the parents responsible  
Perceiving loving parents failing  
Observing chaos in parenting  
Seeing the children now rejected  
Observing them fighting over parenting

**Feeling blamed**

Not deserving to be blamed  
Not seeing us close anymore

**Experiencing helplessness**

Worrying about the effects of the conflict  
Not knowing how to protect him

**Struggling to make sense of the killing**

Feeling shocked and overwhelmed  
Feeling confused  
Feeling shocked and scared  
Observing "friction" exploding  
The killing an act of 'madness'  
Seeing him losing control and killing  
Perceiving the killing as impulsive

**Feeling sympathy**

Understanding the 'madness'  
Seeing feelings of remorse  
Not feeling angry anymore  
Unwilling to reject family

### Clustering of Themes and Developing Master Themes

#### Perceiving a marriage failing

Feeling worried  
Feeling excluded

#### Discovering their deception

Seeing them acting happy amidst chaos  
Gradually feeling disappointed

#### Feeling caught in the middle

Feeling blamed  
Experiencing helplessness

#### The killing an act of 'madness'

Struggling to make sense of the killing  
Feeling sympathy

**Table of Master and Superordinate Themes**

| <b>MASTER THEMES</b>                       | <b>SUPERORDINATE THEMES</b>             |
|--|---|
| <b>PERCEIVING A MARRIAGE FAILING</b>       | Feeling worried                         |
|  | Feeling excluded                        |
| <b>DISCOVERING THEIR DECEPTION</b>         | Seeing them acting happy amidst chaos   |
|  | Gradually feeling disappointed          |
| <b>FEELING CAUGHT IN THE MIDDLE</b>        | Feeling blamed                          |
|  | Experiencing helplessness               |
| <b>THE KILLING AN ACT OF<br/>'MADNESS'</b> | Struggling to make sense of the killing |
|  | Feeling sympathy                        |

Table of Master Themes, Brief Quotations, and References

| MASTER THEMES  | REFERENCES   |
|--|--|
| <p><b>Perceiving a marriage failing</b></p> <p><i>Feeling worried</i></p> <p><b>April:</b> They fought in the past<br/>Sis Sue liked shouting during a fight which only made it worse<br/>Physically fought in the past<br/>Sis Sue wanted to stab him with a knife<br/>Sis Sue also burnt my brother with cooking oil<br/>I don't know what really happened</p> <p><b>May:</b> They were still youthful. They were <u>young</u><br/>I could say almost a slight friction<br/>It is like you could see that they are not ((holding hands))<br/>We did not know what was happening<br/>Person is not yet matured you will find that even small things make them angry and then they take their things and leave<br/>Neo would have wanted to know what happened<br/>Not yet mature to manage some issues<br/>Because of <u>their anger</u>, they would maybe have problems in their marriage</p> <p><i>Feeling excluded</i></p> <p><b>April:</b> My family did not know the issues that my brother and sis Sue were having<br/>We always discuss our issues with the family members so that they can offer guidance<br/>They kept their problems private!<br/>Consulted the elders in our family when they failed to reach a solution<br/>They should not have excluded the elders like they did in their situation</p> <p><b>May:</b> They were keeping their problems private<br/>We were not communicating. It is like I was not able to talk to him about – <u>his wife</u><br/>No open space to ask how he was doing and what was happening?<br/>His wife's aunt arrived to care for him when I was there<br/>We were not told that Neo was back from the hospital<br/>If they spoke out, they could have found assistance<br/>Took them to her parents' place if they had to go somewhere and not to my parents, even when my mother was home</p> | <p>464.47<br/>464.48<br/>465.8<br/>465.9<br/>465.10<br/>465.11</p> <p>496.11<br/>496.42<br/>496.44<br/>496.45<br/>498.26<br/>498.29<br/>498.32<br/>498.36</p> <p>464.13<br/>466.7<br/>466.8<br/>466.13<br/>466.14</p> <p>497.31<br/>497.33<br/>497.34<br/>497.37<br/>497.38<br/>499.2<br/>499.45</p> |
| <p><b>Discovering their deception</b></p> <p><i>Seeing them acting happy amidst chaos</i></p> <p><b>April:</b> But you would find that they do have problems<br/>They were secretive people who did not talk about their problems</p>  | <p>464.16<br/>465.18</p>   |

|  |        |
|--|--------|
| They were pretending to be happy and displaying a good marital image   | 465.20 |
| Wanted people to see them as a good family which was free of problems  | 465.27 |
| They wanted people to say 'Eish, that family they have a good life   | 466.9  |
| <b>May:</b> When I went to their house to visit them, I found them just fine   | 497.1  |
| Not raising any concerns and issues  | 497.1  |
| You can sometimes hear from the way people are talking with each other that they are not happy, but I did not see anything like that | 497.2  |
| Always appear to be happy while you are carrying problems inside   | 499.3  |
| <b><i>Gradually feeling disappointed</i></b>   |        |
| <b>April:</b> He treated his children very well  | 462.22 |
| He did not want anybody to raise a hand on his children  | 462.26 |
| He was very protective of his children   | 462.27 |
| Dan was not his child but he treated him and his children equally  | 463.2  |
| She <u>told me that sis Sue</u> does not want my brother to give her pocket money  | 463.16 |
| <i>You should not look after Nomsa, you should take care of your children<sup>20</sup></i>   | 463.19 |
| Sis Sue started to be bad towards Nomsa but she treated her fine at the beginning. I did not understand                              | 463.22 |
| Sis Sue would just shout at Nomsa for no apparent reason   | 463.27 |
| He guided them if they did a mistake   | 463.38 |
| He had a bad relationship with sis Sue, so my brother brought him food   | 463.40 |
| Sis Sue <u>did not want them</u>   | 463.46 |
| <b>May:</b> Let me talk about the older one who died. She was <u>well-cared-for</u>  | 499.11 |
| I was pleased with the way she treated her children  | 499.16 |
| He was close to his children   | 499.27 |
| They <u>loved their children</u> . It is just that you will never know what happened   | 499.28 |
| They were exchanging parenting roles   | 499.45 |
| I did not see them as bad parents. They were responsible parents   | 499.48 |
| There is nothing wrong that they did in the way they parented their children   | 499.49 |
| They involved their children   | 504.15 |
| Our culture does not approve of children being involved in parental conflict   | 504.19 |
| <b>Feeling caught in the middle</b>  |        |
| <b><i>Feeling blamed</i></b>   |        |
| <b>April:</b> The two families, my family and sis Sue's family, were very close  | 465.3  |
| My grandmother was friends with sis Sue's grandmother  | 465.4  |

<sup>20</sup> Italicised quotes indicates the participants' interpretations of the offenders' and family members' interpretations and experiences.

|   |        |
|---|--------|
| Sis Sue used to invite me for braais at her parents' house  | 465.4  |
| We were very happy together   | 465.5  |
| None of this would have happened if they spoke about their problems   | 465.17 |
| <b>May:</b> The father to this woman I have never seen someone with such a <u>heart</u>                                 | 501.35 |
| <u>We were able</u> to organise the funeral because of him  | 501.36 |
| He took it the way it was that we were <u>ALL not there</u> , we don't know what happened                               | 501.37 |
| He was supportive of us   | 501.38 |
| If it was <u>not for him</u> I don't know what would have happened because the situation was bad                        | 501.46 |
| <i><b>Experiencing helplessness</b></i>   |        |
| <b>April:</b> He encouraged me to continue with my studies  | 465.38 |
| He was supportive of me with regard to my education   | 465.39 |
| He is a person who likes motivating others. He motivated me a lot   | 465.40 |
| <b>May:</b> But his wife's family – <u>JESUS!</u> He was the only one who could get through to them                     | 501.40 |
| Those people <u>wanted a fight</u> . They were <u>rude</u> to us  | 501.42 |
| I wish that the issues concerning the child could be resolved   | 502.31 |
| Eish, you find yourself not knowing what to do.   | 502.33 |
| This custody thing happens you end up being surprised and confused  | 502.37 |
| But in any case, she is no longer alive now, so what will we do?  | 502.38 |
| <b>The killing an act of 'madness'</b>  |        |
| <i><b>Struggling to make sense of the killing</b></i>   |        |
| <b>April:</b> The problem between sis Sue and Nomsa caused this thing. It caused a fight between my brother and sis Sue | 463.30 |
| Maybe he had <u>anger</u> . People that have anger can do dangerous things sometimes                                    | 464.24 |
| I was also <u>scared</u> and <u>I could not believe that my brother committed such a thing</u>                          | 464.29 |
| I could not believe it because he is a quiet person   | 464.30 |
| I could not believe it. It was the first time he became violent   | 464.31 |
| Ah! No! It is <u>definitely</u> something that he did not plan  | 464.38 |
| He just told himself that he was ending the conflict by committing this incident. I don't know. Ijoo!                   | 465.13 |
| <b>May:</b> <u>Ah!</u> It was a <u>shock</u>  | 500.5  |
| We would have expected this thing to happen if we heard that they were in conflict                                      | 500.5  |
| We were <u>surprised</u>  | 500.8  |
| We did not know .... <u>How did it happen?</u>  | 500.9  |
| How can they have an argument, a sudden argument which resulted in something like <u>this</u> ?                         | 500.15 |
| I think that it is something that just suddenly happened  | 500.21 |

|   |        |
|---|--------|
| I don't know the extent to which he can become angry  | 500.22 |
| I knew him to be an obedient child  | 500.30 |
| We slept and woke up in church. We never ... It is like I never thought that something of this nature could <u>happen to us</u> | 501.1  |
| We never even paid attention to such things WHEN THEY WERE DISCUSSED in the radio   | 501.3  |
| It was something that really HIT us   | 501.4  |
| He must <u>not keep his problems to himself</u> because the problems will eventually EXPLODE                                    | 503.11 |
| They continuously occupy your mind. You can even act <u>like a mad person</u>   | 503.15 |
| He was mad for some time  | 503.16 |
| <b><i>Feeling sympathy</i></b>  |        |
| <b>April:</b> Ah! He is very regretful  | 465.30 |
| Ag shame! He is feeling very guilty   | 465.30 |
| <i>He is maybe saying, 'Ah, why did I commit this thing?'</i>   | 465.31 |
| He is not happy that he did this THING  | 465.32 |
| <i>"Eish, you know I don't like committing this crime."</i>   | 465.36 |
| <b>May:</b> His anger will not reduce if we distanced ourselves   | 502.14 |
| We started visiting him when we felt better and the situation calmed down   | 502.15 |
| I advised my family not to ask him questions about – YOU KNOW what happened   | 502.16 |
| When a person is still somehow, he does not want to be asked about what happened  | 502.17 |

**Appendix G: Analysis Process of Personal Construct Analysis**

**Appendix G1: Filicidal Participants**

**Individual Case Analysis**

**Joe**

**Diagnostic Construct Analysis**

**Covert Construing**

| <b>PREVERBAL CONSTRUCT</b> | <b>SUBMERGENCE</b> | <b>SUSPENSION</b>   | <b>EXPLANATORY COMMENTS</b>  |
|----------------------------|--------------------|---|--|
|                            |                    | <p>“I did not see some of the things especially when I was not there.”</p> <p>“I was not aware of the conflict between them when it first started.”</p> | <p>Maybe he suspended some of the evidence of the tension between his wife and aunt’s children because it was incompatible with how he construed his family.</p> |

**Structure of Construing**

| <b>SUPERORDINATE CONSTRUCT</b> | <b>SUBORDINATE CONSTRUCT</b> | <b>CORE CONSTRUCT</b>   | <b>PERIPHERAL CONSTRUCT</b> | <b>EXPLANATORY COMMENTS</b>  |
|--------------------------------|------------------------------|---|-----------------------------|--|
|                                |                              | “As long as I am still alive, it will not be possible because I will never neglect these children, they are my family.” |                             | Unwilling to neglect his aunt’s children because maybe he construed himself as loyal – disowning them would make him disloyal. |

**Strategies of Construing**

| <b>DILATION</b> | <b>CONSTRUCTION</b>  | <b>TIGHT CONSTRUCT</b>   | <b>LOOSE CONSTRUCT</b> | <b>EXPLANATORY COMMENTS</b>   |
|-----------------|--|--|------------------------|---|
|                 | “Things like that are not right, so the best way is that .... if you encounter a similar situation is to avoid or whatever.” |  |                        | His construing seemed to be constricted in which he delimited his perceptual field to minimise incompatibilities and invalidations. |
|                 |  | “will be separated by death”<br>“grow old together and achieve in life – and see your children grow and prosper” |                        | He had tight predictions of his marriage in which he predicted their union to be eternal.   |

Transitions in Construing

| THREAT   | FEAR | GUILT   | EXPLANATORY COMMENTS  |
|--|------|---|---|
|  |      | <p>“It really disappointed me that a person like me ..... because where I was working .... I was dealing mostly with women and children. I mean we were dealing mostly with people that are transported to the hospital or are being transported from the clinic to the hospital or to other maybe – uh institutions. So I was very disappointed after we fought”</p> | <p>He felt guilty by the physical fight because he maybe did not construe himself as a woman batterer. Hitting women is not part of his core role.</p>  |
| <p>“she said that “today I am taking the children and I’m leaving. I am returning home because obviously I do not have a saying since I tried to advice you not to build the house but still you built it, so I think it is best if I leave.” So that was the thing maybe that made me lose control.”</p>              |      |   | <p>He lost control because maybe he construed her decision to leave as an imminent threat to his core structure.<br/><br/>Maybe he was not prepared to lose his family.</p>                                 |
| <p>“we had a problem and maybe exchanged words. She said that she was going to leave me with this house and my aunt’s children but that I would not stay long in it. She said ..... she said she will take the house. She said that she will fight for her rights and ensure that we are out of the house, that is</p> |      |   | <p>Maybe he felt disturbed by her intention to take the house which he construed as a threat to his core structure, “that did not go down well with me”<br/><br/>Who is he without his family and home?</p> |

|   |                          |   |  |
|---|--------------------------|---|--|
| <p>what she said. So that did not go down well with me”</p> |                          |   | <p>Maybe he employed verbal violence in an attempt to eradicate the threat.</p>  |
| <p><b>ANXIETY</b></p>                                       | <p><b>AGGRESSION</b></p> | <p><b>HOSTILITY</b></p>   | <p><b>EXPLANATORY COMMENTS</b></p>   |
|   |                          | <p>“the way that maybe things worked out – I was always thinking that maybe things will be fine again, because I think that there is no relationship that maybe does not have ups and downs.”</p>   | <p>He continued to have hope that things will be fine although problems invalidated his construction of a lifelong and happy marriage.</p>   |
|   |                          | <p>“I stopped giving her pocket money – and then I would buy food for lunch. After I bought the food neh, you would find that my wife would complain again”</p>   | <p>Maybe he changed his ways of caring for his aunt’s children in an attempt to force his wife to accept, and therefore validate his disconfirmed construction of the children.</p>  |
|   |                          | <p>“that is what made me fight with her and tell her that you are now swearing at me, or you are using offensive language especially since – you know very well that these children whom we are talking about they are family, <u>how can I be sexually intimate with my family or how can I sleep with my aunt’s child?</u> How can you say that I should make her my wife?”</p> | <p>Maybe he felt insulted by his wife referring to his cousin as his wife which might have made him angry because it disconfirmed his construal of being entitled to respect and also his expectation of her treating his aunt’s children as family.</p> <p>Perhaps he used violence to force her to respect him and accept his aunt’s children.</p> |

|  |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|--|
|  |  | <p>“she asserted that she can see that she does not have a place in the house so <u>this girl is my wife</u> and she is no longer my wife. So we ended up fighting”</p>  | <p>Perhaps they were both angry because they construed their constructions of themselves, as a man and a wife, and their predictions of how they should be treated as disconfirmed, and therefore used violence to force those constructions and construal into conformity.</p>  |
|  |  | <p>“they were talking as if there is nothing that I could do for these children, or maybe I should neglect them. So I told the police officers that what you want me to do .... this thing that you want me to do, it is impossible. As long as I am still alive, it will not be possible because I will never neglect these children, they are my family.”</p> <p>“So even if you see it as not right, but for me it is right – because – these children one day ..... it is not like they will always be dependent, so I will continue to support them as long as I have the means to do that. So I don’t want my wife’s permission or your permission</p> | <p>Maybe he was angry that people were disconfirming his construal and construction of his aunt’s children by forcing him to abandon them. Perhaps he used verbal violence to force them to validate his construction of caring for his aunt’s children.</p> <p>Perhaps he continued caring for the children in an attempt to force into conformity his constructions.</p> |

|   |   |  |   |
|---|---|--|---|
| <p>“From the start when I thought that maybe I cannot deal with this thing – I thought I should call my mother or uncles so that they can see what to do with this situation because I was not able to resolve it, then you find that my wife was the one stopping me because she did not want my family to see her as a bad person towards my aunt’s children. So I also left it.”</p> |   |  |   |
|   | <p>“I told her that I will take the money and build a small house in the same yard were these children could live.”</p> |  | <p>because it seems as if you want to impose your decisions on me.”</p> |

Maybe he was anxious because he was unable to fix his problems, and could not construe and predict them anymore.

Maybe he thought his family would help him in predicting the situation, avoiding invalidation of his construing, and reduce his anxiety.

This seems to indicate aggression in that he elaborated his perceptual field by deciding to build a house for the children but scanty regarded his wife’s construing of the house and the children.

| <b>ANGER</b>  | <b>SHAME</b> | <b>LOVE</b> | <b>HAPPINESS</b> | <b>SADNESS</b> | <b>EXPLANATORY COMMENTS</b>  |
|---|--------------|-------------|------------------|----------------|--|
| <p>“he was not happy with the way that I was handling things”<br/>                     “he decided that since I was not able to deal with the situation it was better</p> |              |             |                  |                | <p>Maybe he was angry that his brother-in-law disconfirmed his construing of himself as able to manage family affairs.</p> |

|   |   |  |  |  |   |
|---|---|--|--|--|---|
| <p>for his sister to return home”</p>   |   |  |  |  | <p>Perhaps Joe also construed him as alluding that he is failing in his husband role, and therefore invalidating his construing of himself to be a good husband.</p>  |
| <p>“my brother-in-law when he left his bicycle at our place before going to work he stated that I should choose between my aunt’s children and my family.”</p> <p>“So I asked <u>him</u> why he was asking me such a question because it seems as if you are now controlling me maybe, because maybe it appears as if I am not a responsible man in my own home, because I don’t think I need your permission to tell me what I should do.”</p> |   |  |  |  | <p>Maybe he felt angered by his brother-in-law controlling and dictating to him how to be a man in his house. Perhaps his brother-in-law’s behaviour invalidated his construing of himself as a responsible family man.</p> |
|   | <p>“He decided that since I was not able to deal with the situation it was better for his sister to return home.”</p> |  |  |  | <p>Perhaps he felt shame that his brother-in-law construed him to be failing to solve problems.</p>   |

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|   |  |  |  |  | <p>Maybe Joe felt shame by his brother-in-law's decision for his sister to return home, which suggests that he might have construed him as undeserving of his wife and failing to be a good husband.</p> |
| <p>“So I felt that he was <u>very much</u> in charge of my family and yet he also had his own family.”</p>  |  |  |  |  | <p>He was angry that his brother-in-law headed his home, undermined his manhood role, and invalidated his construction of himself as a family man by making him feel incompetent.</p>                    |
|   |  |  |  | <p>“I felt <u>disappointed</u> anyway, because deep inside I knew that I was fulfilling all the requirements that were set in the house and I also tried to fulfil my wife's needs.”</p> | <p>He construed himself as being a competent family man but felt saddened by his wife invalidating his construal by making him feel like a failure.</p>  |
| <p>“But the way that he also approached us ..... I think that it was one of the things that made my relationship with his sister to be sour. So it was like –</p> |  |  |  |  | <p>He perceived his brother-in-law as validating his wife's construal of him as a bad husband which maybe made him feel</p>  |

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| <p>he is taking his sister's side, and he was not maybe giving advice or a solution that me and my wife could use. So it appeared that he was siding with his sister."</p>  |  |  |  |  | <p>angry because he saw himself as a good husband which they invalidated. Therefore, he construed his brother-in-law's intervention as fruitless.</p>   |
| <p>"I saw that the situation was becoming very sour, because my brother in-law had a history of unsuccessful intimate relationships, <u>but</u> nobody ever went to him to tell him what they should do. He and his partner made decisions regarding their relationship."</p> |  |  |  |  | <p>He construed his brother-in-law as acting like a competent man in his house which maybe made him feel incompetent. Perhaps he felt angry because he perceived himself as competent to deal with problems without his brother-in-law's involvement.</p> |
| <p>"according to her by then she thought her brother's suggestion was right. Because, as I stated earlier, she said that she thinks it is best if she left so that I could treat my aunt's daughter as my wife. So, at that time she felt that it was a good suggestion"</p>  |  |  |  |  | <p>Maybe he perceived his wife to treat her brother as a responsible man versus him, and therefore made him feel like an irresponsible husband who was unworthy of her. Maybe this made him angry because he saw himself as being a good husband.</p>     |

| SATISFACTION | SELF-CONFIDENCE | SURPRISE | CONTEMPT | CONTENTMENT | EXPLANATORY COMMENTS |
|--------------|-----------------|----------|----------|-------------|----------------------|
|              |                 |          |          |             |                      |

**Control**

**Circumspection-Preemption-Control Cycle**

| CIRCUMSPECTION PHASE | PREEMPTION PHASE   | CONTROL PHASE   | EXPLANATORY COMMENTS  |
|----------------------|--|---|---|
|                      | <p>“she had two children, my aunt, so after she died I was forced to or I decided to take her children so that we could care for them.”</p>  | <p>“she had two children, my aunt, so after she died I was forced to or I decided to take her children so that we could care for them.”</p>   | <p>His decision was pre-emptive in that he seems to have construed himself as the only one who could care for the children. He also used one pole of the construct in making this decision in which he maybe construed himself as capable of providing adequate care.</p> |
|                      | <p>“I warned her again and told her that I am speaking for the last time – please don’t make me lose control and make a decision which I will regret maybe for the rest of my life, or making a bad decision. So she</p> | <p>“I warned her again and told her that I am speaking for the last time – please don’t make me lose control and make a decision which I will regret maybe for the rest of my life, or making a bad decision.</p> | <p>Joe pre-emptively construed violence as the only way to ending a hostile and anger provoking situation. He seems</p>   |

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|  | <p>continued to provoke me saying that I must hit her, things like that. She said “hit me so that I can get you arrested.” So right there ..... she did not see it ..... I took out my gun.”</p>   | <p>So she continued to provoke me saying that I must hit her, things like that. She said “hit me so that I can get you arrested.” So right there ..... she did not see it ..... I took out my gun.”</p>  | <p>to have used one pole of the construct in which he construed violence as a solution to problems.</p>   |
|  | <p>“I was aware that she was dead after I shot her, you see. So I had this thought that, this thing has happened, it is above <u>my powers</u>. I realised that obviously this thing has happened, I don’t have another alternative, <u>besides the one of coming to prison</u>. So I just told myself that I am not going to prison.”</p> | <p>“I was aware that she was dead after I shot her, you see. So I had this thought that, this thing has happened, it is above <u>my powers</u>. I realised that obviously this thing has happened, I don’t have another alternative, <u>besides the one of coming to prison</u>. So I just told myself that I am not going to prison.”</p> | <p>Maybe he was not happy with the inevitable prediction of going to prison, and therefore made an impulsive decision to take control in constructing the situation into having a desired prediction/outcome.</p> |
|  | <p>“I wrote the suicide letter and asked my family and also close family friends to forgive me because I am really <u>ANNOYED</u> by this situation, so the <u>best way</u> was to end it.”</p>  | <p>“I wrote the suicide letter and asked my family and also close family friends to forgive me because I am really <u>ANNOYED</u> by this situation, so the <u>best way</u> was to end it.”</p>  | <p>Joe seems to have been angry when making a hostile and impulsive decision to ending problems. He seems to have pre-emptively construed suicide as the only best way out.</p>                                   |
| <p>“what got to me was my realisation that the mother of my children was dead. So I thought maybe – that they were still young, so there</p> | <p>“what got to me was my realisation that the mother of my children was dead. So I thought maybe – that they</p>  | <p>“what got to me was my realisation that the mother of my children was dead. So I thought</p>  | <p>Joe made a pre-emptive decision to kill his children and</p>   |

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| <p>was no option. I thought there was no option ..... because I thought – if maybe I spare their lives and mine, I am still going to be imprisoned and they will still not have parents. So according to me ..... maybe under the influence of SATAN was that the other option ..... these children were going to suffer, so I decided to kill them and myself, and that was my solution.”</p> | <p>were still young, so there was no option. I thought there was no option .... because I thought – if maybe I spare their lives and mine, I am still going to be imprisoned and they will still not have parents. So according to me ..... maybe under the influence of SATAN was that the other option ..... these children were going to suffer, so I decided to kill them and myself, and that was my solution.”</p> | <p>maybe – that they were still young, so there was no option. I thought there was no option ..... because I thought – if maybe I spare their lives and mine, I am still going to be imprisoned and they will still not have parents. So according to me ..... maybe under the influence of SATAN was that the other option ..... these children were going to suffer, so I decided to kill them and myself, and that was my solution.”</p> | <p>himself. He seemed to draw on one pole of the construct in which he construed death as a way to preventing suffering. The circumspection phase of the cycle was foreshortened in that he drew on different constructs to construe his problem before pre-emptively construing it as having “no option” except committing filicide-suicide.</p> |
|  | <p>“So I think what made me ..... maybe affect me was that maybe I saw that there was no solution.”</p>  | <p>“So I think what made me ..... maybe affect me was that maybe I saw that there was no solution.”</p>   | <p>The C-P-C Cycle was foreshortened. He made an impulsive decision to employ extreme violence to solve a problem that he construed as ‘solutionless’.</p>  |
|  | <p>“I thought that this situation is out of control, it is better if there is a SOLUTION.”</p>   | <p>“I thought that this situation is out of control, it is better if there is a SOLUTION.”</p>  | <p>Joe seems to have pre-emptively construed his problems as</p>  |

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|  |  |  | <p>uncontrollable and irresolvable. He seems to have submerged a pole of a construct which might have enabled him to construe the situation differently.</p>                                 |
|  | <p>“I told myself that I don’t want this thing to <u>happen again</u> and it is better for me to end it today. So that is when I went to fetch the gun.”</p> | <p>“I told myself that I don’t want this thing to <u>happen again</u> and it is better for me to end it today. So that is when I went to fetch the gun.”</p> | <p>His decision to use violence to end an anger provoking situation seems to have been pre-emptive. He construed violence as the only solution and failed to explore other alternatives.</p> |

Category Groupings of Experience Cycle Methodology Data

Engaging in an intimate/marital relationship

| PHASE                            | CATEGORY GROUPING               | QUOTES   |
|----------------------------------|---------------------------------|--|
| Anticipation                     | Tight prediction                | <p>“where you grow old together and achieve in life – and see your children grow and prosper.”</p> <p>“she also had the same thought like me the time we started our relationship”</p>   |
|                                  | Loose prediction                | <p>“they will take their relationship to a level where somehow ..... uh maybe where you will be separated by death if maybe that is by God’s will.”</p>  |
|                                  | High investment<br>Invalidation | <p>“I used to give her warmth in our love”</p> <p>“Our marriage started well UNTIL – 2009, yes January, early January when my aunt died.”</p> <p>“BUT at the end things started happening, uh my relationship with her started uh to be slightly sour”</p> <p>“I am very sad at the way things turned out to be.”</p> <p>“I felt that there was no effort that I did which they supported, if I could say that. I felt that maybe I am not <u>man</u> enough to them to maybe take charge of my own home.”</p> |
| Investment<br>(Dis) Confirmation |                                 |  |

|                    |                                |  |
|--------------------|--------------------------------|--|
|                    |                                | <p>“I thought to myself that whatever I have tried to do was unsuccessful. It seemed to <u>me</u> that I was always blamed ..... I was too tired.”</p> <p>“BUT now I felt this is a family which did not have order because people were everywhere. It seemed like a family which did not have discipline.”</p> <p>“when this thing started it was nice, it was nice at home, they were all very close.”</p> |
| Construct Revision | Validation                     | <p>“I regret that before this whole thing happened, I did not follow the advice that I was going to receive from the professionals who I was referred to by my supervisor”</p> <p>“I should have sought further assistance from the Social Workers and the likes. I think that if maybe I did that, maybe there could have been hope for us.”</p>  |
|                    | Significant construct revision |  |

**Constructions of fatherhood**

| <b>PHASE</b> | <b>CATEGORY GROUPING</b> | <b>QUOTES</b>   |
|--------------|--------------------------|---|
| Anticipation | Tight prediction         | <p>“I wanted to take them to schools which maintained high academic standards, and then do everything in my powers especially with regard to their education, to give them all the <u>best</u>. That is what I wanted to do – raise them well.”</p> |

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|                           |                         | <p>“I think that still – I will get an opportunity to be a father”</p>   |
|                           | <p>Loose prediction</p> | <p>“we can take these children and stay with them for maybe that YEAR”</p>   |
| <p>Investment</p>         | <p>High investment</p>  | <p>“she wanted these children ... that I should abandon them and of which it was something that I was not going to be able to do.”</p> <p>“As long as I am still alive, it will not be possible because I will never neglect these children, they are my family.”</p> <p>“I tried other things to be financially stable and spoil my children and my family”</p> |
| <p>(Dis) Confirmation</p> | <p>Invalidation</p>     | <p>“<u>this thing</u> did not take me well and I said to her, I thought I was surprising you by buying our child clothes, she did not even go to crèche so that I could spoil her and let her spend her father’s money, but now you are saying these things.”</p> <p>“the situation that I am in today erases the good that I did.”</p>                          |
|                           | <p>Validation</p>       | <p>“I think I fulfilled their expectations of me as their father because they also saw that – obvious I am their father and I know my responsibilities as their father.”</p> <p>“I think that I played my part very well. I was responsible – for my family – and children. I think I tried all my <u>best</u>.”</p>   |

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|--------------------|--------------------------------|---|
| Construct Revision | Significant construct revision | “I will play my role right this time. I will make sure that there are no other similar problems.” |
|--------------------|--------------------------------|---|

**The killing of the child/children**

| PHASE              | CATEGORY GROUPING | QUOTES  |
|--------------------|-------------------|---|
| Anticipation       | Tight prediction  | <p>“I don’t have another alternative, <u>besides the one of coming to prison.</u>”</p> <p>“I am still going to be imprisoned and they will still not have parents”</p> <p>“these children were going to suffer, so I decided to kill them and myself”</p>   |
| Investment         | Low investment    | <p>“I never had this thought – it never came to me.”</p> <p>“it <u>did not work AT ALL.</u>”</p>  |
| (Dis) Confirmation | Invalidation      | <p>“It also painted all <u>fathers</u> badly”</p> <p>“I don’t feel well that we are talking about this. I feel <u>ashamed</u> that I also form <u>PART</u> of the men that hurt or I have hurt my family or women”</p> <p>“My plan did not work for me”</p> <p>“it will be because of this incident. Since I am already here – <u>OBVIOUSLY</u> most of the time you can try to build something good but a slight mistake can erase all of that.” “<u>a lot</u></p> |

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|                           |                             | <p>of <u>people</u> who maybe – I had a good communication relationship with before the incident ..... obviously – they have turned their backs on me by distancing themselves.”</p> |
| <p>Construct Revision</p> | <p>Significant revision</p> | <p>“that is why I am saying that it was not the right decision – and also it was wrong of me to kill my wife”</p>  |

An Analysis of Joe’s PEG Data

ELEMENT

| Offender  | Nuclear family   | Nuclear family’s views of the offender  | Extended family  | Ideal family   |
|---|--|---|--|--|
| <p>What was the offender’s perception of himself before the killing?</p> <p>An achiever – “I saw myself and also other people – that had an understanding of me, they said that they could see that I was going to be successful or that I have progressed in life.”</p> <p>Having a bright future – “I also saw that my future was <u>bright</u>”</p> <p>An ambitious person – “I was a person who had goals and I always told myself that if I want to bring change in my workplace or community, I <u>DID IT.</u>”</p> | <p>What was the offender’s perception of his nuclear family before the killing?</p> <p>Getting along – “People could see ..... and you could also see that these people have an understanding.”</p> <p>Loving – “It is people who are in love.”</p> <p>Feeling happy – “It is a happy family.”</p> <p>Enjoying each other’s company – “Sometimes when I was busy in the garden, you would find that I would go with my wife to drop off garden waste and we would come back playing and I would push her on the wheelbarrow. Some people in our area</p> | <p>What was the offender’s perception of his nuclear family’s views of himself before the killing?</p> <p>Trusting self – “<u>THEY BELIEVED IN ME A LOT.</u> They also had faith that I would try my best to attend to all their concerns and do anything that I am capable of doing. So I think that they believed in me a lot.”</p> | <p>What is the offender’s views of his extended family?</p> <p>Hurt by the killing – “I put them in this situation which also <u>AFFECTED THEM</u> .... It did not just affect me or my wife’s family, it also affected them”</p> <p>Source of support – “I am grateful to God because even after this situation they are still supportive of me, which is what I need the most.”</p> <p>Believing in self – “they believe in me and they can also see that I am a person – who does not give up easily. <u>I try by all means to make the best of my life.</u>”</p> | <p>What was the offender’s perception of an ideal family?</p> <p>High hopes and expectations – “The way I had big hopes for my family”</p> <p>Being a role model – “I thought that we could be a family .... That we could be a good example to people”</p> <p>Instilling hope – “we could be a family which when people look at us they find hope.”</p> |

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| <p>A role model – “There were people in my community who told me that they consider me to be their role model or hero. So I could say that I was a positive light to people.”</p> <p>Feeling happy and fulfilled – “there was that kind of happiness inside of me.”</p> <p>What is his perception of himself after the killing?</p>  | <p><i>always said “you guys like playing as if you are children.””</i></p> <p>A family with a bright future – “my family’s future was also bright, before maybe the incident.”</p>  |  |  |  |
| <p>Changing into a better self – “Since I am already here, I could say that I am in a process of change. But I believe that I am not in prison. I am just undergoing a process of transition so that they could change me into a better person someday.”</p> <p>“That I should not repeat mistakes such as this, ESPECIALLY the situation that got me in prison.”</p> <p>“Even in here, I am still a busy person, I am not idle. I</p> | <p>What is the offender’s views of his nuclear family after the killing?</p> <p>Losing trust – “Obviously, they would be somehow towards me. I would try to get their trust in me back. I would try to show them that I will not hurt them again.”</p> <p>Regaining trust – “I think they know that maybe – I was a man of his word. That is, I did not make promises which I did not deliver. I think I always tried to gain their trust in me.”</p> |  |  |  |

*have been doing everything possible to try and – and come out a better person so that I can change the community or – my country.”*

*Focusing on the future – “even if I can be in prison but my heart is outside.”*

*Hoping to find love – “Maybe He will bring me a person who will love me and I also love.”*

*Refusing to be overwhelmed by guilt – “I still believe that even if I did something that affected a lot of people and killed my family, but I don’t think that I can tell myself that my life is finished. I cannot tell myself that it is over. Life still has to continue. I cannot dwell on the past because what is done is done. So I cannot keep on punishing myself by thinking that I have failed in life.”*

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PEG Analysis of Joe's Main Transcript Data

ELEMENT

| Offender   | Nuclear family   | Nuclear family's views of the offender  | Extended family   | Ideal family  |
|--|--|---|---|---|
| <p>What was the offender's perception of himself before the killing?</p>   | <p>What was the offender's perception of his nuclear family before the killing?</p> <p>A happy family</p> <p>“when this thing started it was nice, it was nice at home, they were all very close.”</p> | <p>What was the offender's perception of his nuclear family's views of himself before the killing?</p>  | <p>What is the offender's views of his extended family?</p> | <p>What was the offender's perception of an ideal family?</p> |
|  |  | <p>Seen as a responsible father</p>   |   |   |
| <p>Feeling disappointed by being violent</p> <p>“It really disappointed me that a person like me ..... because where I was working .... I was dealing mostly with women and children. I mean we were dealing mostly with people that</p> |  | <p>“they also saw that – obvious I am their father and I know my responsibilities as their father.”</p> |   |   |

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| <p>are transported to the hospital or are being transported from the clinic to the hospital or to other maybe – uh institutions. So I was very disappointed after we fought and then – I had to go and maybe explain the <u>cause of the fight.</u>”</p> |  |  |  |  |
| <p>Violence not a part of self</p> <p>“<u>No</u>. In my life since maybe – I had a gun if I could say that – I have encountered many incidents which could have led me to fight, <u>but</u> I am not a violent person.”</p>                              |  |  |  |  |
| <p>Annoyed</p> <p>“I am really <u>ANNOYED</u> by this situation, so the <u>best way was to end it.</u>”</p>  |  |  |  |  |
| <p>Ending problems</p>   |  |  |  |  |

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|---|--|--|--|--|
| <p>“I thought to myself that it is the end and I tried to commit suicide”</p>   |  |  | <p>Family hurt by the killing</p> <p>“it did not work <u>AT ALL</u>. Because it did not only affect my wife’s extended family or mine, BUT I could say that it affected people that I was close to, my community and colleagues.”</p> <p>“But since after maybe this incident <u>EISH</u>, the pain that I caused did not just affect the victims’ family – it affected everybody – who were close to me ..... my family, church members, colleagues.”</p> |  |
| <p>Finding a solution</p> <p>“I thought that this situation is out of control, it is better if there is a <u>SOLUTION</u>.”</p> |  |  |  |  |

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|---|---|--|-------------------------------|----------------------------|
|   | <p>A family without discipline</p> <p>“BUT now I felt this is a family which did not have order because people everywhere. It seemed like a family which did not have discipline. So I told myself that I don’t want this thing to <u>happen</u> <u>again</u> and it is better for me to end it <u>today</u>. So that is when I went to fetch the gun.”</p> |  |                               |                            |
| <p><b>Offender</b></p> <p>What is his perception of himself after the killing?</p> <p>Hoping to rectify the “damage”</p> <p>“Even now – yes there is damage, but I have hope that one day obviously I will be released and there will be a time that maybe if it is by God’s will, He</p> | <p><b>Nuclear family</b></p> <p>What is the offender’s views of his nuclear family after the killing?</p>   | <p><b>Nuclear family’s views of the offender</b></p> | <p><b>Extended family</b></p> | <p><b>Ideal family</b></p> |

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| <p>will give me love again. I think that still – I will get an opportunity to be a father and I will play my role right this time. I will make sure that there are no other similar problems.”</p>   |  |  |  |  |
| <p>Feeling ashamed to be part of harmful men<br/>         “Even now I don’t feel well that we are talking about this. I feel ashamed that I also form <u>PART</u> of the men that hurt or I have hurt my family or women.”</p>   |  |  |  |  |
| <p>Creating a disaster<br/>         “I don’t think it is a right thing. My plan did not work for me.”<br/>         “Because even with my problem, I tried to tell myself that I am solving the situation, but <u>NO</u> at the end it only created a <b>DISASTER.</b>”</p> |  |  |  |  |
| <p>Losing self</p>   |  |  |  |  |

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| <p>“That is, it changed everything.”<br/>Feeling rejected and alone</p>  |                    |                           |                     |                     |
| <p>“You end up – seeing yourself as alone.”</p>  |                    |                           |                     |                     |
| <b>Dyadic interpersonal construing</b>   |                    |                           |                     |                     |
| <p>Joe-wife</p>  | <p>Wife-cousin</p> | <p>Joe-brother-in-law</p> | <p>Joe-children</p> | <p>Joe-family</p>   |
| <p>Sharing marital expectations and commonality<br/><br/>“she also had the same thought like me the time we started our relationship. She was a person that I was very close to, if I could say that.”</p> |                    |                           |                     | <p>Wife-brother</p> |
| <p>Marriage turning “sour”<br/><br/>“BUT at the end things started happening, uh my relationship with her started uh to be slightly sour because maybe she did not get along with those children.”</p>     |                    |                           |                     |                     |

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|  | <p>Not aware of family problems</p> <p>“there were things that happened some of which I was not aware of and some I was aware of.”</p> <p>“I did not see some of the things especially when I was not there.”</p> <p>“I was not aware of the conflict between them when it first started.”</p> |  |   |  |   |
|  |  |  | <p>A close father-daughter</p> <p>“I was very close to the oldest one</p> |  | <p>Wife feeling ill-treated</p> <p>“she told him the way she is being ill-treated in the house especially after my aunt’s children came to live with us.”</p> |
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|  |  |  | <p>because she was a bit wiser due to her age”</p> <p>“most of the time she was always with me”</p> <p>Loving my son</p> <p>“I was close to my son despite the fact that he was young, but he knew that I was his father. So when I arrived home from work it was clear that he was my son because sometimes when his mother was carrying him he wanted to get off so that I could carry him.”</p> |  |  |
| <p>Failing communication</p> <p>“But that does not mean that maybe I did things maybe without consulting my wife, I was consulting her ..... that maybe we should do this and that, but I was not successful.”</p> |  |  |  |  |  |

|  |             |                    |              |  |              |
|--|-------------|--------------------|--------------|--|--------------|
| <p>“But you would find that communication ..... we had a communication breakdown between us”</p>   |             |                    |              |  |              |
|  |             |                    |              | <p>Telling the family too late<br/>                 “my family knew this matter when it was already ..... already <u>sour</u>, when the matter was already worse.”</p> |              |
| <b>Dyadic interpersonal construing</b>   |             |                    |              |  |              |
| Joe-wife   | Wife-cousin | Joe-brother-in-law | Joe-children | Joe-family   | Wife-brother |
| <p>Hiding marital problems<br/>                 “BUT you see the way things were going, an outsider would not know what was happening inside our house. Because – I could maybe say – she always performed her domestic responsibilities like caring for the children, cooking, and taking</p> |             |                    |              |  |              |

|   |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
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| <p>care of me. I was always neat when I went to work and I also had my lunch box.”</p>  |  |  |  | <p>Being a responsible father</p> <p>“I think I fulfilled their expectations of me as their father because they also saw that – obvious I am their father and I know my responsibilities as their father.”</p> |  |  |  |
| <p>Unable to control anger over failing marriage</p> <p>“my wife told me that the decision that she is going to take <u>today</u> was the decision that she should have made a long time ago. I asked her what was her decision, and she said that “today I am taking the children and I’m leaving. I am returning home because obviously I do not have</p> |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

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| <p>a saying since I tried to advice you not to build the house but still you <u>built</u> it, so I think it is <u>best</u> if I leave.” So that was the thing maybe that made me lose control.”</p> <p>“right there and then we had a problem and maybe exchanged words”</p> <p>Unable to tolerate the insults and provocation</p> <p>“She was still busy swearing, swearing, you see. So I ended up talking to her ..... giving her a warning. I told her to stop talking about this matter and to stop talking to me. But she still continued shouting and raising her voice. I warned her again and told her that I am speaking for the last time – please don’t make me lose control and make a decision</p> |  |  |  |  |  |
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| <p>which I will regret maybe for the rest of my life, or making a bad decision.”</p> <p>Blaming wife for the violent act</p> <p>“she continued to provoke me saying that I must hit her, things like that. She said “hit me so that I can get you arrested.” So right there ..... she did not see it ..... I took out my gun. They just saw me taking out my gun and then I shot her.”</p> |  |  |   |  |  |
|  |  |  | <p>Not wanting children to be parentless</p> <p>“what got to me was my realisation that the mother of my children was dead. So I thought maybe – that they were still young, so there was no option. I thought there was no option ..... because I thought – if maybe I</p> |  |  |

|  |                   |                 |                         |  |                             |  |
|--|-------------------|-----------------|-------------------------|--|-----------------------------|--|
|  |                   |                 |                         | spare their lives and mine, I am still going to be imprisoned and they will still not have parents.”                                   |                             |  |
|  |                   |                 |                         | Killing to prevent suffering<br>“these children were going to suffer, so I decided to kill them and myself, and that was my solution.” |                             |  |
| <b>Triadic interpersonal construing</b>  |                   |                 |                         |  |                             |  |
| Joe-wife-cousin  | Joe-wife-children | Joe-wife-family | Joe-wife-brother-in-law | Joe-brother-in-law-cousin  | Joe-brother-in-law-children |  |
| Wife bitter and unwilling to resolve problems<br>“So you find that she had a way of responding ..... she would respond maybe in an inappropriate way, she would say maybe that I cannot interrogate her in her house over children that are not hers.” |                   |                 |                         |  |                             |  |
| “SO, I asked her why she does not eat and she  |                   |                 |                         |  |                             |  |

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| <p>would say that she is full.”</p> <p>“I would ask my wife why things are happening like this, that we are beginning to have a problem with the children again, because I thought that we agreed that the children would just stay for a short period until they go stay with my mother so that she could care for them. So it became clear right there that my wife did not want to discuss the matter and she just left and went to the bedroom and did not want to talk anymore.”</p> |  |  |  |  |  |
| <p>Wife resenting aunt’s children</p> <p>“she would say maybe that I cannot interrogate her in her house over children that are not hers.”</p>  |  |  |  |  |  |
| <p>Seen as favouring aunt’s children versus step-son</p>  |  |  |  |  |  |

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|---|--|--|--|---|--|
| <p>“she expected – I think that she maybe felt maybe why is it that I liked uh children who were <u>not hers</u>, while her son ..... maybe he ended up maybe leaving the house. I think maybe that was one of our problems.”</p> |  |  |  |   |  |
| <p>Unwilling to neglect aunt’s children<br/>         “according to my wife neh – she wanted these children .... that I should abandon them and of which it was something that I was not going to be able to do.”</p>              |  |  |  |   |  |
|   |  |  |  | <p>Feeling controlled<br/>         “he stated that I should choose between my aunt’s children and my family. So I asked him why he was asking me such a question because it seems as if you are now controlling me maybe, because maybe it appears as if I am not a</p> |  |

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|  |  |  |  | <p>responsible man in my own home, because I don't think I need your permission to tell me what I should do."</p> |  |
| <p>Feeling disrespected and insulted<br/>         "that is what made me fight with her and tell her that you are now swearing at me, or you are using offensive language especially since – you know very well that these children whom we are talking about they are family, <u>how can I be sexually intimate with my family or how can I sleep with my aunt's child?</u> How can you say that I should make her my wife?"</p> |  |  |  |   | <p>Threatening to take my children<br/>         "he said that he will also take the children as well."</p> |

|  |  |  |   |  |  |
|--|--|--|---|--|--|
|  |  |  | <p>Not good enough</p> <p>“I felt that there was no effort that I did which they supported, if I could say that. I felt that maybe I am not <u>man</u> enough to them to maybe take charge of my own home.”</p> |  |  |
| <p>Fighting over aunt's children</p> <p>“WHAT MADE US FIGHT was after I spoke to my wife about my awareness of the conflict or a misunderstanding between her and the children.”</p> |  |  | <p>Brother-in-law heading my family</p> <p>“I felt that <u>he</u> was <u>very much</u> in charge of my family and yet he also had his own family.”</p>  |  |  |

| Triadic interpersonal construing  |                   |                 |                         |                           |                             |
|---|-------------------|-----------------|-------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Joe-wife-cousin   | Joe-wife-children | Joe-wife-family | Joe-wife-brother-in-law | Joe-brother-in-law-cousin | Joe-brother-in-law-children |
| <p>Unwilling to accommodate the children</p> <p>“my wife <u>disagreed</u> with my decision and said that “there will be no children who will have a house built for them <u>in this yard.</u>””</p> <p>Not listening to wife anymore</p> <p>“I told her that you don’t want to accommodate these children, but I want you to <u>know that I will no longer listen to you and I will build this house whether you like it or not.</u>”</p> <p>The insults provoking violence</p> <p>“I don’t like saying this, but she liked using it – that “she is leaving and I am staying with <u>my wife.</u>” So this thing really</p> |                   |                 |                         |                           |                             |

disturbed me. I remember that day it was in the morning and I was drinking water and she repeated it again and I threw her with water.”

|   |  |  |  |  |  |
|---|--|--|--|--|--|
| <p><u>disturbed me.</u> I remember that day it was in the morning and I was drinking water and she repeated it again and I threw her with water.”</p> |  |  |  |  |  |
|---|--|--|--|--|--|

Joe’s ABC Model Analysis: Advantages and Disadvantages of Killing or Not Killing, Main Transcript

|            |                      |
|------------|----------------------|
| a1 Killing | A: Problem construct |
|            | a2 Not killing       |

Preferring: Not killing – “So according to me ... maybe under the influence of SATAN was that the other option ... these children were going to suffer, so I decided to kill them and myself, and that was my solution. So that is why I am saying that it was not the right decision – and also it was wrong of me to kill my wife.”

b1 Disadvantages of killing

- Hurting people – “it did not work AT ALL. Because it did not only affect my wife’s extended family or mine, BUT I could say that it affected people that I was close to, my community and colleagues.”
- “But since after maybe this incident EISH, the pain that I caused did not just affect the victims’ family – it affected everybody – who were close to me ... my family, church members, colleagues.”
- Showing men as deadly – “It also painted all fathers badly, you see, that why are fathers the ones doing this?”

b2 Advantages of not killing

**B. Reason for change**

- Becoming a family killer – “Even now I don’t feel well that we are talking about this. I feel ashamed that I also form PART of the men that hurt or I have hurt my family or women. So I don’t think it is a right thing. My plan did not work for me.”

- Rejected – “Even here ... you find that an official asks you what happened, what brought you here. So when you explain to him the situation after sometime they start looking at you somehow, they start to – discriminate you, you see, they distance themselves from you. **THAT IS HURTFUL**”

“YES. You see **ONCE** ... you see prison right now – is a place on its own. When a person leaves a place like this or is in this place ... you see outside I was not a person who had a lot of friends but ... even my community respected me a lot – and also they respected me at work - and also in church. But since after maybe this incident EISH, the pain that I caused did not just affect the victims’ family – it affected everybody – who were close to me ... my family, church members, colleagues. That is, it changed everything. You end up – seeing yourself as alone.”

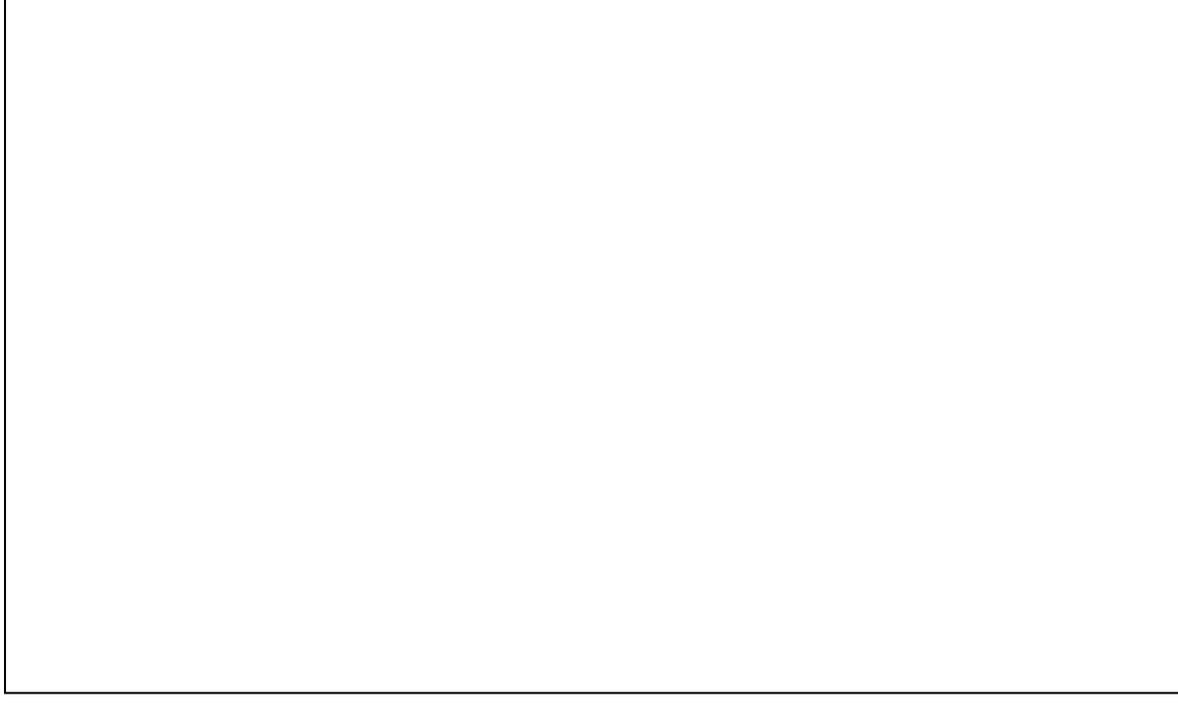


*“everybody that I have stated except maybe my family ... they have – distanced themselves”*

*“BUT a lot of people who maybe – I had a good communication relationship with before the incident ... obviously – they have turned their backs on me by distancing themselves.”*

- *Labelled a killer – “They must not rush to saying – that person EISH killed.”*
- *Creating a disaster – “Because even with my problem, I tried to tell myself that I am solving the situation, but NO at the end it only created a DISASTER.”*
- *Losing reputation of a good family man – “Me ... well besides what happened, I think that I tried with all my powers ... although the situation that I am in today erases the good that I did. I think that I played my part very well. I was responsible – for my family – and children. I think I tried all my best.”*

*“YES. So it will be because of this incident. Since I am already here – **OBVIOUSLY** most of the time you can try to build something good but a slight mistake can erase all of that.”*



- Losing respect – “YES. You see ONCE ... you see prison right now – is a place on its own. When a person leaves a place like this or is in this place ... you see outside I was not a person who had a lot of friends but ... even my community respected me a lot – and also they respected me at work - and also in church. But since after maybe this incident EISH, the pain that I caused did not just affect the victims’ family – it affected everybody – who were close to me ... my family, church members, colleagues. That is, it changed everything. You end up – seeing yourself as alone.”



## c2 Advantages of killing

- Ending annoying problems – “I wrote the *suicide letter and asked my family and also close family friends to forgive me because I am really ANNOYED by this situation, so the best way was to end it.*”
- “*after I finished writing I – I – I killed my daughter and son, and then I ended up maybe .... I thought to myself that it is the end*”
- A solution to overwhelming and solutionless problems – “*I saw that all my efforts were unsuccessful. So I did not have hope anymore, especially after – the way things went in the morning. I thought to myself that whatever I have tried to do was unsuccessful. It seemed to me that I was always blamed .... I was too tired. So that is when I did that.*”

## c1 Disadvantages of not killing

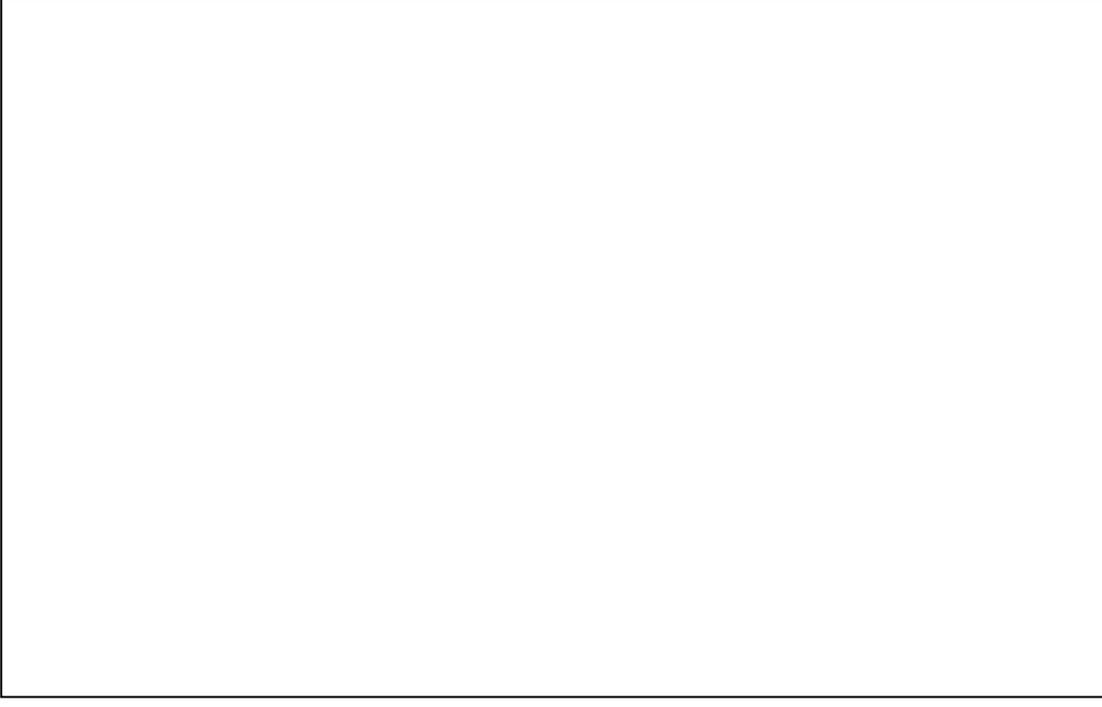
**C. Prevents change**

Preventing suffering – “*what got to me was my realisation that the mother of my children was dead. So I thought maybe – that they were still young, so there was no option. I thought there was no option ... because I thought – if maybe I spare their lives and mine, I am still going to be imprisoned and they will still not have parents. So according to me ... maybe under the influence of SATAN was that the other option ... these children were going to suffer, so I decided to kill them and myself, and that was my solution.*”

- A solution to an uncontrollable situation – “*I thought that this situation is out of control, it is better if there is a SOLUTION.*”



- Protecting the family's image – “*And also something that got to me was the way she was busy SHOUTING at me. Well, I tried to get her to be calm and this side people were everywhere trying to ... BUT now I felt this is a family which did not have order because people were everywhere. It seemed like a family which did not have discipline. So I told myself that I don't want this thing to happen again and it is better for me to end it today. So that is when I went to fetch the gun.*”
- Revising constructions – “*What I learnt is that – if you encounter whatever kind of problem – or you find that you are being tempted – or you find that you are being provoked or you find yourself overwhelmed by anger, it is not right to fight a person. Things like that are not right, so the best way is that ..... if you encounter a similar situation is to avoid or whatever. Because even with my problem, I tried to tell myself that I am solving the situation, but NO at the end it only created a DISASTER. ”*



**Joe’s ABC Model Analysis: Advantages and Disadvantages of Killing or Not Killing, ABC Model data**

a1 Killing

a2 Not killing

**A: Problem construct**

Preferring: Not killing my children – *“It is not killing my children.”*

b1 Disadvantages of killing

b2 Advantages of not killing

- Getting in trouble with the law – *“You get on the wrong side of the law.”*
- Sinning – *“You also do wrong in front of God because He does not want that thing, total.”*
- Feeling sadness – *“No, there is nothing good that you gain, only sadness.”*  
*“You only bring sadness into your life.”*
- Experiencing eternal pain – *“Even now EISH this thing is very painful because I sometimes think about their dates of births. I count that this one would be this age and this one would be this age. So you will never be fine after you kill them.”*

**B: Reason for change**

- Having meaning in life as a father – *“I could say that by not killing your children you get hope that you still have responsibilities which you have to fulfill which in turn motivates you.”*  
*“Your children make you want to know who are and where you are going in life.”*
- Having hope to be a better self – *“you will be a better person once again.”*
- Having hope of problems ending – *“You have hope that things will get better”*

*“It is very painful.”*

- An unending loss – *“It is a permanent LOSS.”*
  - Feeling haunted – *“This thing will always follow you.”*
- “Children who are the same age as your children remind you of them. When you see them going to school, you think I could be taking mine to school too. Seeing other children reminds you of what you did. It is something that will haunt you forever.”*
- Making a bad choice – *“It is not a good decision at all. It is not a good thing to do.”*

#### c2 Advantages of killing

- Not achieving anything – *“There is nothing good that you will benefit or achieve, no.”*

#### c1 Disadvantages of not killing

- Not losing anything – *“No, there are no disadvantages to not killing your children. There is nothing that you lose. I can just give a short answer to that one. There is nothing that you will be losing.”*

#### C: Prevents change

\*It is evident in the analysis that there is no ‘C’ construct which might have prevented Joe from changing his offensive behaviour. The statements in ‘c2’ and ‘c1’ seem to support the statements in ‘B’, which suggests that he could revise his constructions and not reoffend.

**Cross-case Analysis**  
**ENGAGING IN AN INTIMATE/MARITAL RELATIONSHIP**

**Structure of Construing**

*Central dimensions of meaning: Superordinate and core constructs*

**Joe:** “A man I could say is the head of the house, and it is a person who must ensure that his family is always happy”

**Neo:** “I did not have that mind that maybe sometimes she is busy with something, because I was not a person who followed things”

“I am a kind of a person who is – I had a problem of consultation.”

“I was not a person who was able to share some thing. I did not share things. I was a person who kept his problems to himself.”

“I could ALWAYS achieve whatever I wanted to do. I was able to achieve whatever I wanted to do. So I never failed at anything that I wanted to do – that is why I had that hope.”

“I had one problem – which I saw that it is definitely the main problem. Uh, I said that my thing is my thing.”

**John:** “I kept things – inside. I kept it in here ((pointing at his heart)). I don’t easily share my problems. I try to work it out – on my own.”

**Sly:** “A father is somebody who is supposed to be respected – he is the one who makes decisions at home most of the time. ((Silence)) He is a person that you should never lie to no matter what. You can tell other people lies, BUT you have to be HONEST WITH HIM.”

**Anticipations**

*Sharing expectations and commonality*

**Joe:** “She also had the same thought like me the time we started our relationship”

**Neo:** “I expected that just because I knew she was a person who loves nice things, I knew that she also expected that her future – is that we are people who are living well – in a way that at least we will be having everything that we need in life – that will end up making us be a happy family.”

*Anticipations of love*

**Sly:** “When I got together with her it was just to make myself happy ..... for fun because I met her at a party.”

“I saw that our relationship will never move forward, so it was better for us to separate and stop dating.”

*“She expected that maybe I would be in a long-term relationship with her and that I would get married to her<sup>21</sup>.”*

“Eish I thought they would see me as a bad person. The things they thought about me and knew about me. The reason that I did not want to be with her, I thought they would say “of course we knew it, we TOLD YOU.” I expected this kind of thing.”

**Joe:** “When anybody gets in a relationship, they expect that maybe uh they will take their relationship to a level where somehow ..... uh maybe where you will be separated by death if maybe that is by God’s will. And maybe where you grow old together and achieve in life – and see your children grow and prosper.”

**Neo:** “I was still positive – uh about our marriage. I TOLD MYSELF that – all of these things will end in the future. Everything will return back to normal, THE WAY it was before. Well I had that hope, I had it – uh even though I was not a person who was ... it was ... communication breakdown. But I had that mind that one of the good days everything will return back to normal and become right, but I saw it becoming worse. But I did not lose hope – one of the good days, things will return to normal, it will be fine”

“I told myself one thing that in the future maybe – we will grow up together and have grandchildren. That is what I told myself. I did not tell myself that in life there would be a situation which would disturb us.”

**John:** “I needed someone who will love and understand me. I wanted peace ... I wanted LOVE.”

“I expected that we would be a close family.”

### **Validations of anticipations**

#### *Validation of love anticipations*

**Neo:** “Really we had a good working relationship – because most of the times in a lot of things – which I could say that I ACHIEVED – I achieved them with, with the fact that we could sit down and talk about them – and then we were able to advise each other. ((Silence)) Uh, I was the first person to have a house before ..... but when she came into the house she was able to see what was needed in the house. So we sat down and discussed about them. Everything ... let me say that everything that we achieved so far – I achieved with her.”

**John:** “The knives fell out of the basket when she fell down. So her INTENTION was to stab me or Lucy.”

### **Invalidations of anticipations**

#### *Feeling disappointed by invalidations of anticipations*

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<sup>21</sup> Italicised quotes are the participant’s construing of his partner’s/wife’s interpretations.

**Joe:** “The way that maybe things worked out – I was always thinking that maybe things will be fine again, because I think that there is no relationship that maybe does not have ups and downs. I have faith that our problems would be resolved, but – I am very sad at the way things turned out to be.”

“I can remember that I started feeling that this whole situation – was beginning to seriously affect me”

“I felt disappointed anyway, because deep inside I knew that I was fulfilling all the requirements that were set in the house and I also tried to fulfil my wife’s needs. But the way that he also approached us ... I think that it was one of the things that made my relationship with his sister to be sour. So it was like – he is taking his sister’s side, and he was not maybe giving advice or a solution that me and my wife could use. So it appeared that he was siding with his sister.”

“I was very hurt, it really did hurt me especially – we ended up ... it was the first time we fought.”

“I – feel I cannot cope with this issue.”

“I saw that all my efforts were unsuccessful. So I did not have hope anymore, especially after – the way things went in the morning. I thought to myself that whatever I have tried to do was unsuccessful. It seemed to me that I was always blamed ... I was too tired.”

**Neo:** “Which we did not have before. We were people that if I feel that I have problem ... I MEAN I feel that she has a problem, I could tell her that no I feel that you have such and such a problem. Likewise, she also did this thing. If she felt that she sees a problem in me she told me that “I see that you have a problem which is like this and that.” But as time went by and by – we started having a breakdown somewhere somehow.”

“Sometimes it did not take me well. I was often caught unprepared because – uh – you found that most of the time when I am at home I am the one who was always busy, busy – it was almost like, it was almost like I have become a woman in the house. Because always when she returned from work – it is a matter of her just arriving ... she found everything done,” “I ended up having a mind that ... the way I saw things happening – and the way there were fights in the house without happiness, and the way she treated me – not treating me like her husband anymore. I felt that no, this woman there is something which she is busy with WHICH up to so far ... it means that she has decided that with regard to me ... she is no longer interested in me. So (*I*) I was slowly and slowly developing anger.”

“YES, IT IS LIKE THAT. I felt like my wife was slipping through my fingers.”

“My wife came to sit down and asked “but why did you shoot us? What is the reason of shooting us?” ((Silence)) That is when I told her that, ah you have made me tired in life that is why I did something like this. I was tired”

“NO, I did not expect that my marriage will end like this, total. I told myself one thing that in the future maybe – we will grow up together and have grandchildren. That is what I told myself. I did not tell myself that in life there would be a situation which would disturb us.”

**John:** “It was tiring me. ((Deep breath)) Then the OUTBURSTS came when she hit me when I was shaving and then hitting me with the bonnet. I then hit her with a fist. It was the first time I hit her, I hit a woman with a fist or EVEN slapped a woman. BUT I HIT HER WITH A FIST. I never thought about lifting my hand against a woman. It is not me. That moment I ..... with the pain and everything ..... with the ANGER, I just hit her and all these knives just came out. For me, this was a type of a (house) that I am not used to.”

“I did everything to make Lucy absolutely happy. I am like that. I just wanted to give love. But Lucy made a crisis of something. She made a BIG thing of a small thing, which led to – conflict.”

“I had enough of been sworn at.”

“She said she wanted a soft and loving person who does not lose his temper. That is .... That was who I WAS. I wanted to be in PEACE with everybody. But later she saw me as weak and a coward because of being soft-spoken and non-confrontational. That is how I felt.”

“Those feelings built up – over the years – especially with the events of the last year of our relationship before the shooting of the children and myself. I just snapped ((snapping fingers)).”

“I started to retaliate. I started to attack back – verbally. The anger became ..... THE BUILD UP of frustrations over the years – became like a pressure cooker. It built up, it built up and then – it started to explode ((snapping fingers)). It was like a volcano that started to erupt ((snapping fingers)) over small things.”

“I was not coping anymore. I started banging my head against a steel cabinet I’m fuckin fed-up. I can’t take it!”

“I was – upset when I got home. I felt heart sore. I was disturbed. I had too many emotions – when I got home and saw her. A lot of emotions came to me. It was anger and sadness. It was heart sore. It’s oh fuck man ((hitting the table))! Then she came home late. It was always her work, work.”

“I felt weak and ROBBED! I’m supposed to be the leader. I’m supposed to love my wife and keep her and my kids safe.”

**Sly:** “I just thought of her as being too young, - and most of the time the things that I was doing were not similar to what she was doing, you see. So when I was with her most of the time – I was bored”

“I want a person who communicates with me. She must be able to correct me when I am doing something wrong. We must guide and build each other for the future, you see. So in her case, no.”

### **Transitions in Construing**

#### **Threat**

*Encountering threat*

**Joe:** “But don’t tell me that you think it is better if your sister returned home. His words were – uh “her place is still there at home.””

“She said that she thought it was better for her to return home and leave me with this house and my aunt’s daughter so that I can make her my wife”

**Sly:** “She expected that maybe I would be in a long-term relationship with her and that I would get married to her. She expected a lot of things from me. Before we continued with our relationship, I told her not to expect much from me. She expected a lot of things, TOO MUCH.”

“YES, they also expected too much from me. That is how I saw things. They expected that I am going to marry her.”

**Neo:** “This person is my wife, she is my wife full stop. There is no way that – there will be another person who will be involved”

“I ended up having a mind that ... the way I saw things happening – and the way there were fights in the house without happiness, and the way she treated me – not treating me like her husband anymore. I felt that no, this woman there is something which she is busy with WHICH up to so far ..... it means that she has decided that with regard to me ... she is no longer interested in me”

“There is nobody who is going to tell me anything inside my house, who was going to tell me how I – should manage my family, how I should interact with my family. Uh, even when you came to tell me something, you and I would not end the conversation in peace. I was going to ask you, now how do you want me to run my family, because I think this is my house and there is no one who is going to tell me how to treat my family. If you have a problem with my family, you have a problem with me – can you please ... there is nothing that you will tell me inside my house.”

**John:** “She got an interdict against me – under the Domestic Violence Act. She mentioned different instances that were building up, like when I took her credit card on two occasions. She said I was financially abusing and controlling her.”

*Violence<sup>22</sup> as an outcome of threat*

**Joe:** “She said that “today I am taking the children and I’m leaving. I am returning home because obviously I do not have a saying since I tried to advice you not to build the house but still you built it, so I think it is best if I leave.” So that was the thing maybe that made me lose control.”

**Neo:** “I think she was seeing someone. That was a problem which when we tried to advise each other ABOUT SOMETHING that we saw was happening – uh it turned into an argument. EISH! I ended up ..... it ended being a FIGHT, really, really. It ended up being a serious fight, you see. It ended up being a fight.”

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<sup>22</sup> Violence in this dissertation refers to physical and verbal violent acts.

**John:** “At – HOME things started accumulating as well. Problems piled up. Lucy’s behaviour changed. She spent hours making herself beautiful. But she was ice-cold towards me – when it comes to sex. For the last – seven months – having sex ones a week was too much for her. Her phone always rang at night and she answered it out of hearing distance. I could hear that she was talking to a man. When I confronted her about him, she said he’s just a colleague. I thought how can a colleague call at like 2 o’clock in the morning? So, our problems got worse.”

“She also said I was jealous of her work because one Sunday she spent the whole day working on her laptop. She did not speak a single word to us, just laptop, laptop, work, work ((banging the table)). She didn’t even bath ((banging the table)). So I told her listen **WHY AREN’T YOU BATHING, YOU’RE STINKING MAN!** I TOOK the laptop’s **CORD** ((whistling)) and put it in the washing machine. I said to her the thing that **IS KEEPING YOU AWAY FROM US** is also in charge in my house. So I was the villain while she was sitting the whole bloody weekend working on her laptop and her family was nothing to her.”

## Anger

### Invalidations of relationship constructions

#### *Failing love expectations and constructions*

**Joe:** “She took that knife and chased me with it – and then I ran outside. So what they did ... it drew a lot of people’s attention, and a lot of people came to see what was happening.”

**Neo:** “The way the situation was like, it is an issue of ... you would find that most of the time – I was always in the kitchen, you see – of which **THAT THING** – was not something that I was used to, but just because of the situation which I saw was happening – uh – I became used to”

“My hope was reduced by the issue that ... you find that now most of the time – that is, a week does not **EVEN** pass without us fighting in the house. That is where my hope started to slowly, slowly finish.”

“I ended up having a mind that ... the way I saw things happening – and the way there were fights in the house without happiness, and the way she treated me – not treating me like her husband anymore. I felt that no, this woman there is something which she is busy with **WHICH** up to so far ... it means that she has decided that with regard to me ... she is no longer interested in me, you see. So (I) I was slowly and slowly developing anger you see. So – whereby a slight thing which she did, I compared it to other things that happened in the past”

**John:** “I think she wanted acknowledgement from her Supervisor. She even did private jobs that were not on her – job description. She drove around in her boss’s private car to do private jobs for her boss – during **OFFICIAL TIME**. And then after four she would stay at work – to do her own work. So her loyalty was – with her boss – and not her family.”

“I said Lucy can’t we – speak? Can’t we come to some agreement? Can’t we do something about what’s going on here? Then she said “**AAAGG man, GO**, yap, yap. Stop yap, yapping!” ((Silence)) So that evening I packed my suitcases and just left in the morning. I

TOOK my suitcase to WORK and decided I'm not going home tonight, I had enough. I cannot go on like this. If this is her attitude "oh, yes you want to yap, yap." I'm trying to solve the problem. I'm trying to – see whether we can't get to a common ground. Can't we save this marriage and then you get that feedback "ag man, yap, yap. You just yap, yap!"

"((Crying)) I had so many hopes. ((Silence)) I had so many – dreams ((crying)). But one night – one damn night it's all shattered ((crying))."

**Sly:** "I knew that Gigi and I loved each other. But she ended up hurting me."

### *Feeling blamed*

**Joe:** "I saw that all my efforts were unsuccessful. So I did not have hope anymore, especially after – the way things went in the morning. I thought to myself that whatever I have tried to do was unsuccessful. It seemed to me that I was always blamed"

"DURING MY DISCUSSION WITH THEM, they favoured my wife. They said that my wife is right because it is her place and then I am – showing that I am not maybe ..... if I can say ..... maybe I am not responsible because I am choosing my aunt's children so my wife is beginning to feel that maybe she does not have a place in the house. Because she also had a child, so ..... uh outside our relationship so the child was removed from the house, but now I took my aunt's children ..... and she did not feel well about the issue."

**John:** "They didn't want to see her mistakes. EVERYTIME that we had problems, she ran to them – and told them her story – which was half the truth. They then confront me with half the truth."

**Neo:** "Instead if we had a problem in our house, she was quick to go home ... to her family without talking ... consulting me ... she was quick to go to her family to tell them that "yes, the situation in my house is like this and that." That thing – I realised it sometime when I was with my father-in-law – when he came to my house – to confront me – "uh, how are you treating your wife?"

### **Hostility**

#### *Remaining hopeful amidst chaos*

**Joe:** "The way that maybe things worked out – I was always thinking that maybe things will be fine again, because I think that there is no relationship that maybe does not have ups and downs."

**Neo:** "I was still positive – uh about our marriage. I TOLD MYSELF that – all of these things will end in the future. Everything will return back to normal, THE WAY it was before. Well I had that hope, I had it – uh even though I was not a person who was ... it was ... communication breakdown. But I had that mind that one of the good days everything will return back to normal and become right, but I saw it becoming worse. But I did not lose hope – one of the good days, things will return to normal, it will be fine"

**John:** "I wanted to get out of the marriage, but I did not because I believed that our problems will IMPROVE. It will get better. I was patient."

*Extorting and manipulating validation evidence*

**Joe:** “I stopped giving her pocket money – and then I would buy food for lunch. After I bought the food neh, you would find that my wife would complain again”

“I told her that you don’t want to accommodate these children, but I want you to know that I will no longer listen to you and I will build this house whether you like it or not. So I built the house.”

**Neo:** “Our marriage had ... ((silence)) had a problem. Uh, when time went on ... with ... like any other marriage which sometimes has problems, like you find that sometimes you have occasions where you don’t agree on something, BUT at the end of the day you agree on that thing.”

“EISH I feel – disappointed in myself. I feel ashamed. I feel disappointed, I feel ashamed and I feel you know what – it means I was not responsible. That is what I feel (*right now*). The way the situation happened, I feel that eish – no, it means that I could not handle my problems.”

“BUT also as I am sitting and thinking, and I say that if I get a second chance, I will prove myself as a father. I am already thinking about things that I am going to do for her and I am sure that if I follow it, I will be SUCCESSFUL”

**John:** “I did everything to make Lucy absolutely happy. I am like that. I just wanted to give love. But Lucy made a crisis of something. She made a BIG thing of a small thing, which led to – conflict. In later years when she wanted to fight with me, I walked away or ignored her, she then took out her frustrations on Anna. After Joy was born, she took out her frustrations on John Junior.”

“I started behaving irrationally. But she always put her work first. So one morning I locked my car and took the keys. She called me and I knew she was late for work. I said hello and she said “yes I want the car.” I said which car? “The car is locked.” The car is locked because it’s my car, it’s not your car. What does our contract say? It’s my car. I said you can walk to work or ask your boss to come and fetch you. But you are not using my car because you disrespect me. She started pleading and I said ok fine – THERE, the key is there go to work.” So things were bad between us. Nothing was – acceptable to me – or her.”

**Sly:** “I thought I was not doing the right things because she was a good person. But she – did not satisfy me in other areas.”

“Even her brothers, some of them were involved in things like that. The ones I said I was acquainted to.”

“The reason that I did not want to be with her, I thought they would say “of course we knew it, we TOLD YOU.” I expected this kind of thing. Like what happened to the baby, THEY WOULD SAY “of course WE TOLD YOU, WHAT WERE YOU DOING WITH HIM”. I expected this kind of thing.”

*Violence as an act of hostility*

**Joe:** “It was the first time in my life that I had an altercation with my wife in that way and also we ended being physically violent with each other – after my wife said that “she could see that I do not love her anymore because I agreed with what her brother said”, when he stated that she should return back home.”

“WHAT MADE US FIGHT was after I spoke to my wife about my awareness of the conflict or a misunderstanding between her and the children. So I told her that I have decided to take the money ..... because there was money that I saved ..... I told her that I will take the money and build a small house in the same yard were these children could live. So my wife disagreed with my decision and said that “there will be no children who will have a house built for them in this yard.””

**Neo:** “I think she was seeing someone. That was a problem which when we tried to advise each other ABOUT SOMETHING that we saw was happening – uh it turned into an argument. EISH! I ended up ..... it ended being a FIGHT, really, really. It ended up being a serious fight, you see. It ended up being a fight.”

**John:** “Then the OUTBURSTS came when she hit me when I was shaving and then hitting me with the bonnet. I then hit her with a fist. It was the first time I hit her, I hit a woman with a fist or EVEN slapped a woman. BUT I HIT HER WITH A FIST. I never thought about lifting my hand against a woman. It is not me. That moment I ..... with the pain and everything ..... with the ANGER, I just hit her and all these knives just came out. For me, this was a type of a (house) that I am not used to.”

“I TURN AROUND and walked away, so she AGAIN took out her frustrations on Anna. I withdrew for about three weeks when she lost her temper. Then she would come to me and FOLLOW ME. I would walk away, she would follow me. She would stand aggressively in front of me and say “no don’t be a moffie, DON’T RUN AWAY, TALK – NOW!” She was aggressive and wanted me to react to what she was saying. But I ran– because I didn’t want to fight. So eventually I could not take that anymore. I just started to snap ((snapping fingers)).”

“She also said I was jealous of her work because one Sunday she spent the whole day working on her laptop. She did not speak a single word to us, just laptop, laptop, work, work ((banging the table)). She didn’t even bath ((banging the table)). So I told her listen WHY AREN’T YOU BATHING, YOU’RE STINKING MAN! I TOOK the laptop’s CORD ((whistling)) and put it in the washing machine. I said to her the thing that IS KEEPING YOU AWAY FROM US is also in charge in my house. So I was the villain while she was sitting the whole bloody weekend working on her laptop and her family was nothing to her.”

**Sly:** “I know people will start judging me. They will also tell other people and I will feel somehow. I will start fighting with people over something like this.”

### *Violence as extortion of respect*

**Joe:** “That is what made me fight with her and tell her that you are now swearing at me, or you are using offensive language especially since – you know very well that these children whom we are talking about they are family, how can I be sexually intimate with my family or how can I sleep with my aunt’s child? How can you say that I should make her my wife?”

“She asked “WHAT IS HAPPENING?” you see. So my wife replied ..... she was talking loud because she was angry. She said “YOU DON’T KNOW WHAT IS HAPPENING, YOU

DON'T KNOW WHAT IS HAPPENING", you see. So I told her that she must not involve my grandmother and disrespect her when we are disagreeing about something – that is what I told her. I told her that she must confront me if she maybe has a problem and talk to me decently, but that she must not disrespect me and then don't shout at me – in the middle of people as if we are the same age. So she said "what will you do to me?" She was saying things like that with her voice still loud. We fought again and they tried to stop us, you see. So right there – I decided that this thing is getting worse and then I went to the bedroom, you see."

**John:** "I TURN AROUND and walked away, so she AGAIN took out her frustrations on Anna. I withdrew for about three weeks when she lost her temper. Then she would come to me and FOLLOW ME. I would walk away, she would follow me. She would stand aggressively in front of me and say "no don't be a moffie, DON'T RUN AWAY, TALK – NOW!" She was aggressive and wanted me to react to what she was saying. But I ran – because I didn't want to fight. So eventually I could not take that anymore. I just started to snap ((snapping fingers))."

"Things were not good between me and Lucy days before the shooting. I was on leave and I told Lucy that I needed my car. I took her to work and picked her up. I parked close to the exit door at the back of the law enforcement agent where she must come out. Everybody came out except for Lucy. I sent her a text and she swore at me when she came out, "couldn't you fuckin come in? Why didn't you fuckin come into the office? Why didn't you fuckin come fetch me?" I said to her just shut up! And then for about two weeks we had no communication."

## **Anxiety**

### ***Encountering problems as unconstruable***

**Joe:** "From the start when I thought that maybe I cannot deal with this thing – I thought I should call my mother or uncles so that they can see what to do with this situation because I was not able to resolve it, then you find that my wife was the one stopping me because she did not want my family to see her as a bad person towards my aunt's children. So I also left it."

**Neo:** "I did not understand her issue, you see that WHY was she always arriving late because she told me that it was not busy"

**Sly:** "I DID NOT UNDERSTAND because sometimes I went to the shop with both of them when I came to visit the child. I could not just take the child, but I also went with Mpho and the child. I don't know if they thought we were still together or not because of the way I did things."

## **Aggression**

**Joe:** "I told her that I will take the money and build a small house in the same yard were these children could live. So my wife disagreed with my decision and said that "there will be no children who will have a house built for them in this yard.""

**Neo:** “When I saw the situation continuing, I ended up taking steps to find out what was the problem, you see. But I did it on my own, you see. I remember I did one – whereby I phoned her workplace – with the need of wanting to know what was happening. I phoned the person who was in charge of her, so that person told me one of the things which I was not aware of.”

“I ended up telling her that she must please leave her work and she said “she will not leave her work – because – she is not sure what she is going to do if she stops working and at the end we separate. So she is not going to stop working.”

**John:** “She wanted to have children but her work was more important than her children. I could say the children – became a burden to her. On the [REDACTED] before I shot the children, I phoned her boss concerning the overtime. Lucy worked the month of June for free and we had financial expenses as the result of that. She did not have off from work. I realised that her Supervisor was not going to assist me. A minute or two later Lucy phoned me and was shouting at me, “stop interfering with my work. I wish you and the kids can just leave me alone.””

“I took her credit card in February. That was where I started to do – irrational stuff. I took her credit card because she put us into financial difficulties. She did not even tell me that she was going to withdraw money. The whole of February was a difficult – fighting month, not fighting, but a cold war – just ignoring each other. We were just saying ‘hello’. But it was just quiet.”

## **Guilt**

### *Not loving partner*

**Sly:** “I did not feel good because I knew that she was not a person – that I wanted to be with for a long time ..... like we date for some time until I marry her. That is why I ended up telling her that I have another woman and therefore we should separate.”

“I was not good. I was going to tell her ... I saw that she was in love with me – and obviously I was going to hurt her by breaking up with her, you see. So I felt guilty for hurting her, especially since I was not committed to her.”

### *Feeling dislodged from manhood role*

**Joe:** “I felt that maybe I am not man enough to them to maybe take charge of my own home.”

**Neo:** “Sometimes it did not take me well, you see. I was often caught unprepared because – uh – you found that most of the time when I am at home I am the one who was always busy, busy – it was almost like, it was almost like I have become a woman in the house.”

**John:** “A father is a head of the house and I was not the head of my house.”

“I felt weak and ROBBED! I’m supposed to be the leader. I’m supposed to love my wife and keep her and my kids safe.”

### *Feeling guilty of violence*

**Joe:** “It really disappointed me that a person like me ..... because where I was working .... I was dealing mostly with women and children. I mean we were dealing mostly with people that are transported to the hospital or are being transported from the clinic to the hospital or to other maybe – uh institutions. So I was very disappointed after we fought”

**Neo:** “If I took the right steps – right now it would still be me. Although I would not be with this person, maybe we would have divorced, but it would still be me.”

**John:** “I then hit her with a fist. It was the first time I hit her, I hit a woman with a fist or EVEN slapped a woman. BUT I HIT HER WITH A FIST. I never thought about lifting my hand against a woman. It is not me.”

“I was short-tempered at work and I was never a short-tempered person.”

## Shame

### *Construed as incompetent and abusive*

**Joe:** “He decided that since I was not able to deal with the situation it was better for his sister to return home.”

“I asked him why he was asking me such a question because it seems as if you are now controlling me maybe, because maybe it appears as if I am not a responsible man in my own home”

“They said that my wife is right because it is her place and then I am – showing that I am not maybe ..... if I can say ..... maybe I am not responsible because I am choosing my aunt’s children”

**John:** “She got an interdict against me – under the Domestic Violence Act. She mentioned different instances that were building up, like when I took her credit card on two occasions. She said I was financially abusing and controlling her. She also said I was jealous of her work”

## Strategies of Construing

### Dilation

#### *Facing chaos resulting from exploration*

**Neo:** “Eish a lot of things came to my mind – my sister. That is, ((silence)) I imagined a lot of things. I – thought about a lot of things. I ..... you know a lot of things came to my mind you see. They ended up making me angry.”

“I went home three times. I went home and left, I went home and left, you see. I thought about leaving forever – and not coming back.

“The problems came when she came back from work, you see. All those things came back to my mind, the things that were happening which I was thinking about ..... they were still happening ..... they came back – when I looked at her”

**John:** “I was – upset when I got home. I felt heart sore. I was disturbed. I had too many emotions – when I got home and saw her. A lot of emotions came to me. It was anger and sadness. It was heart sore. It’s oh fuck man ((hitting the table))! Then she came home late. It was always her work, work.”

**Sly:** “Most of the time when I was drunk – we ended up fighting – everything was messed up. I could not sit still. I was going up and down. I had a lot of friends. I had different girls. I end up doing things which I regretted in the morning when I woke up.”

## **Constriction**

### *Dealing with chaos through constriction*

**Joe:** “So she said “what will you do to me?” She was saying things like that with her voice still loud. We fought again and they tried to stop us, you see. So right there – I decided that this thing is getting worse and then I went to the bedroom, you see. I went to the bedroom and then I looked for the car keys so that I can go.”

“Things like that are not right, so the best way is that ..... if you encounter a similar situation is to avoid or whatever.”

**Neo:** “ANYHOW I JUST LEFT IT. Because I am a kind of a person when I talk to you and if we disagree on something – I just leave you. I just leave you like that.”

“I was abusing it just because when I was just sitting, just sitting, I thought about everything that was happening – uh I saw that the best thing was to drink.”

“Most of the time, the time that I was able to spend – at home, I limited it. I was not able to spend a lot of time at home because I had a lot of different thoughts WHEN I sometimes looked at her, you see. So I realised that the BEST thing was to leave. Because I felt THAT even when it was the weekend – although I was there and she was also there, I did not stay at home.”

**John:** “She shouted and swore at Anna, “TAKE the bicycle and put it back on its wheels.” ((Silence)) She swore at me if I intervened, “fuck you, your child must just learn. She’s just useless. She’s just careless. Stop peeping. You are always peeping over your child. Stop treating her like a little baby.” ((Crying)) The Psychologist pointed it out to me before we got married. He said “John, you should not marry this woman. She will also have mixed loyalties when she gets her own children.” And it actually happened that way. I was never a guy of verbal conflict. It is not me. Even when Megan fought with me, I turned around and walked away.”

“I think she withdrew because she felt like she was a failure. It was her withdrawal and me trying to sort things on my own because I was FRUSTRATED at that stage. But I kept my frustrations inside – which I shouldn’t have done. I should have expressed myself and how I actually felt.”

**Sly:** “She told me those kind of things “Mpho is a child, she is still at school, she has to finish school.” I was SURPRISED because I was not dating Mpho, I just came to see the child but she is talking to me about Mpho, you see. I did not argue with her, I just left.”

“I felt well after I smoked Nyaope. I was calm. I did not become angry. I did not hang around people in messed up places. So I left alcohol and started smoking – Nyaope.”

### **Circumspection-Preemption-Control Cycle**

#### **Encountering challenges in decision-making**

##### *Feeling frustrated by ruminating*

**Neo:** “I had thoughts that sometimes I should just go and leave the house – you see. Uh – I thought of things like divorcing, you see. Those are some of the things which came to my mind – you see. But when I thought about divorcing – I also thought about the issue concerning the children, that the children ..... that is, they will grow up having a problem that “my mother and father have separated.””

**John:** “I sat in the braai room and thought, Ag! Divorce her. You know what John hang yourself. But I did not want to leave my children behind ((hitting the table)). Don’t carry on like this ((hitting the table)).”

**Sly:** “I did not believe it at first – that I was the one who impregnated her because I did not see her for some time. Those are some of the questions I asked myself, why did she take so long without telling me? But after some time I accepted.”

##### *Making preempted choices*

**Joe:** “So I told her that I have decided to take the money ..... because there was money that I saved ..... I told her that I will take the money and build a small house in the same yard were these children could live. So my wife disagreed with my decision”

**Neo:** “It seemed that the problem was starting from work. So I saw that the best thing ..... TO SAVE EVERYTHING ..... the best thing was for her to leave her work. Then we could see this situation ..... just because it started with an issue that ..... it seemed to have started from work. It would be a solution which could end”

**John:** “I said Lucy can’t we – speak? Can’t we come to some agreement? Can’t we do something about what’s going on here? Then she said “AAAGG man, GO, yap, yap. Stop yap, yapping!” ((Silence)) So that evening I packed my suitcases and just left in the morning. I TOOK my suitcase to WORK and decided I’m not going home tonight, I had enough. I cannot go on like this.”

**Sly:** “I saw that our relationship will never move forward, so it was better for us to separate and stop dating.”

## **CONSTRUCTIONS OF FATHERHOOD**

### **Structure of Construing**

*Central dimensions of meaning: Superordinate and core constructs*

**Joe:** “As long as I am still alive, it will not be possible because I will never neglect these children, they are my family.”

“My aunt played a very important part in helping my mother care for us. So that is why I also felt that maybe I should ... I am doing the right thing ... that I should also return the favour by raising her children”

**Sly:** “I still see myself as a fine father”

**Anticipations of fatherhood***Anticipations of being a father*

**Joe:** “I wanted to take them to schools which maintained high academic standards, and then do everything in my powers especially with regard to their education, to give them all the best. That is what I wanted to do – raise them well.”

**Neo:** “When we started the relationship I expected to have a family, a happy family in which we would end up having children, and then we have a house ..... in which we would need everything that would make us happy. Like to have a HOUSE – you see – you need to have EVERYTHING that is necessary in the house, and then that our children get a better education.”

“I am telling myself that one of the good days, if I get a second chance I will prove myself – that, I can achieve such and such a thing.”

**John:** “I also had Anna with me, so I needed someone who could take care of her. I wanted stability in Anna’s life”

“That my children will be happy, we will look after them and bring them up. Uh, that at a later stage when I have passed away and Anna is big, my other children will manage her money and look after her.”

**Sly:** “I am the only child at home. I expected that at least he would add to my family.”

**Fulfilling fatherhood anticipations***“I lived up my expectation”*

**Joe:** “I think that I played my part very well. I was responsible – for my family – and children. I think I tried all my best.”

**John:** “I lived up my expectation of making them happy.”

**Sly:** “Uh, for me .... my expectations ..... I thought they were fine because we had a good interaction and most of the time – his mother and my mother saw that I loved him, I cared for him.”

### **Failing to be a father I anticipated**

#### *Feeling hurt by invalidations of fatherhood anticipations*

**Joe:** “Me ... well besides what happened, I think that I tried with all my powers ... although the situation that I am in today erases the good that I did.”

**Neo:** “When she GROWS UP she will blame me. Even if it happens that maybe she fails in life she will always say “but if I .... you did not do this kind of a thing, I would not be like this today.””

“I am not responsible, but if I was a responsible father my family right now – would have maybe changed, it would not be that family which is maybe the same – since 1997. Maybe it would be a family which was able to achieve something which even now I would be saying that maybe I am proud of”

**John:** “I lived up my expectation of making them happy. But when it came to protecting them – I failed ((crying)). Anna would come to me and kiss my legs. She would say “pa I mower.” “I” is love ((crying)). They loved me and I failed them ((crying)).”

**Sly:** “To be honest – yes I think I was not a good father to him because of Nyaope. I did not care for him at that time, but what I know is that I love him.”

### ***Fighting over the children***

**Joe:** “She responded by saying “ah you don’t have a choice”, or she would say things like that. So this thing did not take me well, I ended up tearing the clothes and the shoes. I tore the clothes and threw them in the bin.”

**John:** “((Crying)) It hurts me – because I know what went on in the house. I was there. Anna was there, John was there. I was in that situation, daily. There was DAILY CONFLICT. There was – ABUSE – towards Anna, me, and John Junior. I had enough of the abuse. I had enough of been sworn at. I had enough of – the children been hit, been sworn at. Every time that she acts like this – it feels like she is stabbing me in the heart. That is how I felt. Every time that she either shouted or swore at me, shouted at John Junior, or pulled him around, or hit Anna, then it is like stab wounds ((stabbing hand)).”

“My expectations of having a good mother for my daughter were disappointed.”

“I failed them because I was supposed to act. I did not act. I couldn’t CHOOSE, I was a COWARD to CHOOSE between Lucy and the children. I couldn’t say stop this now Lucy, my children are more important to me.”

### **Transitions in Construing**

#### **Threat**

*Encountering threat*

**Joe:** “He said that he will also take the children as well.”

*Violence as an outcome of threat*

**John:** “I went to my mother-in-law and said please give me Joy. As I reached for Joy my father-in-law intervened. I grabbed him and said I want to hit you ((raising his fist)). We had a scuffle and Lucy came out and started shouting at me. I saw that things are becoming BAD so I locked them outside. John Junior and Anna were in the house with me. My father-in-law and I were still fighting. He told me “YES you are a sissy, you are that, COME OUT.” I told him you are a BASTARD MAN. Just FUCK OFF my property. I was their villain. I said fuck off here from my place. I said – Lucy can STAY, Joy can stay, they are my family. YOU’RE NOT MY FAMILY. YOU’RE NOT MY HOUSEHOLD. You want to interfere – GO. If you GO, I’ll open the door. If you don’t GO, I won’t open the door. That is it, but I’m not letting you in my house – you are not welcome.”

**Anger**Invalidation of fatherhood constructions*Failing to be a father*

**Neo:** “She is her aunt who is ..... there are other things which sometimes – she feels that she has to tell her, eish but she feels that she must just leave her because if that one tells her like this, she will say “I am doing this and that for you.” So you see the words that are coming out ..... BECAUSE those people are not scared to say that “your father is in prison.” You see that the words will, will always hurt her.”

**John:** “The mistake I made was that – the first time she hit Anna, I should have stepped in. I should have put my foot down. There I failed my children”

“With regard to protecting my children from the abuse, I did not act like a good father. I loved them but I did not protect them. Lucy swore at me when I INTERVENED, “ag, fuck off! Get fuckin out of here!” That made me go into myself more. Keeping my emotions for myself.”

**Guilt***Feeling guilty for failing*

**Neo:** “I am always blaming myself, you see. I am blaming myself. I cannot say that I am not blaming myself. I am blaming myself for everything you see. THAT IS WHY I am telling you that even now the way the situation is, when I see that I cannot do some things that I was supposed to do ..... EISH I feel that I am not in prison, it is like I am OUTSIDE but uh, I am not responsible”

**John:** “I was a coward. I should not have allowed her to hit and swear at Anna, or swear at John Junior. But I allowed it and it became a – a habit, and – I withdrew more.”

Circumspection-Preemption-Control Cycle

## Encountering challenges in decision-making

### *Feeling trapped*

**John:** “I couldn’t CHOOSE, I was a COWARD to CHOOSE between Lucy and the children. I couldn’t say stop this now Lucy, my children are more important to me. I knew from my first marriage that once you open a domestic violence order, your marriage is gone.”

“I started having suicidal – thoughts. Before I handed them in, I cocked my gun and pulled the trigger several times. When I was about to load the gun, I said no I can’t do it – because what will happen to my children ((crying))?”

“I said no you cannot do it because if you leave the children behind with her – the abuse is just going to escalate. I thought of committing suicide many times but I thought you cannot leave the children with that woman ((hitting the table)). So – you must stay alive to be with the children, to look after the children ((hitting the table)). Because if you are not there, who is going to look after them?”

**Joe:** “She had two children, my aunt, so after she died I was forced to or I decided to take her children so that we could care for them.”

**Neo:** “I stayed for the sake of the children because I felt that there is nobody who will care for my children than the way I take care of them.”

## THE KILLING OF THE CHILD/CHILDREN

### Anticipations of killing

#### *Not expecting to kill*

**Sly:** “I expected that this kind of thing would happen to evil people like – SATANISTS. The way I love him, it would NEVER happen to me, and then I did this kind of thing to him. I did not help him. I did not care for him. I did not expect that it would happen, this thing. Not to me, the way I loved my child.”

### Invalidations of killing

#### *“My plan did not work”*

**Joe:** “It did not work AT ALL. Because it did not only affect my wife’s extended family or mine, BUT I could say that it affected people that I was close to, my community and colleagues. It also painted all fathers badly, you see, that why are fathers the ones doing this?”

“Because even with my problem, I tried to tell myself that I am solving the situation, but NO at the end it only created a DISASTER.”

“This incident EISH, the pain that I caused did not just affect the victims’ family – it affected everybody – who were close to me ..... my family, church members, colleagues. That is, it changed everything. You end up – seeing yourself as alone.”

**Neo:** “God did not want that to happen the way it was supposed to happen, you see. He did not want ..... maybe if it happened like that I am sure, sure that – maybe there was not going to be anybody who is alive, including me, myself.”

**John:** “I put it on fire and I shot myself but somehow I survived. God saved me ((crying)).”

**Sly:** “((Deep breath)) I was not fine about his death. I was trying to understand how he died. But how did he die? WHY did I not bring him before?”

### *Worrying about anticipated and encountered rejection*

**Sly:** “I don’t talk about it because I know people will start judging me. They will also tell other people and I will feel somehow. I will start fighting with people over something like this. So I don’t talk about this incident.”

### Transitions in Construing

#### **Anxiety**

#### *Failing to construe the killing*

**Neo:** “Why should this situation lead me to this?”

“I left it when it fell there, I left it – then I went to sit on the couch, I sat down. That is when my mind came back, you see that eish – but what did I do? Why did I do such a thing? But I did not go back to it. That is when my wife came to sit down and asked “but why did you shoot at us? What is the reason of shooting us?””

**Sly:** “I did not understand how ((crying)). I did not understand how he died – because I just thought it was minor injuries. ((Silence)) I just asked myself how this thing could happen to me ((deep breath)).”

#### *Feeling guilty*

**Joe:** “I don’t feel well that we are talking about this. I feel ashamed that I also form PART of the men that hurt or I have hurt my family or women. So I don’t think it is a right thing. My plan did not work for me.”

“It will be because of this incident. Since I am already here – OBVIOUSLY most of the time you can try to build something good but a slight mistake can erase all of that.”

**Neo:** “EISH I feel – disappointed in myself. I feel ashamed. I feel disappointed, I feel ashamed and I feel you know what – it means I was not responsible. That is what I feel (*right now*). The way the situation happened, I feel that eish – no, it means that I could not handle my problems.”

“I am more disappointed a lot – in me ... I feel ashamed and a lot – that – I am in such a situation which I am currently in (*you see*), and I am NOT PROUD of the situation that I am currently in.”

**John:** “What I did to the KIDS as their father, is a shame ((crying)).”

**Sly:** “I lost my child and it is my fault. This thing that happened EISH and I did not believe it could happen to me.”

### *Feeling shame*

**Joe:** “It really disappointed me that a person like me ..... because where I was working .... I was dealing mostly with women and children. I mean we were dealing mostly with people that are transported to the hospital or are being transported from the clinic to the hospital or to other maybe – uh institutions. So I was very disappointed after we fought and then – I had to go and maybe explain the cause of the fight.”

“So when you explain to him the situation after sometime they start looking at you somehow, they start to – discriminate you, you see, they distance themselves from you. THAT IS HURTFUL, because I think maybe there should be a way ..... I am not sure how ..... which they can perceive you, so that problems like this can be eliminated. They must not rush to saying – that person EISH killed. Yes, the incident happened, but maybe there could be something that could be done”

**Neo:** “I am more disappointed a lot – in me. I EVEN disappointed other people who are – my family. I feel that I disappointed them, because I don’t think that they also expected that – one of the good days they will be coming to visit me inside prison you see. They felt ..... they thought that MAYBE – in the future they will hear that, that man has a top position at work.”

**John:** “((Crying)) It’s painful. I just want my kids alive, then I can tell Lucy here are the kids they are alive!”

“I am seen as a failure. My culture does not condone this kind of thing. A father is not supposed to kill his children. He is supposed to protect them, give them what they need, and I did the opposite. I took care of my children and I loved them, but at the end I killed them ((crying)). They don’t see me as a good father.”

**Sly:** “But to say that I killed him, I want to kill him – it is not what I wanted to happen to him. ((Silence)) But it happened and what is being said is that I killed him.”

“When I pass by – there are other people who you can see from their facial expression, they never tell me straight – I don’t know if they are scared of me or what, but I can see that this person is just acting – they are thinking this person is bad and he killed his child. Even the people who know me very well see me as bad.”

### Strategies of Construing

#### **Constriction**

#### *Killing as a constrictive act to end chaos*

**Joe:** “So she continued to provoke me saying that I must hit her, things like that. She said “hit me so that I can get you arrested.” So right there ..... she did not see it ..... I took out my gun. They just saw me taking out my gun and then I shot her.”

“I wrote the suicide letter and asked my family and also close family friends to forgive me because I am really ANNOYED by this situation, so the best way was to end it.”

“I saw that all my efforts were unsuccessful. So I did not have hope anymore, especially after – the way things went in the morning. I thought to myself that whatever I have tried to do was unsuccessful. It seemed to me that I was always blamed ..... I was too tired. So that is when I did that.”

“What got to me was my realisation that the mother of my children was dead. So I thought maybe – that they were still young, so there was no option. I thought there was no option ..... because I thought – if maybe I spare their lives and mine, I am still going to be imprisoned and they will still not have parents. So according to me ..... maybe under the influence of SATAN was that the other option ..... these children were going to suffer, so I decided to kill them and myself, and that was my solution.”

“I thought that this situation is out of control, it is better if there is a SOLUTION. And also something that got to me was the way she was busy SHOUTING at me. Well, I tried to get her to be calm and this side people were everywhere trying to ..... BUT now I felt this is a family which did not have order because people were everywhere. It seemed like a family which did not have discipline. So I told myself that I don’t want this thing to happen again and it is better for me to end it today. So that is when I went to fetch the gun.”

**Neo:** “I felt like my wife was slipping through my fingers. That is, I don’t know THE WAY ..... another person could take it like that and say “you did this thing because you did not love her.” You see, they could say that, but it is not like that. I loved her – a lot, a lot more than the word. So – eish I felt ..... I felt somehow.”

**John:** “I thought of committing suicide many times but I thought you cannot leave the children with that woman ((hitting the table)). So – you must stay alive to be with the children, to look after the children ((hitting the table)). Because if you are not there, who is going to look after them? Honestly, I was not concerned about Lucy. I didn’t feel a damn about her. That’s the stage that I reached. I’m now fuckin – fed-up of – you. I can’t take it anymore. My performance at work deteriorated.”

“I spoke to her about our marriage, to get it right. She just said “AG, fuck you John! Just fuckin leave me alone. I want to fuckin sleep man!” I don’t remember the whole shooting. I took my gun and went to Anna’s bedroom and shot her first ((crying)). ((Crying)) I cannot remember a shot going off. I cannot remember my hand doing that ((pulling the trigger)) – the jerk of the pistol. I don’t remember shooting her ((crying)). I apparently shot Joy and John Junior ((crying)). It was like I was in an air conditioner room – and outside here it was 50 degree Celsius. During this whole process, this blank process, the process of shooting them, it felt like my body was exploding with – extreme heat.”

“I told the police that I don’t want to live anymore ((crying)). I’m fed-up. I can’t live anymore ((crying)). I want out. I cocked my pistol and tried to shoot myself, but nothing

happened. I realised that I put this thing on safety. So I put it on fire and I shot myself but somehow I survived.”

“I wanted to commit suicide about three, four times in that year, but I did not want to leave my children behind. I think I wanted to take them with me to protect them from Lucy. So that evening when I decided to kill myself, that is when I decided to kill them too.”

“I did not plan to kill them. I only planned to kill myself. I just wanted to die. I didn’t have zest for life ((crying)). My life was meaningless. I thought I was in charge of my life but I was not. My work life was in shambles ((crying)). My marriage life was in shambles ((crying)). ((Crying)) Every day it felt to me like Lucy is slipping through my hands. ((Crying)) I had so many hopes. ((Silence)) I had so many – dreams ((crying)). But one night – one damn night it’s all shattered ((crying)).”

### **Circumspection-Preemption-Control Cycle**

#### **Encountering challenges in decision-making**

##### ***Violence as foreshortening of the circumspection-pre-emption-control cycle***

**Joe:** “I warned her again and told her that I am speaking for the last time – please don’t make me lose control and make a decision which I will regret maybe for the rest of my life, or making a bad decision. So she continued to provoke me saying that I must hit her, things like that. She said “hit me so that I can get you arrested.” So right there ..... she did not see it ..... I took out my gun.”

“What got to me was my realisation that the mother of my children was dead. So I thought maybe – that they were still young, so there was no option. I thought there was no option ..... because I thought – if maybe I spare their lives and mine, I am still going to be imprisoned and they will still not have parents. So according to me ..... maybe under the influence of SATAN was that the other option ..... these children were going to suffer, so I decided to kill them and myself, and that was my solution.”

**Neo:** “BUT before I left from the ..... from the bedroom EISH my sister I ..... I cannot tell you what came there, you know. I cannot tell you what came and ATTACKED me FAST. Because what I told you when I looked at her – I felt you know eish something coming, you see. Because I went into the bedroom and left, and went into the bedroom, she was in the bathroom, I left and went in and looked at her – she was busy, I don’t know what she was doing. I looked at her. I left and went back into the bedroom. Another part of my heart said “I should go” and another part said “ah, why are you going? Look at this person and see her exact intentions – today.” ((Silence)) Another part said “eish, just go.” But – I don’t know what came after ..... another thing. ((Silence)) Because I ended when ..... you know what, I ended when things were messed up.”

“But in the process of this thing happening, I concluded that – ah, it is better if there is nobody in the family. That is what I ended up doing, you see. Uh, unfortunately ..... or let me say fortunately – God did not want that to happen the way it was supposed to happen, you see. He did not want ..... maybe if it happened like that I am sure, sure that – maybe there was not going to be anybody who is alive, including me, myself. So – that is, it was

something that – that happened in a short period of time. It, it ..... that is, it attacked me FAST.”

**John:** “I spoke to her about our marriage, to get it right. She just said “AG, fuck you John! Just fuckin leave me alone. I want to fuckin sleep man!” I don’t remember the whole shooting. I took my gun and went to Anna’s bedroom and shot her first ((crying)). ((Crying)) I cannot remember a shot going off. I cannot remember my hand doing that ((pulling the trigger)) – the jerk of the pistol. I don’t remember shooting her ((crying)). I apparently shot Joy and John Junior ((crying)).”

“I told the police that I don’t want to live anymore ((crying)). I’m fed-up. I can’t live anymore ((crying)). I want out. I cocked my pistol and tried to shoot myself, but nothing happened. I realised that I put this thing on safety. So I put it on fire and I shot myself but somehow I survived.”

“((Crying)) I wanted to commit suicide about three, four times in that year, but I did not want to leave my children behind. I think I wanted to take them with me to protect them from Lucy. So that evening when I decided to kill myself, that is when I decided to kill them too.”

**Sly:** “Since I had just finished smoking outside, I thought the burns were minor and not major. I took toothpaste and smeared it on him – and I stayed with him without taking him to the hospital ... I just made a decision that ah it is a small thing – he will recover.”

### *Regretting choices*

**Sly:** “After he became sick I should have immediately looked for help. Nyaope made me think slowly about things that could have helped him.”

**Neo:** “I learnt that when you are having problems we are supposed to sit down and advise each other about those problems. Then, if we are not able to deal with the problems ..... we cannot get maybe a concl ..... uh, I mean a conclusion about the problem, at least we have to inform other people who can assist us, you see. Then ..... it is then where maybe – I think we can find assistance. But the problem which I realised and then which I saw ..... I realised something that – I AM A FAILURE, uh I am a failure because I saw the situation slowly starting but I LEFT IT.”

**John:** “I should have left her, but I was a coward. ((Silence)) We could’ve either worked on the marriage and our common goals. If we could not sort things out, I could have moved with Anna to the cottage house and she stays with John and Joy in the house. Or we could have just thrown in the towel and split our lives. I wanted us to have back our partnership in which we loved and respected each other. I even booked a weekend away for us because I thought if we got away from the house we could TRY REBUILDING what we lost, but the whole thing – kicked off in a wrong way.”

**Appendix G2: Family Participants**

**Individual Case Analysis**

**Mary – Joe’s mother**

**Diagnostic Construct Analysis**

**Covert Construing**

| <b>PREVERBAL CONSTRUCT</b> | <b>SUBMERGENCE</b>   | <b>SUSPENSION</b> | <b>EXPLANATORY COMMENTS</b>  |
|----------------------------|--|-------------------|--|
|                            | <p>“they were very serious about each other and also committed to their marriage. They always welcomed me with happiness. My daughter-in-law welcomed me and was happy to see me. She did not appear to be unhappy – and my son did not appear to be unhappy. You know, they did not show that they were having problems with each other. I have never heard of any problems which they were experiencing, my child. No! All I know is that they were happy and committed to their marriage.”</p> <p>“Eish, that is what I don’t know – because I always found them happy every time I visited.”</p> |                   | <p>The participant maybe drew on the positive construct pole to construe the couple’s marriage. Perhaps she submerged the negative construct pole which might have enabled her to construe problems.</p> |

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|  | <p>“They were <u>always</u> happy whenever I visited them. They were always happy and laughing even when they visited me this side and they did not tell me anything. Everybody was happy. Their children looked happy. My sister’s children who were staying with them did not tell me any problems. Mmm. They looked happy as always. No, they did not tell me anything.”</p> |  |  |
|--|---|--|--|

**Structure of Construing**

| <p><b>SUPERORDINATE CONSTRUCT</b></p>  | <p><b>SUBORDINATE CONSTRUCT</b></p> | <p><b>CORE CONSTRUCT</b></p> | <p><b>PERIPHERAL CONSTRUCT</b></p> | <p><b>EXPLANATORY COMMENTS</b></p>   |
|--|-------------------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------------|--|
| <p>“In life – when you have a child you have to give him fatherly love. ((Silence)) I thought that he would give them that kind of love, a fatherly love.”</p>   |                                     |                              |                                    | <p>Constructions of a father’s love for his children appeared to be superordinate in the participant’s construction system.</p>            |
| <p>“A man is seen as a good person in our culture. He is expected to raise his children well and look after his wife. He and his wife are supposed to get along. He is expected to work for his family. He is responsible for making</p> |                                     |                              |                                    | <p>She appeared to have superordinate constructions of a man being culturally constructed as a provider and a protector of his family.</p> |

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| sure that his family is happy and safe.” |  |  |  |  |
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**Strategies of Construing**

| <b>DILATION</b> | <b>CONSTRUCTION</b>                                | <b>TIGHT CONSTRUCT</b>   | <b>LOOSE CONSTRUCT</b> | <b>EXPLANATORY COMMENTS</b>  |
|-----------------|--|--|------------------------|--|
|                 |  | “I was hoping that they would be together until I die so that they could bury me. Yes. I wished only the best and goodness for their marriage. Yes. ((Silence)) I thought that they would take good care of each other.” |                        | The participant seemed to tightly construe the couple’s marriage in a positive manner in which she did not appear to predict problems.   |
|                 |  | “I thought that he would give them that kind of love, a fatherly love.”  |                        | She seemed to tightly expect her filicidal son to love his children.   |
|                 |  | “I also thought that their mother, Sue, would work together with her husband and give their children the same kind of love that my husband and I gave to our children.”  |                        | The respondent appeared to tightly expect the couple to support each other when parenting. She maybe tightly expected that she and her husband would be the couple’s role models regarding raising their children. |
|                 | “They were fighting over pocket money. Sue did not |  |                        | The participant’s limited knowledge of the couple  |

|  |  |  |  |
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|  | <p>want Joe to give his cousin pocket money. That is all I know. I don't know why she had issues with Joe giving his cousin pocket money."</p> |  | <p>fighting over the aunt's children seemed to suggest that she might have avoided knowing details of the conflict to avoid further incompatibilities in constringing.</p>   |
| <p>"I am still shocked even now because I don't know what made him to do this thing. I am still asking myself different questions even now."</p>   |  |  | <p>The statement 'I am still asking myself different questions', seems to suggest that participant might have expanded her perceptual field to construe the inconstruable killing.</p>   |
| <p>"Eish! I don't know, you know. ((Silence)) I don't find answers to my questions. I am always asking myself questions – but I don't have the answers to what happened which led him to kill his family ((tearful))."</p> |  |  | <p>The South African emotional expression of "Eish!" and the tearfulness seemed to indicate the chaos that the participant might have encountered as the result of a dilated perceptual field which cannot be reorganised.</p> |
|  | <p>"They came to the funeral but – we did not sit down and talk about this thing. Yes, Sue's family also came to the funeral but we</p>        |  | <p><i>The families maybe did not talk about the intolerable killing to avoid incompatibilities in constringing.</i></p>  |

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|  | <p>did not talk about what my son did.”</p>  |   |  |  |
|  | <p>“Sue said “I am tired because my brother is always taking me out of my marriages and wants me to get married to another man.” I was shocked and just kept quiet. I just said ‘Haaa!’ Jack then said to Sue ... Sue was at her home. All these things happened when she was at her home. Jack then said “I will see how long you are going to stay in that marriage which you are <u>bragging about.</u>” I was shocked to hear those things.”</p> |   |  | <p>The participant maybe kept quiet to avoid further incompatibilities in construing. Perhaps her construing of her son-in-law’s resentment of the couple’s marriage was incompatible to her family constructions.</p> |
|  |  | <p>“I think that Jack started the problems in Joe’s marriage – because Jack ... Sue told me that Jack said “I am going to see if you are going to live for a long time in that <u>small marriage of yours</u> which you are <u>bragging about.</u>” So I don’t know.”</p> |  | <p>The respondent seemed to tightly and preemptively suspect her son-in-law as the cause of the couple’s problems because of his threatening statement.</p>  |
| <p>“I don’t know if he was maybe shouting at them or</p> |  |   |  | <p>Perhaps the respondent maybe extended her</p>   |

|   |  |  |  |  |
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| <p>what. They did not tell me. Sue just told me what I told you.”</p> |  |  |  | <p>perceptual field to explore and understand what the son-in-law might have done to cause conflict in the couple’s marriage.</p>  |
|   |  | <p>“I think the problems started with the R3500.00 which we paid for – lobola – because from that point on Sue said that life was not good for her. I am not sure if her parents had a problem with the lobola payment?”</p> |  | <p>The respondent seemed to be tight and pre-emptive in construing ‘lobola’ payment as maybe the instigator of problems. She appeared to suspect the in-laws as maybe having been displeased with the payment.</p> |
|   |  |  | <p>“I don’t know maybe the Xhosa people would see him as a bad person”</p> | <p><i>The respondent seemed to loosely predict Xhosa people as likely to reject her son because of the killing.</i></p>  |
|   | <p>“My culture does not encourage men to kill their wives and children. So, I don’t know maybe the Xhosa people would see him as a bad person, but I still see him as a good person”</p> |  |  | <p>The participant maybe could not tolerate the incompatible constructions of her son killing, and therefore she continued to see him as “good” to avoid incompatibilities in construing.</p>                      |

## Transitions in Construing

| THREAT   | FEAR | GUILT | EXPLANATORY COMMENTS  |
|--|------|-------|---|
| <p>“She also told me that her brother said that he did not think that she would live very long if she stayed with my son, Joe. That is what I know and I was shocked. This thing happened after Jack said those things, so I don’t know.”</p>  |      |       | <p><i>The participant might have felt shocked because she maybe construed her son-in-law’s statement as imposing a threat to her daughter-in-law’s and filicidal son’s core structure.</i></p>  |
| <p>“Jack wanted Sue to divorce my son. Sue had two children from her previous marriage, Dan and Nick, but Nick was dead when we paid lobola. So Sue had one child when we married her, Dan, and had two children with Joe. We did not have a problem. I don’t have a problem even now. Jack ... Sue told me that Jack wanted her to divorce Joe – and return to her – first husband because Joe – was just a dog and not man enough for her. That is what Sue told me. I said to her ‘No, your brother – will not do such a thing.’”</p> |      |       | <p>Although the participant seemed to think that her son-in-law would not destroy her filicidal son’s marriage, she maybe construed him as posing a threat to her family and son’s marriage by wanting his sister to divorce.</p> <p><i>Furthermore, she perhaps construed her son-in-law to threaten her filicidal son’s masculinity by undermining and disrespecting him.</i></p> |
| <p>“I remember this other time which made me angry when Jack phoned and said “Yes, mama – you are sitting there at your home while Joe and Sue are fighting.” He said to me “You will see!””</p>   |      |       | <p>The participant might have felt angry because she maybe construed her son-in-law as threatening her motherhood identity.</p>   |

| <p>“Jack said ‘I am just <u>sitting here</u> and I am <u>not going there</u> – so I <u>will see the outcome</u>.”</p> <p><b>ANXIETY</b></p>   | <p><b>AGGRESSION</b></p> | <p><b>HOSTILITY</b></p>   | <p>She maybe felt threatened by her son-in-law.</p> <p><b>EXPLANATORY COMMENTS</b></p>  |
|---|--------------------------|---|---|
| <p>“They were fighting over pocket money. Sue did not want Joe to give his cousin pocket money. That is all I know. I don’t know why she had issues with Joe giving his cousin pocket money.”</p>   |                          |   | <p>The respondent did not seem to be able to construe why her daughter-in-law disapproved of her filial son supporting his cousin. She maybe did not have constructions to make sense of the fight.</p> |
| <p>“Eish! I don’t know, you know. ((Silence)) I don’t find answers to my questions. I am always asking myself questions – but I don’t have the answers to what happened which led him to kill his family ((tearful)).”</p>  |                          |   | <p>The participant seemed to be overwhelmed by a sense of confusion instigated by her inability to construe the killing.</p>  |
| <p>“Their level of communication with each other was good, <u>very good</u>. So I don’t know – what darkness came over him which – made my child do this thing because they had good communication. I don’t know. ((Silence)) God is the only one who knows because I don’t know anything.”</p> |                          |   | <p>The participant seemed unable to understand how the couple could not talk through their problems because she construed them to have a good communication relationship.</p>                           |
|   |                          | <p>“my child did this bad thing and I cannot excuse his behaviour. So Sue’s family were – somehow towards me during the funeral but I did not</p> | <p><i>The in-laws appeared to be angry with the offender’s extended</i></p>   |

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|  |  | <p>fight with them because – my child did this terrible thing.”</p> <p>“Jack and his family were using vulgar language and talking to us in whatever way. That is what I had to sit and listen to and there was nothing I could do.”</p> <p>“Sue’s family swore at me, they used all the offensive words they could think of. What could I say because my child did a bad thing?”</p> | <p><i>family for the killing. The anger maybe led to hostile verbal violence in which they were disrespectful.</i></p> <p>The participant seemed to justify the in-laws’ anger and hostility. She appeared to construe herself to deserve the anger perhaps as punishment for what her son did.</p>  |
| <p>“They did not tell me. They were <u>always happy</u> whenever I visited them. They were always happy and laughing even when they visited me this side and they did not tell me anything. Everybody was happy. Their children looked happy. My sister’s children who were staying with them did not tell me any problems. Mmm. They looked happy as always. No, they did not tell me anything. They did not tell me anything. Even now my sister’s children ((yawning)) don’t tell me anything about Joe’s marital problems. Joe, his wife, and his aunt’s children did not talk about what was happening in their home. I don’t know why they</p> |  |   | <p>The participant appeared to be confused by the couple’s and the aunt’s children’s behaviour of not confiding in her or the extended family about their problems. She maybe construed their behaviour to be incompatible with the family constructions in which they maybe spoke about issues.</p> |

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| <p>were not talking with us about their problems.”</p>  |  | <p>“Sue told me that <u>Jack wanted her to divorce Joe</u> – and return to her – <u>first husband</u> because Joe – was just a dog and <u>not man enough for her.</u>”</p>               | <p><i>Perhaps the son-in-law employed verbal violence in which he appeared to disrespect his filicidal brother-in-law in a hostile attempt to force his sister to divorce the offender.</i></p>   |
| <p>“They had a good marriage. To be honest, Joe and Sue were very close, <u>too much</u>. ((Silence)) I don’t really know what Jack was doing to them. I don’t really know what he did to them. I don’t know what he was doing to his sister, Sue. I don’t know if he was maybe shouting at them or what. They did not tell me.</p> |  | <p>“My culture does not encourage men to kill their wives and children. So, I don’t know maybe the Xhosa people would see him as a bad person, but I still see him as a good person”</p> | <p>The respondent appeared to be unable to construe what her son-in-law might have done to destroy a good relationship. Maybe she constructed the couple’s relationship as unbreakable. Therefore, maybe she was confused by the son-in-law breaking them.</p> <p>The participants appeared to be hostile in attempting to extort evidence to validate invalidated constructions of her filicidal son being good by continuing to see him as a “good person”.</p> |

| <p><b>ANGER</b></p>  | <p><b>SHAME</b></p> | <p><b>LOVE</b></p> | <p><b>HAPPINESS</b></p> | <p><b>SADNESS</b></p> | <p><b>EXPLANATORY COMMENTS</b></p>  |
|--|---------------------|--------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------|---|
| <p>“When they said “Joe killed his wife and children!” They did not tell</p> |                     |                    |                         |                       | <p>Although the participant reported feeling shocked, she appeared to</p> |

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| <p>me immediately when they fetched me. We arrived at Joe's house and I did not see my daughter-in-law and my grandchildren. I also did not see Joe. My mother then told me that Joe has killed them. I was very shocked when she told me the news because I did not know that Joe could commit something like this."</p> <p>"I also did not know that he was having problems which could lead him to do something like this. ((Silence)) I don't think any of my family members even knew about his problems because we have never had a family meeting concerning Joe's marital problems. But I don't know if my daughter-in-law's family knew. But my family, no, they did not know. Joe and his wife never told me anything even when I visited them.</p> |  |  | <p>feel angered by the killing because it invalidated her constructions of her filicidal son in which she seemed to construe him as incapable of killing.</p> <p>Additionally, the filicide-homicide appeared to invalidate her construction of her filicidal son having a "happy" and problem-free marriage.</p> |
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| <p>They were always happy. That is all.”</p>  | <p>“The two families had a good relationship, you know. To be honest, we had a good relationship. ((Deep breath)) You see my child did this bad thing and I cannot excuse his behaviour. So Sue’s family were – somehow towards me during the funeral but I did not fight with them because – my child did this terrible thing.”</p> |  |  |  | <p>Perhaps the in-laws’ changing behaviour towards her might have induced a sense of shame in that she maybe saw them as not perceiving and interacting with her the way they previously did.</p> |
| <p>“Joe and I have a good and open relationship but he did not tell me anything.”</p> |  |  |  |  | <p>The fact that her filicidal son did not confide in her maybe precipitated feelings of anger because it might have invalidated her construction of an open communication relationship.</p>      |

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|   | <p>“people talk when a bad thing like this happens.”</p>  |  |  | <p>Maybe she felt dislodged from other people’s construing of her because of the killing.</p>   |
|   | <p>“Sue’s family swore at me, they used all the offensive words they could think of. What could I say because my child did a <u>bad thing</u>?”</p> |  |  | <p>The perceived disrespect might have also induced a sense of shame in the participant.</p>  |
| <p>“I remember this other time which made me angry when Jack phoned and said “<u>Yes</u>, mama – you are sitting there at your home while Joe and Sue are fighting.” He said to me “You will see!””</p> |   |  |  | <p>The respondent maybe felt angered by the perceived construing of being painted as an uncaring mother. This maybe invalidated her self-construction of being a loving mother.</p> <p>Furthermore, her feelings of anger were maybe perpetuated by construing her son-in-law as disrespecting her by intimidating her.</p> |
|   | <p>“I don’t know maybe the Xhosa people would see</p>   |  |  | <p><i>She maybe perceived her filicidal son as likely to feel dislodged from the</i></p>  |

|  |   |   |                        |                           |   |
|--|---|---|------------------------|---------------------------|---|
|  | <p>him as a bad person”</p>                   |   |                        |                           | <p><i>Xhosa people’s construing of his core role.</i></p>   |
| <p>“I am shocked by this thing which he did. I am really shocked because I expected – that he would build a good family with his wife and they would grow old together, raise their grandchildren together, and also care for me. I thought they would be together. But now he did this thing ((crying)).”</p> | <p>“but I still see him as a good person”</p> |   |                        |                           | <p>The quote indicates that the participant would not induce a sense of shame in her filicidal son because she continues to see him as a good person.</p> <p>This also suggests that she did not slot rattle her construing of him after the killing.</p> <p>The respondent appeared to be angry with her son for killing. She seemed to construe him as having her invalidated her prediction of him have a successful marriage and also caring for her.</p> |
|  | <p><b>SELF-CONFIDENCE</b></p>                 | <p><b>STARTLE/SURPRISE</b></p>                    | <p><b>CONTEMPT</b></p> | <p><b>CONTENTMENT</b></p> | <p><b>EXPLANATORY COMMENTS</b></p>  |
|  |   | <p>“Eish, my child I don’t know. I don’t know</p> |                        |                           | <p>The respondent seemed to be startled by the killing in which she</p>   |

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|  |  | because I am staying here so I don't know what was happening there. I don't know. I am still shocked even now because I don't know what made him to do this thing. I am still asking myself different questions even now." |  |  |  | might have felt a desperate need to construe it. |
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**Control**

**Circumspection-Preemption-Control Cycle**

| <b>CIRCUMSPECTION PHASE</b> | <b>PREEMPTION PHASE</b>  | <b>CONTROL PHASE</b>   | <b>EXPLANATORY COMMENTS</b>  |
|-----------------------------|--|--|--|
|                             | "No, my child I don't think that he planned it. I think that it is something that just suddenly happened, <u>just like that</u> . He has never showed that he was thinking of committing something like this." | "No, my child I don't think that he planned it. I think that it is something that just suddenly happened, <u>just like that</u> . He has never showed that he was thinking of committing something like this." | The respondent seemed to be pre-emptive in deciding that her filicidal son did not contemplate committing filicide-homicide.<br><br><i>She appeared to pre-emptively construe her son as making an impulsive decision to kill.</i> |

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| <p>“When I think about it – they should have come to me so that I could guide them – and tell them that ‘No my children don’t fight like this. It is better if you sit down and talk about your problems.’ If I am not successful ... I would ask them to see Social Workers if they do not hear what I am trying to tell them. I would encourage them to see Social Workers because I would see that their issues are overwhelming me and I am unable to cope.”</p> | <p>“When I think about it – they should have come to me so that I could guide them – and tell them that ‘No my children don’t fight like this. It is better if you sit down and talk about your problems.’ If I am not successful ... I would ask them to see Social Workers if they do not hear what I am trying to tell them. I would encourage them to see Social Workers because I would see that their issues are overwhelming me and I am unable to cope.”</p> | <p>“When I think about it – they should have come to me so that I could guide them – and tell them that ‘No my children don’t fight like this. It is better if you sit down and talk about your problems.’ If I am not successful ... I would ask them to see Social Workers if they do not hear what I am trying to tell them. I would encourage them to see Social Workers because I would see that their issues are overwhelming me and I am unable to cope.”</p> | <p>The respondent appeared to have intended to explore various constructs and poles of the constructs to help the couple address their issues. She seemed to construe a referral to the Social Worker as the best option if she was unsuccessful in intervening.</p> |
| <p>“I would ask them to see Social Workers if I cannot help them. But now they did not give me that chance to try and help them. They did not give it to me my child.”</p>   | <p>“I would ask them to see Social Workers if I cannot help them. But now they did not give me that chance to try and help them. They did not give it to me my child.”</p>   | <p>“I would ask them to see Social Workers if I cannot help them. But now they did not give me that chance to try and help them. They did not give it to me my child.”</p>   |  |

Category Groupings of Experience Cycle Methodology Data

The extended family member’s perception of the offender’s intimate/marital relationship

| PHASE              | CATEGORY GROUPING | QUOTES   |
|--------------------|-------------------|--|
| Anticipation       | Tight prediction  | “I was hoping that they would be together until I die so that they could bury me. Yes. I wished only the best and goodness for their marriage. Yes. ((Silence)) I thought that they would take good care of each other.”   |
| Investment         | High investment   | “I was hoping that they would be together until I die so that they could bury me.”   |
| (Dis) Confirmation | Invalidation      | <p>“<i>Eish, to be honest they were very serious about each other and also committed to their marriage.</i>”<sup>23</sup></p> <p>“They hardly fought with each other. I was really shocked when I was called and told that this thing has happened – because I always found them happy and laughing whenever I visited them. They had a good marriage. Yes, my child.”</p> |

<sup>23</sup> Italicised quotes are the researcher’s interpretations of the participant’s construing of the couple’s and their children’s anticipations, investment, confirmation/disconfirmation, and construct revision.

|                    |                                |   |
|--------------------|--------------------------------|---|
|                    | Validation                     | “They were <u>always</u> happy whenever I visited them. They were always happy and laughing”  |
| Construct Revision | Significant construct revision | “I think that Jack started the problems in Joe’s marriage – because Jack ... Sue told me that Jack said “I am going to see if you are going to live for a long time in that <u>small marriage of yours</u> which you are <u>bragging about</u> .” So I don’t know.” |

**The extended family member’s perception of the offender’s relationship with his child/ren**

| PHASE              | CATEGORY GROUPING                      | QUOTES  |
|--------------------|--|---|
| Anticipation       | Tight prediction – biological children | “Joo! I thought that they were going to raise their children well – and with a lot of <u>love</u> .”  |
| Investment         | Tight prediction – step-child          | “the boy was staying in the backroom and the girl was supposed to come live with me the year that their mother died, in 2009.”                          |
| (Dis) Confirmation | High investment                        | “ <i>He did everything for him and cared for him like he was his own son. Joe loved Dan</i> ”   |
|                    | Validation                             | “Eish, they took good care of their children.”<br><br>“ <i>They expected their father to give them the love which he, Joe, gave them ((tearful)).</i> ” |

|                    |                                |   |
|--------------------|--------------------------------|---|
|                    | Invalidation – step-child      | “Joe said “No mama she does not have to come stay with you, we will stay with her.””  |
|                    | Validation – aunt’s children   | “My sister’s children who were staying with them did not tell me any problems. Mmm. They looked happy as always.”   |
| Construct Revision | Significant construct revision | “The problem was that Sue did not want the girl in the house.”<br>“They were fighting over pocket money. Sue did not want Joe to give his cousin pocket money.” |

The extended family member’s thoughts on the killing

| PHASE              | CATEGORY GROUPING | QUOTES  |
|--------------------|-------------------|---|
| Anticipation       | Loose prediction  | “He did something that is wrong. He did something that is against my culture. My culture does not encourage men to kill their wives and children. So, I don’t know maybe the Xhosa people would see him as a bad person.” |
| Investment         | Low investment    | “No, my child I don’t think that he planned it. I think that it is something that just suddenly happened, just like that.”  |
| (Dis) Confirmation | Invalidation      | “He has never showed that he was thinking of committing something like this. No. This   |

|                           |                                       |  |
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|                           |                                       | <p>thing really scared me. I was very scared when they came to pick me up at work.”</p> <p>“I am shocked by this thing which he did. I am really shocked because I expected – that he would build a good family with his wife and they would grow old together, ((silence)) raise their grandchildren together, and also care for me. I thought they would be together. ((Silence)) But now he did this thing ((crying)).”</p> |
| <p>Construct Revision</p> | <p>Significant construct revision</p> | <p>“Eish! It is everything. I lost my son, my daughter-in-law, and my grandchildren.”</p> <p>“IF MY DAUGHTER-IN-LAW and her husband spoke to me about their problems, I would have held a meeting with them and told them ‘No, you should not fight when things are like this. You have to sit down and find a solution to your problems.’ So – they did not tell me their problems.”</p>                                      |
|                           | <p>No construct revision</p>          | <p>“I am still shocked even now because I don’t know what made him to do this thing. I am still asking myself different questions even now.”</p>   |

An Analysis of Mary's PEG Data

ELEMENT

| Offender   | Offender's nuclear family  | Offender's nuclear family's views of the offender   | Himself/herself   | Extended family  | Ideal family   |
|--|--|---|---|--|--|
| <p>How did the extended family member perceive the offender before the killing?</p> <p>Not an "evil" person – "he was a good person. He did not have an – <u>evil heart.</u>"</p> <p>Treating others with respect – "He was always a gentle and respectful person."</p> <p>Not violent – "He was not a person who liked fighting."</p> | <p>What was the extended family member's views of the offender's nuclear family before the killing?</p> <p>Seeing the couple to share qualities of kindness – "Sue was also a good, loving, and caring person just like Joe."</p> <p>Perceiving a loving family – "His family was warm and loving."</p> <p>Seeing them to be a close family – "They were really united."</p> <p>Observing them to have good communication – "Joe and Sue discussed</p> | <p>What was the extended family member's perceptions of the offender's nuclear family's views of the offender before the killing?</p> <p>Seeing daughter-in-law as perceiving husband as good – " I think Sue saw her husband as a good man."</p> | <p>What is the extended family member's views of himself/herself?</p> | <p>What is the extended family member's views of the extended family?</p> <p>Being a family of principles – "We are a good family."</p> <p>Solving problems together – "We are people who discuss issues and find solutions. We guide each other."</p> <p>Capable of solving problems – "we would have help Joe – and Sue if they came to us about their problems. We were</p> | <p>What is the extended family member's perceptions of an ideal family system?</p> <p>Wanting a family of peace rather than conflict – "I would like to have a peaceful family. I don't like a family that has a lot of drama. I wish my family would be peaceful and <u>not have conflict.</u></p> <p>Conflict does not build a home but destroys homes."</p> |

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|  | <p><i>everything. They advised each other when they were building their house. They spoke about everything.</i></p> <p><i>Seeing daughter-in-law as kind – “She was a good and gentle person.”</i></p> <p><i>Seeing love – “They were good together. You know they had warm love for each other.”</i></p> |  | <p><i>going to give them guidance. You see, the elders in my family and Sue’s family were going to meet and discuss Joe’s marital problems. Whatever problems they were having were going to be fixed. They were going to be fixed.”</i></p> <p><i>Supporting each other – “We are a supportive family.”</i></p> <p><i>“We are still united”</i></p> |  |
|--|---|--|--|--|

| How does the extended family member view the offender after the killing?   | What was the extended family member's views of the offender's nuclear family before the killing? | What was the extended family member's perceptions of the offender's nuclear family's views of the offender before the killing? | What is the extended family member's views of the extended family? | What is the extended family member's perceptions of an ideal family system? |
|--|--|--|--|---|
| <p>Still treating others with respect – <i>“He is still a respectful person even now.”</i></p> <p>Still the son I know – <i>“I STILL SEE Joe as the same person I know.”</i></p> <p>Not an “evil” person – <i>“He does not have – an evil heart.”</i></p> <p>Seeing him to adhere to moral values – <i>“He is still the same person I know and has the values that I taught him when he was growing up.”</i></p> |  |  |  |   |

PEG Analysis of Mary's Main Transcript Data

ELEMENT

| Offender  | Offender's nuclear family   | Offender's nuclear family's views of the offender  | Himself/herself  | Extended family  | Ideal family  |
|---|---|--|--|--|---|
| How did the extended family member perceive the offender before the killing?  | What was the extended family member's views of the nuclear family before the killing? | What was the extended family member's perceptions of the offender's nuclear family's views of the offender before the killing? | What is the extended family member's views of himself/herself? | What is the extended family member's views of the extended family? | What is the extended family member's perceptions of an ideal family system? |
| How does the extended family member view the offender after the killing?  | What was the extended family member's views of the nuclear family before the killing? | What was the extended family member's perceptions of the offender's nuclear family's views of the offender before the killing? | What is the extended family member's views of himself/herself? | What is the extended family member's views of the extended family? | What is the extended family member's perceptions of an ideal family system? |
| Not seeing him to have planned to kill<br>"No, my child I don't think that he planned it. ((Silence)) I think that it is something that just suddenly |   |  |  |  |   |

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| <p>happened, <u>just like that.</u></p>   | <p>Not perceiving him showing signs of planning to kill</p> | <p>“He has never showed that he was thinking of committing something like this. No.”</p> |  |  |  |  |   |
| <p>Not seeing him capable of killing</p>  |   |  |  |  |  |  |   |
| <p>“I was very shocked when she told me the news because I did not know that Joe could commit something like this.”</p> |   |  |  |  |  |  | <p>Not seeing them aware of problems</p> <p>“I don’t think any of my family members even knew about his problems because we have never had a family meeting concerning Joe’s marital problems.”</p> |

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|  |  |  |   | <p>“But my family, no, they did not know.”</p> |  |
|  |  |  | <p>Feeling shocked</p> <p>“I don’t know. I am still shocked even now because I don’t know what made him to do this thing. I am still asking myself different questions even now.”</p> <p>“I am shocked by this thing which he did. I am really shocked because I expected – that he would build a good family with his wife and they would grow old together, ((silence)) raise their grandchildren together, and also care for me. I thought they would be together. ((Silence)) But now he did this thing((crying)).”</p> |  |  |

|  |                             |                         |  |                |          |
|--|-----------------------------|-------------------------|--|----------------|----------|
|  |                             |                         | Feeling overwhelmed by unanswered questions<br>“Eish! I don’t know, you know. I don’t find answers to my questions. I am always asking myself questions – but I don’t have the answers to what happened which led him to kill his family ((tearful)).” |                |          |
|  |                             |                         | Feeling hurt by the killing<br>“Joo! You know EISH! It was painful.”   |                |          |
| <b>Dyadic interpersonal construing</b>                               |                             |                         |  |                |          |
| Joe-wife   | Parents-biological children | Parents-aunt’s children | Sue-cousin   | Joe-step-child | Mary-Joe |
| Seeing a happy relationship<br>“They hardly fought with each other.” |                             |                         |  |                |          |

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|---|--|---|---|--|
| <p>“They had a good marriage. They had a happy marriage. Yes, my child.”</p>            |  |   |   |  |
| <p>Seeing them as loving parents<br/>“Eish, they took good care of their children.”</p> |  | <p>Knowing them to be happy<br/>“Eish, that is what I don’t know – because I always found them happy every time I visited.”</p> |   |  |
|   |  |   | <p>Perceiving daughter-in-law to resent cousin<br/>“The problem was that Sue did not want the girl in the house.”</p> |  |
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|--|---------------------------|-----------------|--|-----------------|--|--|
|  |                           |                 | <p>pocket money. That is all I know. I don't know why she had issues with Joe giving his cousin pocket money."</p> |                 |  |  |
|  |                           |                 |  |                 | <p>Perceiving him to love step-child</p> <p>"Joe had a good relationship with Dan. He did everything for him and cared for him like he was his own son. Joe loved Dan"</p> <p>"otherwise Joe really cared for Dan you know."</p> <p>"Joe did not ill-treat Dan."</p> |  |
| <b>Dyadic interpersonal construing</b>   |                           |                 |  |                 |  |  |
| <p>Extended family-in-law</p> <p>Avoid talking about the killing</p> <p>"Sue's family also came to the funeral but we did not talk</p> | <p>Mary-family-in-law</p> | <p>Jack-Sue</p> | <p>Mary-Jack</p>   | <p>Jack-Joe</p> | <p>Sue-extended family</p>   |  |

|   |   |   |              |                                  |                           |   |
|---|---|---|--------------|----------------------------------|---------------------------|---|
| about what my son did.”                 | Feeling ill-treated   |   |              |                                  |                           |   |
|   | “Sue’s family were – somehow towards me during the funeral but I did not fight with them because – my child did this terrible thing.” |   |              |                                  |                           |   |
|   |   | Realising a fight   |              |                                  |                           |   |
|   |   | “Jack started to do a lot of different things after we paid lobola such as fighting with his sister, Sue. Sue told me that her brother is fighting with her. That is what she told me.” |              |                                  |                           |   |
| <b>Triadic interpersonal construing</b> |   |   |              |                                  |                           |   |
| Mary-parents-children                   | Mary-parents-aunt’s children  | Extended Sue-step-child   | family-child | Parents-step-child-family-in-law | Parents-step-child-father | Mary-Joe-Sue  |
|   |   |   |              |                                  |                           | Feeling shocked   |
|   |   |   |              |                                  |                           | “I was really shocked when I was called and told that this thing has happened – because I always found them |

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|  |  |  | <p>Seeing the in-laws causing friction</p> <p>“Dan stopped staying with his mother and Joe because of Sue’s parents. They did not want Dan to stay with Joe and Sue. You see? The problem started after Sue received grant money for Dan, but all this time he was staying with them and her parents did not have a problem.”</p> <p>“the issues with the children involved money – because everything was fine when Sue was still <u>working</u> on getting the social grant for her son. So problems started after she got the social grant.”</p> |  | <p>happy and laughing whenever I visited them.”</p> |
|--|--|--|---|--|---|

| Triadic interpersonal construing  |   |  |
|---|---|--|
| Jack-Sue-Joe  | Mary-Jack-family-in-law   | Mary-Jack-couple   |
| <p>Learning son-in-law disapproved of the marriage</p> <p>“She also told me that her brother said that he did not think that she would live very long if she stayed with my son, Joe. That is what I know and I was shocked. This thing happened after Jack said those things, so I don’t know.”</p> <p>“ Jack wanted Sue to divorce my son.”</p> | <p>Feeling helpless amidst chaos</p> <p>“even during the funeral, Jack was everywhere. He was running around taking whatever he wanted to take. And then on the other side you know people talk when a bad thing like this happens. So Jack and his family were using vulgar language and talking to us in whatever way. That is what I had to sit and listen to and there was nothing I could do.”</p> | <p>Not seeing son-in-law as good anymore</p> <p>“The first time I saw Jack, I saw him as a good person – and my son was good towards him. But the way he treated me, Joe and Sue.”</p> |

Mary’s ABC Model Analysis: Advantages and Disadvantages of Intervening or Not Intervening, Main Transcript

a1 Not intervening to prevent the killing

**A: Problem construct**

a2 Intervening to prevent the killing

Preferring: Intervening – *“IF MY DAUGHTER-IN-LAW and her husband spoke to me about their problems, I would have held a meeting with them and told them ‘No, you should not fight when things are like this. You have to sit down and find a solution to your problems.’ So – they did not tell me their problems.”*

b1 Disadvantages of not intervening to prevent the killing

- Losing loved ones – *“Eish! It is everything. I lost my son, my daughter-in-law, and my grandchildren.”*
- Causing family conflict – *“The two families had a good relationship, you know. To be honest, we had a good relationship. ((Deep breath)) You see my child did this bad thing and I cannot excuse his behaviour. So Sue’s family were – somehow towards me during the funeral”*

b2 Advantages of intervening to prevent the killing

- Watching them succeed – *“I think that they would be far in life now – because they always discussed everything they were planning to do. They guided each other that this should be like this and this like that.”*
- Offering guidance – *“they should have come to me so that I could guide them”*  
*“I would encourage them to see Social Workers”*

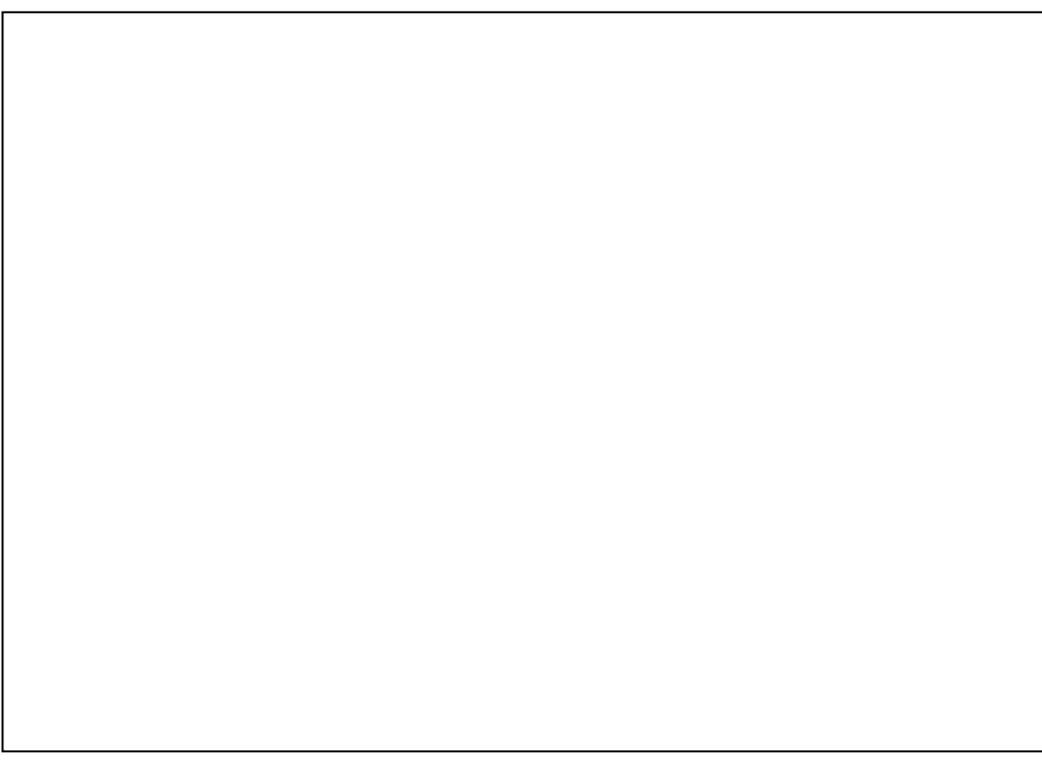
- Receiving news of a fight turning deadly – “*During all this fighting I was fetched at work and told “Your child killed Sue and his children.”*”
- Feeling pain – “*Ijoo! I really loved my daughter-in-law and grandchildren. Ijoo! You know EISH! It was painful.*”
- Perceived as an uncaring mother – “*I remember this other time which made me angry when Jack phoned and said “Yes, mama – you are sitting there at your home while Joe and Sue are fighting.” He said to me “You will see!” He said that Sue opened a case against Joe. It was the first time I heard that she filed a case against him.*”
- “*Jack said ‘I am just sitting here and I am not going there – so I will see the outcome.*”
- Seeing him become a culturally unacceptable man – “*My culture does not encourage men to kill their wives and children. So, I don’t know maybe the Xhosa people would see him as a bad person*”

- Helping them to find a solution – “*tell them that ‘No my children don’t fight like this. It is better if you sit down and talk about your problems.’*”
- Offering reassurance – “*Sue told me that Jack wanted her to divorce Joe – and return to her – first husband because Joe – was just a dog and not man enough for her. That is what Sue told me. I said to her ‘No, your brother – will not do such a thing.’*”

c2 Advantages of not intervening to prevent the killing



c1 Disadvantages of intervening to prevent the killing



**C. Prevents change**

**Mary’s ABC Model Analysis: Advantages and Disadvantages of Intervening or Not Intervening, ABC Model data**

|   |                             |                                       |
|---|-----------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| a1 Not intervening to prevent the killing | A: <b>Problem construct</b> | a2 Intervening to prevent the killing |
|---|-----------------------------|---------------------------------------|

Preferring: Intervening – “We would have done something to help them if they told us their problems. The elders in my family would have guided them and told them ‘No, our children don’t fight. You must stop fighting and continue to build your lives together.’ So I would say that I prefer doing something to prevent this situation from happening if only they said something to us.”

b1 Disadvantages of not intervening to prevent the killing

- Losing loved ones – “Obviously if you don’t do anything to prevent this crime from happening you will lose people that you love. Like now, I have lost my son, my daughter-in-law and grandchildren.”
- “You will lose loved ones”
- Gaining sadness – “you will gain a lot of sadness.”

b2 Advantages of intervening to prevent the killing

- Helping to solve problems – “their problems would be resolved and they would be together. I was going to help them to solve their problems and everything was going to be fine.”
- Giving support – “by doing something you are giving the person who is in the situation an opportunity to talk about their issues and they get relieved in the process. Whatever burdens they are carrying inside will be lessened and they can start to think clearly.”

c2 Advantages of not intervening to prevent the killing

- Not gaining anything – *“There is no way that you will gain something if you don’t do anything to prevent this crime. No!”*

c1 Disadvantages of intervening to prevent the killing

- Not losing anything – *“I would not be losing anything by doing something to prevent this situation from happening.”*  
  
*“I was not going to lose anything”*

### C. Prevents change

\*There appeared to be no ‘C’ constructs, which consists of ‘c2’ pole, the advantages of a problematic pole (‘a1), and ‘c1’ pole, the disadvantages of the desired pole (‘a2’) (Tschudi & Winter, 2012, p. 92), which might have prevented the participant to choose to intervene if she knew about the couple’s problems. Furthermore, the respondent seemed likely to choose to intervene because the disadvantages of not intervening, ‘b1’, appeared to outweigh the advantages of intervening, ‘b2’.

### Cross-case Analysis

## CONSTRUING THE OFFENDER'S INTIMATE/MARITAL RELATIONSHIP

### Submerging the Negative Construct Pole

#### Construing him as 'good'

**Mpho:** "I saw him as fine, normal. He was quiet and did not talk much. I was the one who was mostly talkative and told him what I did at school. People mostly ... When I was walking with him, maybe the following the day someone would approach me and tell me that this person is not good."

"It's only this other time when my family went to report my pregnancy. My grandfather said "I know this boy. He stabbed – someone with a bottle." I then saw that, 'Yes, they told me the truth about him.' That is when I started to realise things about him but we had already separated. I started to see that he was not a good person – when my grandfather told me that he stabbed someone with a bottle in the street, and then he ran away afterwards." (Slot rattling)

**April:** "I considered her to be a good person – because she always corrected me when I did a mistake, "No don't do that like that." She corrected me like I was her younger sister. I did not backchat, 'Oh, this and that', when she hit me. No! I respected her. She corrected me and I respected her."

#### Construing a Happy Couple

**Dave:** "I did not see any issues between them when I visited. I would be lying if I said that I saw something."

**Jack:** "Eish, mama you know I will never be able to explain it to you because when I arrived at their house ... I briefly stopped at their house and I saw that they were STILL happy. They did everything together even when they came here to the Mall to do their shopping. There was nothing that was alarming."

**Mary:** "They were very serious about each other and also committed to their marriage. They always welcomed me with happiness. My daughter-in-law welcomed me and was happy to see me. She did not appear to be unhappy – and my son did not appear to be unhappy. You know, they did not show that they were having problems with each other. I have never heard of any problems which they were experiencing, my child. No! All I know is that they were happy and committed to their marriage."

**April:** ""Their relationship was good. They were happy – at the beginning. It was nice! Even when they had their first child, everything was nice. You see? They did not have problems. They got along well. You see? Yes, they got along nicely. ((Silence)) And then my aunt died. ((Silence)) And then after my aunt died that is when I can say sis Sue and my brother started having problems. Sis Sue did not want Nomsa and her brother to stay there ((pointing to Joe's house)). She did not want my aunt's children to stay there with her and Joe. But you see initially my mother wanted to take Nomsa and sis Sue refused. You see? That is when their problems started." (Slot rattling)

## Strategies in Construing

### Constriction

#### *Construing him avoiding*

**April:** “Yes, they fought in the past. I clearly remember that day because I was visiting my grandmother and they started fighting. Sis Sue liked shouting during a fight which only made it worse and my brother was cool and soft-spoken. They fought verbally not physically. My brother told her, “Go to your parents’ house and you will come back when you are feeling better.””

**Jack:** “He keeps quiet when he is hurt. He does not talk about issues that are hurting him. He keeps everything inside. Which is not good! You have to talk about things that are hurting you because they are going to hurt you more if you keep them inside and you will regret it tomorrow.”

#### *Minimising dealing with incompatibilities*

**Dave:** “I could say that they got along fine. ((Silence)) Because I cannot say that – sis Sue ill-treat this girl when Joe was not there. I don’t know anything about that, you see. I just looked at their facial expressions when I visited them and I saw everything fine, you see. I did not see the girl being troubled even when she washed the dishes – or cleaned the house. No, everything was fine. You see, if sometimes a person is troubled you will see that they will complain when they wash the dishes or things like that. You see? So she did not complain. So I saw everything as fine because I just visited and left, I did not spend a long time with them. Maybe if I did – I was going to see that my brother – was not treating sis Sue right, or that sis Sue was ill-treating my aunt’s children. You see? But so far when I got there everything was fine.”

**Jack:** “Joe – you know even the mistakes that my younger sister made ... For example, there is one which I heard after my sister died, that she chased him with ... I heard from the neighbours. She chased him around the house with a knife. She did not tell me those kinds of things. So I heard such things from the neighbours after this incident happened.”

**June:** “I DID NOT see those serious issues – even if maybe they had ... But I did not see any serious issues. The child visited and Mpho sometimes came to fetch him, and Sly most of the time went to take him. It was mostly Sly who came with him. There were no issues – it’s like DEEP ISSUES that these people are fighting, no. There were no issues, they were not there ... The small issues were like – maybe they – had some disagreements.”

**Tumi:** “I was not initially aware of their relationship because Mpho was not staying with me. She stayed with my mother. I don’t know anything. I knew nothing about their relationship. I only became aware of it when I visited. I knew about their relationship through my younger sibling. He said “Your child is dating this other guy, Sly, and he is not a good person. He is a thief.” Sly was a person who never came into the house when he visited. He always stood outside. I have never seen him. I don’t know anything about him.”

**Jude:** “No, how their relationship was moving? How is it? I did not want him and so she met him out there. I told her that people are saying this person is doing bad things, and she just continued to go to him. Therefore, there was nothing that I was going to do to her. I was not interested in their relationship as long as she saw him out there far away from me.”

### **Transitions in Construing**

#### **Anxiety**

##### ***Experiencing the couple’s problems as unconstruable***

**Jack:** “They did everything together! Yes, they came together to my house. They went everywhere together. And also another thing is that he was able to give his wife – access to his bank cards and say, “Go withdraw money.” Those were some of the signs which showed that this person is – 100% committed to his marriage. They were also communicating very well. There was respect between them. They respected each other! So I am not sure what happened or when their problems started because you will never know some of the things, you will never know what happens behind closed doors.”

**May:** “people tend to come to functions together when they are staying in the same house, especially when they are newly married. But I realised that – they were ... There was ... How can I put it ... I could say almost a slight friction. Because sometimes they did not attend family functions together, they came separately. It is like you could see that they are not ((holding hands)), so we did not know what was happening.”

##### ***Failing to construe the family-in-law***

**Mary:** “They had a good marriage. To be honest, Joe and Sue were very close, too much. ((Silence)) I don’t really know what Jack was doing to them. I don’t really know what he did to them. I don’t know what he was doing to his sister, Sue. I don’t know if he was maybe shouting at them or what. They did not tell me.”

**May:** “if you are quiet and do not discuss your issues with us, and you always appear to be happy while you are carrying problems inside, then we do not know what will happen in the future”

#### **Feeling angry<sup>24</sup>**

**April:** “I think my brother and sis Sue did things the modern way. They did not follow culture. No, they did not practice culture. They were living the modern life. You see the way things are done today, like not talking about their problems. According to my culture and also my family practice, we talk about our issues. We always discuss our issues with the family members so that they can offer guidance. So now they kept their problems private!”

**Dave:** “Joe and I were close but he never said anything to me. He was a kind of a person who spoke about things but he has never discussed this with me. You see, he told me of his intentions to buy a plot of land to build a house and also the challenges that he was having with that. But he did not tell me about his marital problems.”

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<sup>24</sup> Anger in this section is used in terms of Cummins’ (2003).

**Jude:** “Eish! I did not want Sly. I think that Mpho should have listened to me when I told her about Sly and left him because he was a bad person.”

### **Hostility**

**Mary:** “My culture does not encourage men to kill their wives and children. So, I don’t know maybe the Xhosa people would see him as a bad person, but I still see him as a good person”

**Jude:** “When you tell her that people are saying that this person that you are dating is like this and that, she contested it and continued to see him.”

### **Anticipations of the Couple’s Love**

#### *Anticipating their relationship to fail*

**May:** “I thought because of – their anger, they would maybe have problems in their marriage.”

**Jack:** “I considered them to be children that I was supposed to teach in terms of building a marriage. I was supposed to teach them how to build a family because they were so young ... they did not know how to maintain and strengthen a family. So, those are the things that I wanted to do and also unite their family.”

**Jude:** “No! I did not have any hopes. I did not see any light there. There was no light there! You could also see that a person like that was not a kind of person that could marry someone.”

#### *Anticipating their relationship to be successful*

**April:** “I thought they would be together, happy, and have a family. I thought they would do things together.”

**Dave:** “I wanted them to be together for a long time and have a family just like they had. The first time I saw them together I saw that they were in love with each other. They looked like they were going somewhere in life and that is what I wanted for them.”

**Jack:** “Yes! They were going for success. According to me, I imagined where they would be in 2014 because I saw the way he was doing things. I was also encouraging him. I was saying ‘Go!’”

#### *Construing the couple anticipating love*

**April:** “They expected to have a loving relationship. They expected to be in love with each other. They expected to be united, and in love, you see. They expected to respect each other.”

**Mary:** “When I looked at the situation, I thought Sue told herself ‘This is where I am staying until – I become a grandmother. You see I thought she had that kind of commitment.”

**Dave:** “Joe wanted to have a sense of togetherness with sis Sue. He wanted to have a good and tight marriage.”

### **Validations of Anticipations of the Couple’s Love**

#### ***Construing a good relationship***

**April:** “They did not have problems. They got along well. You see? Yes, they got along nicely.”

**Dave:** “They looked very happy together when they visited us here.”

**Jack:** “Mama, I am telling you there was no slightest sign which showed that Joe and his wife did not have a life. Life was there mama! Life was visible!”

**May:** “Their house shows you that they were people who were focused and had a vision. They had already achieved a lot of things – which did not match their age. So you could see that these people are hard working.”

#### ***Construing trouble in their love***

**April:** “After my aunt died that is when I can say sis Sue and my brother started having problems.”

**Jack:** “You know mama how painful it is when you are a brother to your – brother-in-law’s wife and – every time when you get to their place you tell him, ‘Uh, my brother – uh my younger sister told me ...’ You know she was complaining to me about the things that Joe was doing to her.”

**May:** “It is like you could see that they are not ((holding hands))”

## **CONSTRUING THE COUPLE’S RELATIONSHIP WITH THE CHILDREN**

### **Strategies of Construing**

#### **Constriction**

##### ***Constricting to avoid invalidations***

**Mpho:** “There was no sign that he was ill-treating him. You could never say that he was ill-treating him or what because that child always wanted to be with his father. There were no signs that this person does not want this person. Even the time the child came back hurt on the head because Sly said he hit the dashboard, the child always wanted to visit him even though my family said he must not go to Sly’s place anymore. He always ran to him when he saw him and wanted to be with him. The child showed love for his father. There was nothing that showed that he was doing this and that to him.”

**Dave:** “No, they got along fine because when I got there ... What can I say? Sis Sue told me that Joe’s cousin should have his own room. You see? And so they extended their house so that the boy could have a room outside the main house and the girl stayed with them in the house. And so that is what I know. I told them ‘No, if you guys have discussed and agreed on this matter then continue to build the room.’ So they built the room but the end result of the

extension was this incident in which he killed his family and attempted to commit suicide. You see? The boy was supposed to stay in that room, have the key to the room, and cook for himself.”

## Anxiety

### *Unable to construe*

**April:** “Ag shame, sis Sue was not talking to her and I did not know why she was angry with her. I did not know what happened. Sis Sue did not even want us to visit Thato in the backroom. I could not understand why she was good towards my other family members but she was not treating my two cousins, Nomsa and Thato, well. Those are some of the things I saw when I visited them and that is also what Nomsa told me.”

**Jack:** “That is another issue which I saw was causing conflict in the house because uh – Joe – was saying things like – he will not support another man’s child. But he was previously supporting him. So now I did not know what influenced him to think that way, and say and do those things in the house? They got along in the house before he started bringing the issue of the step-child.”

**June:** “I just thought ‘EISH, Sly likes acquainting us with people that I don’t quite understand.’ In the meantime, Sly also did not like – the lady. That is the way it was but he loved his child. BUT he never told me that he does not like her, he just said “EISH but those people ...” That is what he said that “EISH, those people are somehow and I don’t understand them. They are somehow.”” (**Lacking sociality**)

## Anger

### *Construing anger*<sup>25</sup>

**April:** “Ah, I don’t know, you know. Maybe he did not want sis Sue ... What can I say? Maybe he did not want sis Sue to be forced to love his aunt’s children or something. You see? I don’t know. I don’t know where his anger came from.”

**Jack:** “Mama, this is my house! I will not allow my aunt’s children to stay with me here. I have to first discuss the matter with my wife. I have to say to her, ‘What are you thinking about this issue?’ I have to talk to her first even if my aunt’s children are orphans. I should not make decisions before negotiating with her. That is something that caused problems – and then I – had already suggested to take my nephew to my mother’s place. When my sister realised this, she said “No, his aunt’s children are staying with us but in the meantime – my child is rejected. These ones are loved and not mine.””

“That is the thing that my sister did not like. Like I have already explained that when the school wanted something, she will ask Joe and not my sister even when they are all sitting together. She will say, “My brother the school wants this and that.” She will not say, ‘My sister the school wants this and that.’ She will tell her brother. So my sister would say “Awhoa, I was with you the whole day, why did you not tell me?” Sometimes you would find

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<sup>25</sup> Anger is used in Cummins’ (2003) terms.

that she needs money to buy things – like women stuff, things to wear. Who should she tell? She should tell – a woman, isn't it? Yes, not a man.”

## **Hostility**

### *Violence as an act of hostility*

**April:** “The hatred which sis Sue had for Nomsa started when she told my brother, “You should not look after Nomsa, you should take care of your children.” My brother said, “I will not discriminate because Nomsa and her brother are my family.” Nomsa said that sis Sue ill-treated her in the house. She shouted at her even though she cleaned the house and washed the dishes. You know she did all the housework.”

**Jack:** “He was - complaining about – the child who was staying with them. He was hurting her with words ... Yes, the step-son! Uh, Joe – you know even the mistakes that my younger sister made ... For example, there is one which I heard after my sister died, that she chased him with ... I heard from the neighbours. She chased him around the house with a knife. She did not tell me those kinds of things. So I heard such things from the neighbours after this incident happened.”

**June:** “They ones came here and claimed to have seen – WOUNDS on the child. Yes, he was HURT. The dashboard hurt him. He hit the dashboard of the car. They came and said that “No, we saw that the child was not alright.” I told them that Sly said he was injured by the dashboard. That is the only time they came here. And then they said that they saw the child ... The buttocks ... I don't know how they said the buttocks looked. I said to them ... I said that ... ‘If you saw something wrong ... The child ... If you saw something wrong with the child, please don't ever give Sly the child.’ You see – because of the car's dashboard. Me ... I said ‘Please give Sly the child during weekends when I am at home, ONLY!’ I told them that when they came here. I asked them that ‘If you say that you saw something wrong don't ever, ever give Sly the child, since you are saying that Sly hit the child with the dashboard.’”

### *Extortion of respect*

**Jack:** “The girl is the one who left after she and my sister FOUGHT PHYSICALLY. This girl started having boyfriends. Girls in the house have the responsibility of doing tasks like washing the dishes. She did want to wash the dishes and before you know it her boyfriend is calling her outside. And then she is getting money from outside. Her boyfriend is giving her money. And then there were times that she did not sleep at home which my sister addressed with her, “And now why are you not sleeping at home?” “No you can't tell me anything. You are nothing to me! You are also not my mother.” Those things are very hurtful mama! THEY ARE VERY MUCH HURTFUL especially when YOU are trying to build and unite your family. When you are trying to make them one.”

**Jude:** “His father said “I left them because she defended him when I spoke to him. He ended up pointing a gun at me and that is what made me leave.” He said “I left my house because of this person.”

## **Anticipations of the Couple's Parenting**

### *Anticipating the parents/guardians to be responsible*

**April:** “I thought that they would raise their children well because my – brother had a good job. So I thought to myself that they would raise their children well and that their children would grow up to be independent and do things for themselves.”

**Dave:** “I believed that they were going to raise their children well because they did everything according to their plan. They did everything together. They were very close and things like that, you see. They sometimes took the child to the crèche together. They went shopping together. You see one will be pushing a trolley and the other one will be holding the child. Things like that, you see. So I wished for them to have a good life. I wanted them to continue living like that.”

*Construing the parents/guardians anticipating to be loving*

**Dave:** “He wanted to be a good father to his children and a good man to his family. He wanted to give them love. He wanted to give his wife and children the love that they deserved. He wanted his children to grow up in a good way.”

**June:** “He told himself that he was going to be a father to his child. He was going to care for his child, and he was going to be with his child.”

*Anticipating the filicidal father to be bad*

**Jude:** “Well, what kind of a father would you expect from a person who is not working, and you always see him going up and down on the street to buy Nyaope? You see him going to that place where they sell those things that they are smoking. There is nothing good that you can expect from that person.”

**Tumi:** “Do you think that a person who is into crime and is always involved in shootings and guns would raise a child? When you think about it, you? He is a criminal, isn’t he? So, a person who is involved in crime and living by the gun will never raise a child.”

**Validations of Anticipations of the Couple’s Parenting**

*Construing the parents to be loving*

**April:** “Ah! He had a very good relationship with his children. He treated his children very well. Ijoo! He got very sad if sis Sue hit the younger child. Ijoo! My brother did not want a child to be beaten. He did not want that. Even the older one, he did not want her to be beaten even if she did a mistake. He wanted his daughter to be properly disciplined by telling her what is wrong and right. He did not want anybody to raise a hand on his children. So he was very protective of his children. HE WAS also protective towards us, my aunt’s children and me.”

**Dave:** ““I did not visit them often. I went there maybe after a year or so, but I saw that they had love for their children whenever I visited. I saw that their children were happy.”

**Mary:** “Eish, they took good care of their children.”

**May:** “They were always together. Their children looked happy.”

**June:** “He was happy to be a father. He did not have a problem with being a father.”

### **Invalidations of the Couple’s Parenting**

#### *Construing them fighting over the children*

**April:** “Nomsa used to tell me things. Nomsa and I are very close. We have a very close cousin relationship. She told me that sis Sue does not want my brother to give her pocket money. My brother said to sis Sue that “I have to also take care of Nomsa.”” (**Lacking commonality and sociality**)

**Mary:** “The problem was that Sue did not want the girl in the house.”

**Jack:** “You find that when I also looked at this incident of their fighting I found that uh – maybe the child did not have milk, because their other child was still a baby, Joe has to take out money and give it to my sister because she was not working. She needed to buy food for the child. So now Joe was able to tell her, “But you are getting child grant. What are you doing with the grant money?” She said, “No, the grant money is not enough because this other one is attending crèche. Can you please give me money?” Joe then ... That is when Joe raised his hand and slapped her.”

#### *Construing feelings of resentment*

**April:** ““The hatred which sis Sue had for Nomsa started when she told my brother, “You should not look after Nomsa, you should take care of your children.” My brother said, “I will not discriminate because Nomsa and her brother are my family.” Nomsa said that sis Sue ill-treated her in the house. She shouted at her even though she cleaned the house and washed the dishes. You know she did all the housework.” (**Lacking commonality and sociality**)

**Jack:** “My sister told me that the girl, she does not tell her when she has problems, no, she tells her uncle. She would not tell my sister if the school wanted something or they are going on a school trip. So, she saw my sister as nothing! ... This girl I am sure thought ‘Ah! This person is giving me instructions and yet is nothing to me.”

## **CONSTRUING THE KILLING**

### **Construing the killing: Planned-unplanned poles**

**April:** “Ah! No! It is definitely something that he did not plan. He had a gun for a very long time. He owned a gun from the time our aunt was alive. He did not suddenly get a gun. He did not plan to commit this thing. He owned a gun from before he started dating sis Sue.”

**Jude:** “I think he planned it because he harmed him the first time and kept quiet about the incident. Isn’t it that when a child is injured, you will report the injuries when you return him? You will tell them ‘look at him here and there. He did this and that.’ But he just dropped him and went away. It means this thing was always in his plans or in his mind ... It was intentional because he kept quiet. When Mpho got there and told him “let’s take the child to the hospital.” He refused to go to the hospital. Isn’t it that he was going to be worried if he

did not intend to do it? He would have ran and said ‘let’s go to the hospital.’ ... It is something that he planned.”

**Jack:** “Joe did not plan this crime but the devil planned it.”

### **Construing the killing avoidable**

**April:** “They had serious problems which they should have discussed with my family, but they chose to keep their problems locked inside their house, and this happened. None of this would have happened if they spoke about their problems.”

**Dave:** “This kind of a situation happens to people who don’t talk about their problems, but if you talk – I am sure that things like this, killing your family and attempting to commit suicide, will not happen to a person who talks about their problems.”

**May:** “If they asked for help this would not have happened. I wish that they learnt to ask for help for their problems.”

### **Strategies in Construing**

#### **Constriction**

##### *Construing a father killing as constriction*

**April:** “I think he just told himself that he was ending the conflict by committing this incident.”

**Jude:** “I don’t know if he aimed to do this thing because people said that he had another girlfriend. She often visited him at his home. I think that he thought ‘my girlfriend will not like it when I maintain this child. It is better for me to get him out of the way.’ I don’t know.”

“He planned to achieve ... He said that they must not sentence him because he has another child. This means that he did not care about Tom, he cared about the new child. He saw that this one was going to get in his way, so it was better for him to remove him so that he is left with that one.”

“He maybe killed Tom because maybe he did not love Mpho and saw her as stupid and not beautiful. He maybe saw the new girlfriend as more beautiful and he could not tell Mpho ‘don’t come to me anymore’ and so maybe he looked for a way to get her out of his life, and this was it.”

### **Transitions in Construing**

#### **Anxiety**

##### *Struggling to construe*

**Dave:** “That is what I don’t know – because this incident happened at their house on a – Friday. I am not sure if it was a Friday or Thursday, somewhere there. So they just called us and said, “No, your brother committed this kind of a thing.” I was very sad because – he

never said what was happening in this marriage. Do you understand? So I don't know what he wanted to achieve because he never mentioned any problems in his marriage. He just committed this thing."

**May:** "This older one, he was too close to her. The younger one also ... I also often met him with the younger one too. His children ... He was close to his children. Even his wife, you would often find her ... Eish! They loved their children, you know. It is just that you will never know what happened."

"We don't have evidence that we can tell someone, like maybe they were always in conflict or what. We don't have that kind of information on how they were living together, like were they fighting or not, or what was going on? We don't have ... Or they had a disagreement. We don't have that kind of information. This thing surprised us"

**Mpho:** "It was fine. He loved him – and the child also loved him. ((Silence)) He took him and they went to watch TV or played soccer. They loved each other. That child loved him and he also loved him. ((Silence)) So eish, I don't know how this thing happened."

"I don't know what caused him to do something THIS BIG because I – did not have a problem with him. My family also did not have a problem with him. My family welcomed him when he came over. They did not chase him away, or say that he must not see the child, or shout at him. My family treated him well. Although my uncle disliked him, but he was okay towards him. So, I don't know what made him do this thing because I left him alone and stopped running after him after we broke up. There was nothing like I fought with him or what. I don't know. ((Silence)) We interacted and communicated decently, like normal people. We have never fought – and my family has never fought with him. So eish, I don't know what I can say led him to do this."

**Jack:** "He loved his wife with his whole entire heart. That is why I am telling you mama that I don't know what happened."

**Mary:** "Eish, my child I don't know. I don't know because I am staying here so I don't know what was happening there. I don't know. I am still shocked even now because I don't know what made him to do this thing. I am still asking myself different questions even now."

## Shame

### *Anticipating the filicidal father to feel shame*

**April:** "My culture does not support family killings. It encourages us to seek guidance from the elders in the family when we are having problems. So obviously the people of my culture will be disappointed in him and see him as having failed as a man. You know all the good that he did for his family will not be seen anymore. He is now a FAILURE, eish!"

**Mary:** "He did something that is wrong. He did something that is against my culture. My culture does not encourage men to kill their wives and children. So, I don't know maybe the Xhosa people would see him as a bad person."

**June:** "Eish! It is tough because they are seeing him as a killer. I don't think they will ever see him as a loving and caring father. He was a good father but this thing is making people see him as a killer, eish."

*Feeling shame*

**May:** “Have you seen how the other family treats you when a situation like this occurs? You guys don’t know anything. You don’t know what happened. You don’t know what happened because you were not there.”

**Mary:** “The two families had a good relationship, you know. To be honest, we had a good relationship. ((Deep breath)) You see my child did this bad thing and I cannot excuse his behaviour. So Sue’s family were – somehow towards me during the funeral but I did not fight with them because – my child did this terrible thing.”

**Guilt***Perceiving the father dislodged from his role*

**April:** “Ah! He is very regretful. Ag shame! He is feeling very guilty because now he is facing the consequences of his actions. He is maybe saying, ‘Ah, why did I commit this thing? Why? Why did I ...?’ He is regretful. He is not happy that he did this THING. Right now he is regretting committing this crime.” ... He told me when I visited him, “Eish, you know I don’t like committing this crime.””

**Jude:** “He is regretting but it is too late. He is maybe asking himself ‘why – did I do this thing? I would be doing this and that. I would have changed if they acquitted me.’”

**June:** “he will know next time that the life he was living – made him lose his child. Dagga. I – saw dagga in the car, dagga leaves. They say that they mix this dagga with Nyaope – and they smoke it. That is what he was smoking.”

**Mpho:** “I don’t feel good because – maybe that poor child would be alive if I did not give him the child.”

**Circumspection-Preemption-Control (C-P-C) Cycle***Construing a father killing impulsively*

**Jack:** “Satan will show you only the good things when he comes to you. He will say, ‘Look, your child will have a bad life, so it is better for you to kill him.’”

“It was those spirits mama which made him go to the crèche. An evil spirit can make you do things mama. He was not aware of what he was doing. He was not aware that he is not himself. Do you know that an evil spirit can take control of your mind? You will do anything that it wants.”

**Mary:** “No, my child I don’t think that he planned it. I think that it is something that just suddenly happened, just like that. He has never showed that he was thinking of committing something like this.”

**May:** “I think that it is something that just suddenly happened.”

“You – become ... It is like those things make you somehow when they continuously occupy your mind. You can even act like a mad person or something. This crime shows you that there was a period in which – he was mad for some time.”

### **Construing the Filicidal Killer**

#### **Anticipations of the killing**

##### *Not anticipating him to kill*

**Dave:** “They say when you know someone, then you really know that person. When you know someone, then you know that person. There are certain things that he does which will show you that ‘No this person is not right. No, now this person is ok,’ and then you can ask him ‘What is wrong?’”

**Mpho:** “I did not expect that he would intentionally or unintentionally harm him. I did not expect that. I did not think that he would hurt him because that child loved him.”

**Jude:** “I expected that he would do that to Mpho when they are fighting, but I did not have the thought that he would do it to a child. ((Silence)) I did think that someday they, Sly and Mpho, will get in a physical fight. But I did not think that – he will end up doing things like this on a child. Eish! I did not think that he will do such things to a child because it was a boy. Yes, if it was a girl because I know that they rape them and do this and that to them.”

#### **Validations of constructions of the killing**

##### *Construing him becoming ‘mad’*

**May:** “He was not talking about them. So you see when the situation is like that things end up exploding in some way or another. You – become ... It is like those things make you somehow when they continuously occupy your mind. You can even act like a mad person or something. This crime shows you that there was a period in which – he was mad for some time.”

#### **Invalidations of constructions of the killing**

##### *Feeling startled*

**June:** “The Judge also said “it is so surprising – because you were always with this child. How is it possible that ....?” And HE WAS NOT fighting with Mpho. I have never heard complaints that he and Mpho are fighting, and have a SERIOUS – issue.”

“He cared for him and even the Judge was surprised and said “How could you commit this thing because you cared for your child? The way we hear things you stayed with your child and you did not have – serious issues with Mpho.” You know THERE ARE SERIOUS ISSUES which can even make you commit suicide. But they wanted serious issues, issues that he and Mpho had. But they could not find any issues which could have led Sly to kill his child. They were saying “what was it?” And even Mpho said “Sly and I did not have problems.” You understand? They wanted to know what he and Mpho were fighting over which could have led to the child ... Sly ... That things became like this for him. But we could not understand it and find – serious issues”

**May:** “What surprised me was ... Is it possible that ... We grew up in a family that is religious. Uh, our family religiously attended church. ((Silence)) You could say that we slept and woke up in the church. We never ... It is like I never thought that something of this nature could happen to us. We never even paid attention to such things **WHEN THEY WERE DISCUSSED** on the radio. It was something that really **HIT** us.”

*Feeling shocked*

**Dave:** “I was very shocked. We were very shocked that ah, something like this really did happen. You see? We did not believe that really, really my brother would commit something like this. I did not believe that!”

**Mary:** “My mother then told me that Joe has killed them. I was very shocked when she told me the news because I did not know that Joe could commit something like this. I also did not know that he was having problems which could lead him to do something like this.”

**Jude:** “I was **SHOCKED** because I did not expect that he will do such things to a child. I expected that he would do that to Mpho when they are fighting, but I did not have the thought that he would do it to a child. ((Silence)) I did think that someday they, Sly and Mpho, will get in a physical fight. But I did not think that – he will end up doing things like this on a child. Eish! I did not think that he will do such things to a child because it was a boy. Yes, if it was a girl because I know that they rape them and do this and that to them. But because this one was a boy, I know that guys like sons. But now his case – **SURPRISED ME**. I could not understand how it happened. You **KILL** somebody who resembles you! You can see that ‘this person looks like me.’ I did not think that he would do such a thing. What I expected was that he would do it to this one, Mpho, because she was nagging him.”

**Appendix H: University of Hertfordshire Ethics Approval**

**UNIVERSITY OF HERTFORDSHIRE  
HEALTH AND HUMAN SCIENCES**

**M E M O R A N D U M**

**TO** Precious Sedumedi

**CC** David Winter

**FROM** Dr R Southern, Health and Human Sciences ECDA Chairman

**DATE** 1 August 2013

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Protocol number: LMS/PG/UH/00092

Title of study: I killed my child(ren): A qualitative study exploring the phenomenon of paternal filicide in the South African context.

Your application for ethical approval has been accepted and approved by the ECDA for your school.

This approval is valid:

From: 1 August 2013

To: 28 February 2014

**Please note:**

**Approval applies specifically to the research study/methodology and timings as detailed in your Form EC1. Should you amend any aspect of your research, or wish to apply for an extension to your study, you will need your supervisor's approval and must complete and submit form EC2. In cases where the amendments to the original study are deemed to be substantial, a new Form EC1 may need to be completed prior to the study being undertaken.**

**Appendix I: Department of Correctional Services Ethics Approval****correctional services**

Department:  
Correctional Services  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

Private Bag X136, PRETORIA, 0001 Poyntons Building, C/O Church and Schubart Street, PRETORIA

Tel (012) 307 2000, Fax (012) 328-5111

**Ms Sedumedi-Maluleke TP**  
**68 Wordworth Court**  
**Middlefield**  
**Hartfield**  
**Hertfordshire**

Dear Ms Sedumedi-Maluleke

**RE: FEEDBACK ON THE APPLICATION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN THE DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONAL SERVICES ON "I KILLED MY CHILD(REN): A QUALITATIVE STUDY EXPLORING THE PHENOMENON OF PATERNAL FILICIDE IN THE SOUTH AFRICAN CONTEXT"**

It is with pleasure to inform you that your request to conduct research in the Department of Correctional Services on the above topic has been approved.

Your attention is drawn to the following:

- The relevant Regional and Area Commissioners where the research will be conducted will be informed of your proposed research project.
- Your internal guide will be **Director: Correctional Programmes (Dr Platjies)** you are requested to contact her at telephone number **(012) 305 2881** before the commencement of your research.
- It is your responsibility to make arrangements for your interviewing times.
- Your identity document and this approval letter should be in your possession when visiting.
- You are required to use the terminology used in the White Paper on Corrections in South Africa (February 2005) e.g. offenders not prisoners and Correctional Centres not prisons.
- You are not allowed to use photographic or video equipment during your visits, however the audio recorder is allowed.
- You are required to submit your final report to the Department for approval by the Commissioner of Correctional Services before publication (including presentation at workshops, conferences, seminars, etc) of the report.
- Should you have any enquiries regarding this process, please contact the Directorate Research for assistance at telephone number 012-307-2770/ 012-305 8554.

Thank you for your application and interest to conduct research in the Department of Correctional Services.

Yours faithfully

**ND SIHLEZANA**  
**DC: POLICY CO-ORDINATION & RESEARCH**

DATE: 21/11/2013