The Unexpected Family Transition for Single Father Families: A Grounded Theory Approach

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The Unexpected Family Transition for Single Father Families: A Grounded Theory and Multiple Perspective Approach

CHAPTER ONE

When the mother leaves the household because of death, divorce, incarceration, or separation, the children in the household may lose a role model, a teacher, a security blanket, a nurturer, a scheduler, a cook, a shopper, a female presence in the household, a driver, an event planner, and the person who kisses their boo-boos away. How do you replace that? It is the single father’s seemingly impossible task to fill this void to some degree. It is the children’s task to adapt to this major life and role transition. They must adapt to life without a mother in this household. How do children respond to changes in parental role responsibilities? Do they consider their father “the man of the house” if he shops for girls clothing, cooks and cleans after suppers, learns to braid hair, and nurtures his scared or sickly children? How do their children respond to this new dad?

The questions above highlight some of the issues that can affect families when men take on roles traditionally held by women. Consumer scholars have identified life and role transitions as crucial to the triggering and shaping of consumer behaviors; however, most of these studies focus on normative transitions (Andreasen 1984; Du and Kamakura 2006; Lee, Moschis, and Mathur 2001; Mehta and Belk 1991; Myers 1985; Noble and Walker 1997; Schewe and Balazs 1992; Solomon 1983; Wilkes 1995). Less attention has been given to how nonnormative (unexpected) role transitions affect behaviors (see Adelman 1992; Gentry et al. 1995; McAlexander 1991; McAlexander, Schouten, and Roberts 1993 for exceptions). The questions above highlight a major focus in this dissertation, which is how this nonnormative family transition can involve the
children in the single-father household and how the children’s perspective of family possesses and consumption compares to the father’s perspective.

The single-parent household is the fastest growing household type in the United States. During the last three decades, the percentage of children living with a single parent has more than doubled to 27.6% (U.S. Census Bureau 2003). Among such household types, the number of single-father households has grown most rapidly [2½ times faster than single-mother households and ten times faster than the modal two parents with kids household (Ginsburg 2001)], as it has risen from representing only one percent of all children in 1970 to well over four percent in 2003 (U.S. Census Bureau). Today, about five percent of all children, whether Black, White, or Hispanic, live with only their fathers and the current estimates of the American Community Survey suggest that there are 2.5 million single men caring independently (i.e., wife not present in household) for their biological children.

Family consumer researchers have long held that the family is a relevant unit of analysis and not the individual (Alderson 1957; Davis 1976; Foxman, Tansuhaj, and Ekstrom 1989; Qualls 1987). The first step to overcoming the complex nature of family consumer research is to give up the individual and become concerned with the family as the unit of analysis (Commuri and Gentry 2000). As the fundamental unit of analysis, the family, remains the purchasing unit for most major acquisitions (Commuri and Gentry 2000). The family has also been found to have a major role in consumer socialization (Carlson and Grossbart 1988; John 1999; Ward 1974), intergenerational consumer influence (Moore-Shay and Lutz 1988; Moore, Wilkie, and Lutz 2002), and familial consumer influence (Beatty and Talpade 1994; Childers and Rao 1992). Thus,
understanding the family is essential to understanding a host of major consumer decisions, patterns, and behaviors. Moreover, being a family is a collective enterprise central to many consumption experiences and replete with challenges in contemporary society (Epp and Price 2008). Consumer research has been criticized for asking research questions on issues that do not provide a comprehensive coverage of modern family dynamics (Commuri and Gentry 2000).

Within consumer behavior, there has been very little research done on single-parent households in general (Ahuja and Walker 1994; Mangleburg, Grewal, and Bristol 1999) and even less on single-father households (Harrison and Gentry 2006b; Harrison and Gentry 2006a; Ziol-Guest, DeLeire, and Kalil 2006). Since the family is the basic purchase and consumption unit, Ahuja and Stinson (1993) suggested marketing needs to study changes in family structure continuously as they relate to changes in market behavior. At the time, their research focused on female-headed single parent families recognizing the importance of changing family structure as the single-mother household was the fastest growing American household type. Today, single-fathers are the fastest growing family-type and their arguments still hold. Further, Katz (1979) contends that the single father is a unique individual, who may share some commonalities with single-mothers, but who also has a series of unique and poorly understood needs. Further inquiry is needed to understand this family-type, especially from the family consumption perspective (Harrison and Gentry 2006a). A recent study of the single father’s perspective of identity disruption (Harrison and Gentry 2006a) formed the basis for this dissertation which will provide a better understanding of this family-type by combining findings from the father’s perspective with findings from a new study of the children’s
The increasing fragmentation of the American family in the U.S. provides greater opportunities to replace more traditional support during times of transition and to build new relationships with consumers (Goodwin and Gentry 1997). Life-changing events present marketing opportunities as consumer purchase new products and service to ease transitions and accommodate change (Mathur, Moschis, and Lee 2007). Gentry et al. (1995) suggested that family transitions caused by events such as divorce, death, and incarceration are associated with high levels of stress and pain for family members, and they represent discontinuities in the manner in which the household interacts with the marketplace. They suggested that short-run behavioral changes are nearly always present, and frequently long-term behavioral patterns change as well. They also suggested that consumer behavior can serve as a relatively safe and pleasant way for family during transition to “re-enter the world.” Rindfleisch and Burroughs (1997) suggested that further investigation is needed to explore the role of consumption attitudes and activities in helping individuals endure life and role transitions.

In a recent study of the transition to a single father household, Harrison et al. (work-in-progress) found that single-fathers have rich stories of empowerment to tell. Most faced huge challenges, but see themselves as being successful parents and quite content to be more involved parents. This is quite similar to the summary of single-father research written by Thompson (1986) over 20 years ago. As Thompson (1986, pp. 83-84) noted in his summary of the work done on single fathers, they can become directly involved parents.

These interview studies of single fathers characterized the first year of transition as being especially stressful, with fathers required to negotiate personal problems
(loneliness, depression) as well as the reorganization of the household…. While some managed to modify their working hours and responsibilities, others suffered financial difficulties from reducing their work hours or, in a few cases, quitting work altogether to become full-time caregivers. Following this initial period, however, these studies almost uniformly reported that fathers felt increasingly competent and successful in their new domestic responsibilities. Very few fathers employed housekeepers or babysitters; most assumed cooking, cleaning, and caregiving demands by themselves, and most reported enjoying, to some extent, these new obligations…. To be sure, some fathers voiced concern over their ability to provide for the child’s ‘emotional needs’ (e.g., nurturance), and the fathers of daughters were concerned with the child’s sexuality and the lack of an appropriate female role model at home, especially as girls reached puberty. On the whole, fathers reported substantial satisfaction with their adjustment to single fathering…. By and large, they had little preparation for assuming domestic and child-care responsibilities.

In effect, despite being faced with a gendered disadvantage and lack of experience, men somehow manage to make the transition to involved parenting when they embrace primary parenting responsibility. However, little is known about the mechanism of such a transition, or what Thompson (1986) referred to in the excerpt above as the “initial period.” Harrison et al.’s (2006a) research highlighted various consumption-related anchors single fathers used during this initial period of transition to involved parenting. More specifically, the father used the marketplace as a coping strategy to assert traditional ideas of masculinity, since their roles often cause an internal gender role conflict. Some fathers were found to rely heavily on the market to assist them with family consumption needs (e.g., relying on salespeople to assist in clothing shopping for young girls) (Harrison and Gentry 2006a).
One of the problems with previous work with single fathers noted by Thompson (1986) is that only the fathers’ stories have been obtained, and not the children’s. Harrison et al. (2006a) suggested that the general path leading to empowerment may reflect efforts on the father’s part to justify his efforts, with questionable perceptions existing in terms of his successes. To this point in time, there have been no studies in consumer research of the single-father household which have evaluated both father and child perspectives. Also, Rindfleisch and Burroughs (1997) highlighted the need for scholars to consider how children of divorced families adjust both economically and socially to their new lives. A better understanding of this growing segment of “new fathers” and their families can lead marketers to provide more accurate images and depictions of the fathers and their families, moving away from standard, or traditional, ideas about masculinity and fatherhood. The satisfaction that single fathers had in their parental abilities offer a strong case for the idea that men in America are receptive to the changes in family structures (Harrison and Gentry 2006b). An understanding of changing values is key to eliminating gendered barriers in families, moving towards a day when women will not have to pretend that they make less money to protect male egos (Commuri and Gentry 2005). Moreover, the roles of fathers are changing and this exploration to understand the extreme case of fatherhood and father involvement will provide insights into societal changes in more mainstream families and fatherhood in general. As mentioned, such changes in roles have a profound affect on the family consumption. The value of the extreme case is in highlighting more general processes. The single father transition is extremely stressful, which also allows for easier access to insights about family processes in general (Harrison and Gentry 2006b).
Across other disciplines the focus of research on single-father households, in general, has described the reasons for father custody (Greif 1985b), the nature of parenting styles (Risman 1986; 1987), economic characteristics (Brown 2000; Paulin and Lee 2002), work-life and family-life balance (Greif, DeMaris, and Hood 1993), societal acceptance (Goldscheider and Kaufman 2006), and exploring the family from the father’s perspective (Mendes 1976). In a study comparing children in single mother households and two-parent households, Amato (1987) obtained children’s perspectives on father support and other issues. He found that children in single-mother families reported less father support, less father control, less father punishment, more autonomy, more household responsibility, more conflict with siblings, and less family cohesion (Amato 1987). In other disciplines, the scant research pertaining to the children of single fathers has most often taken the father’s assessment of their children’s behavior (Greif 1985a). Scholars have been interested in children’s adjustment to divorce and the effects on academic achievement (Downey 1994), child delinquency (Demuth and Brown 2004), family structural demography (Bumpass and Sweet 1989; Eggebeen, Snyder, and Manning 1996), risks and stressors (Kelly and Emery 2003), noncustodial parental relationships (Furstenberg et al. 1983), and child well-being (Downey, Ainsworth-Darnell, and Dufur 1998). In marketing, researchers have examined the role that consumption and possessions play after life transitions such as job loss (Roberts 1991), relocation (Mehta and Belk 1991; Penaloza 1994), natural disaster (Baker, Hunt, and Rittenburg 2007), retirement (Hopkins, Roster, and Wood 2006), death of a loved one (Bonsu and Belk 2003; Gentry et al. 1995), and a risk to life (Pavia and Mason 2004). Specifically, it is important for marketers to obtain information on consumer lifestyle and
life status changes as they represent those receptive to changes in preferences and such adjustments may lead to changes in brand and store preferences (Andreasen 1984; Mathur et al. 2007).

This dissertation will also address two major gaps in family consumer research, both pertaining to how single-father households use consumption and are influenced by the marketplace during the initial phase of their family transition. First, I will give voice to the children in single-father families by developing a grounded theory of the transition process from the children’s perspective. Children are active forces in families, however, most often in consumer research if children are not the object of the research, for example in studies of children’s influence in decision making or parent’s responses to advertising to children, then children’s voices often are unheard as members of the collective family. Second, in the single-father household, on which research is scarce, the children are relatively invisible in the eyes of consumer researchers. In single parent families, children represent the only other members of the household and affect family processes, thus ignoring them does not offer a complete understanding of the family and/or consumption patterns and behaviors. While few studies do exist that attempt to provide a more complete picture of the single-parent family, the single father led household and more specifically the children within this family type remain unstudied. There is a need for an understanding of the children’s perspective to validate the father’s perspective. Single informant studies are ripe with the potential for biases; thus, the triangulation of family member accounts will add trustworthiness to the father’s story. To address these limitations in the literature and the need to validate the father’s perspective; the following research questions for the grounded theory of the family transition to single father
families from the child’s perspective were developed. From the broad, over-arching research questions, more specific sub-questions were also developed. It is important to mention that these research questions and sub-questions are merely a starting point. The nature of the inductive methodological approach used in this dissertation warrants a bottom-up relationship with participants. The emergent theory will be developed from the perspective of the participants and thus their experiences will be used to refine and develop additional questions pertaining to how they use consumption to negotiate the life transition:

RQ1: What is the process by which children negotiate changes in household dynamics and consumption patterns during the family transition to a single-father household?

SQ1: What core concepts influence household consumption and household production strategies during the family transition to a single-father household?

SQ2: What strategies are used to negotiate division of labor and household consumption changes?

SQ3: What are the consequences of these strategies?

Research questions about household and individual consumption will focus on clothing and grocery shopping, meal preparation, and household management (for more information, see the Interview Guide in Appendix II).

The following research question is included to understand better changes in the process of the consumer socialization of children during this family transition.

RQ2: Does the way that children learn about consumption change as a result of
family role changes?

SQ4: Do children learn different shopping strategies from their father?

SQ5: Do the children see their father as a role model consumer, or one to emulate as a shopper

RQ3: On what dimensions of the family adjustment process do the children’s and father’s perspectives diverge or converge?

SQ7: Has the father’s masculinity changed?

SQ8: Has their father tried to keep family life the same as it was before?

SQ9: How do you make sense of multiple perspectives of the family unit?

CHAPTER TWO

In this chapter, I will start with discussion of various perspectives of grounded theory research before highlighting theoretical perspectives that guided my previous analysis of the single father family. I will then describe how these theoretical perspectives will guide the analysis in this dissertation. Finally, I will discuss how both the children’s perspective and the family’s perspective will be analyzed to gain a better understanding of the household transition.

The place of the literature review has long been disputed by grounded theorists (Charmaz 2006). Classic grounded theorists argue for delaying the literature review until after the analysis, so that the grounded theory is not developed through the lens of earlier ideas (Glaser 1978; Glaser and Strauss 1967). However, Goulding (1998) suggested grounded theory research requires an understanding of related theory and empirical work in order to enhance theoretical sensitivity. For this dissertation, I will use the broad - theoretical life- and family-transition perspectives to guide the development of a more
focused theory of children’s transition into single father households. A review of the literature provided enough information to begin to explore this process, as there is little research that examines the reorganization of this family-type from the children’s perspective. Thus, I feel comfortable adhering to both the classical view, where I am not influenced by other research, and the more contemporary view that uses existing theory as a guide.

THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES

The theoretical perspectives that served as a guide to an initial understanding of the transition to single-father families include perspectives on life transitions and role theory. Life transitions refer to “changes in status that are discrete and bounded in duration although their consequences may be long-term” (George 1993, p. 358). The elements of role theory, introduced by Linton (1936), defines role as both a status and the behaviors of the status occupant. Role theory has evolved to further focus on role allocation, or “the process by which roles are assigned to individuals and the related dynamic of role entry and exit,” and socialization, or “the process by which social structures transmit to individuals the skills and attitudes compatible with the roles that they enact” (George 1993, p. 354). Further, role transitions refer to the “the process of moving in and out of roles in a social system” (Burr 1972, p. 407). The link between role theory and life transition is that role entry and exit are, by definition, transitions (Allen and Vliert 1984). While life- and role-transition help to guide our understanding of how life changes affect single fathers, it may not offer as much guidance in understanding the transition to a single-father household from the child’s perspective.
While most research focuses attention to transitions at the individual level, family scholars have recently attempted to gain understanding of transition from the family level (Cowan 1991). Further, White (2005) suggested that the group level of analysis is critical in understanding the family. The family transition model emphasizes “multiple developmental trajectories” (Parke 1988, p. 170). This perspective focuses on the fact that crucial events such as the child’s first day of school are nervously anticipated by both parents and children with implications for change in both parent and child views of themselves, their relationship in the family, and the family’s connection with community institutions (Parke 1988). Further, families are increasingly viewed as composed of sets of interconnected relationships (Cotte and Wood 2004; Epp and Price 2008) and that to understand how families react to change, it is necessary to understand the subunits of families, such as the parent-child, husband-wife, and child-child relationships (Parke 1988). Focusing on multiple dyads within the family presents the diverse perspectives of family members and offers a more complete understanding of the family unit (Curasi, Price, and Arnould 2004). When possible, researchers should attempt to include all family members in data collection (Epp and Price 2008). Surprisingly, little is known across disciplines about the developmental trajectory of family subunits across childhood (Parke 1988). Thus, questions were added to the interview guide to understand sibling relationships as they pertain to the transition.

CHILDREN’S PERSPECTIVE OF FAMILY LIFE

Family members are potentially rich sources of information about the rearing environments of children and the dynamics of the family system (Cook and Goldstein
However, few studies have attempted to explore children’s definitions and ideas about family. As first-hand reporters, children provide well-differentiated and highly personalized reports of themselves, family members, and their relationships (Reid, Ramey, and Burchinal 1990). Further, Morrow (1998) suggested that there is a need to listen to the children’s voice and that recent family research has challenged dominant ideas about the effect of families on children, showing that children’s perspectives may differ from the parent/adult perspective. This sentiment is echoed by John (1997), who calls for marketing researchers to step outside of the “adult box.” She suggests that too many researchers believe that there is little to be gained from looking at issues in literature concerned with children and their development.

Much of the family consumption and decision making research has focused only on the husband and the wife, and the role of children often has been ignored (Lackman and Lanasa 1993). Moreover, Flurry (2007) suggested that changes in the structure of the traditional American family, that is, trends such as older parents, delayed marriages, and single-parent families, have had a significant impact on the lives of children and have conspired to change child influence patterns documented in family decision-making literature. Ahuja (2001) suggested that given the increases in the number children living in single-parent situations, children are making marketplace decisions once left to a parent. Ahuja, Capella, and Taylor (1998) found that children in female-headed single-parent households were three times as likely to shop alone or with their mothers than children growing up in two-parent families. It has also been suggested that family structure changes will increase the likelihood that children will be socialized by agents external to the family (Flurry 2007). McAlexander, Schouten, and Roberts (1993) discuss
consumption and de-acquisition processes associated with divorce, but it focuses on the divorcing couple and omits the children. Flurry (2007) also suggested that further investigation is needed to understand the impact of structural changes on the lives of children in the family and that there is need for fathers to be incorporated into the data collection process (Flurry 2007).

Much previous work on family relationships has been criticized because researchers have interviewed just one person from each family-usually a woman-and just let that person’s account stand for the whole family group (Finch and Mason 1993, p. 13). Further, research is primarily focused on adults’ adjustment to changing family roles, especially those made by women (Corsaro 2005). Commuri and Gentry (2000) also suggested that too much research on families has dealt with only one household member’s perceptions and that future research needs to consider all family member interactions and the members’ explicit and implicit roles in consumption processes. Amato (1987, p. 329) noted that “many studies rely on parents for information on children’s experiences of family life; yet children themselves are the best people to comment on their own feelings and perceptions.” It was even been suggested that most family social research is wife-research (Commuri and Gentry 2000). Children’s lives have been solely explored through the views of their adult caregivers (Christensen and James 2000).

The changing landscape of the American family to include more single and blended families and increased divorce rates have had a profound affect on children (Corsaro 2005). Katz (1979) speculated how children would be affected by the transition to a single-father household:
To the children, the transition to a single father family may mean a rougher, harsher life without a mother. It may mean a father so busy with combining work and domestic duties that he is always tired and impatient and without time to relax with his children. For girls, it means the absence of a model in the family.

The loss of a parent, according to Glasser and Navarre (1965, p. 102), “produces a structural distortion in the communications between the child and the adult world and, since such communication is a factor in the development of the self-image, of social skills, and of an image of the total society, the totality of the child’s possible development is also distorted.” Thus, events that occur with families and the perception of these events are not always identical, for either children or adults. Further, perceptions about major dimensions of family functioning are relatively stable, except during periods of change (Reid et al. 1990).

Other disciplines have produced considerable research on parent-child relationships in divorced and remarried families (Amato 1993); however, there is little work on the role siblings may play in exacerbating or buffering the effects of marital transitions (see Hetherington et al. 1992 for an exception).

In sum, the reorganization of family that is produced as a result of family transition has yet to be examined adequately from the children’s perspective. More specifically, consumer researchers have not yet examined such transitions from this perspective nor have single-father households in general been examined from the perspective of the other members of that household. Consumer scholars suggest that it is not only important to lend an ear to unheard voices of consumers, but also to recognize that for particular households an understanding of family dynamics and consumption processes is predicated on the extent to which children’s roles are accurately understood.
FAMILY PERSPECTIVE OF FAMILY LIFE

As was mentioned previously, little attention has been paid in consumer research to the household consumption and production issues concerning many emerging household types: single parents, step-families, second families, and gay and lesbian households. One problem is their relative scarcity or at least difficulties in their identification. The emergence of the use of qualitative data collection procedures has generated insightful studies, but these are privy to criticisms as well. For example, in the case of single-parent studies, there is a question whether the parent’s story is biased. This dissertation will investigate the convergence of fathers’ and children’s perspectives of single-father household lived experiences. The major barrier to effectively understanding families is a mindset that attempts to understand it from a perspective that has been developed for understanding individual behavior (Commuri and Gentry 2000). Research suggests that a “family” is made up of unique bundles of identities including the family’s collective identity, smaller group’s (e.g. siblings and parent-child) relational identities, and individual family members’ identity (Epp and Price 2008). Epp and Price (2008) suggest that family consumer research has been dominated by a concern with how individuals influence and orchestrate family, influence other family members, and represent family as an aspect of extended selves. They suggest that this focus on individuals leads scholars away from the range of internal family relationships that affect collective decisions (Epp and Price 2008). Family identity is especially salient during transition, as identity is often challenged, redefined, and/or reorganized (Bolea 2000). Further, Moschis (2007) suggested that theory is needed to explain more fully changes in
consumption, and why consumers of various characteristics change their consumption patterns in response to stress, due to situational and structural factors, or to their need for new self-definitions.

This multiple member approach would offer a better understanding of family processes. For example, Gentry and Bates’ (1994) study offered interesting insights into how mothers maintain family belongingness after divorce. However, knowing the children’s perspective of this family process would aid our understanding of the complete picture of family belongingness. Gentry et al.’s (1995) study of the family transitions during grief could have benefited from a multiple member perspective as to the family transition. The life and family transition literature in marketing is dominated by the individual perspective. Thus a collective perspective, or multiple-family member accounts, could provide scholars with a fresh lens with which to study consumption pattern changes during transitions.

In sum, changing American family structures have received relatively little attention in consumer research. For example, gay families, step families and single father families have been virtually ignored despite the fact that they represent the fastest growing American family-types. The recognition and exploration of such changing family dynamics may offer extreme case derivatives of more mainstream families and can provide valuable insights into contemporary family consumption patterns and behaviors. Part of the reason for the lack of research focus may be that they are hard to identify or locate. As noted previously, another issue with the existing research for single-parent families, in particular, is that they may be biased as the family is most always represented by the adult family member. No longer is it acceptable to use one
family member’s perspective of household dynamics as representative of the family. In this dissertation, an understanding of multiple family member perspectives, whether they converge or diverge, will be obtained to gain a better understanding of the *family* unit transition.
CHAPTER THREE

METHOD

In this chapter, I will begin with a discussion about paradigmatic differences in how theory is defined, before discussing the major method that will be employed in this dissertation, grounded theory. I will then outline the major coding procedures employed in grounded theory: open, axial, and selective coding. Next, I will discuss the sampling frame used and discuss other data collection and analytical procedures including gaining access to respondents, researcher reflexivity, qualitative validity, and locating a site for the interviews. Finally, I will discuss the process of comparing the data sets of the fathers and the children.

WHAT IS THEORY?

Before embarking on the development of a grounded theory, it is important to first understand the meaning of theory in social scientific thinking. The dominant paradigm in marketing and social science at present is that of the post-positivist perspective. Post-positivists view theory as a statement of relationships between abstract concepts that cover a wide range of empirical observations (Charmaz 2006). The aim of theory in this perspective is for parsimony, generality, to seek causes, explanations, and predictions of relationships, and to treat concepts as variables. The interpretivist’s view of theory emphasizes understanding rather than explanation. The understanding gained from the theory rests on the researcher’s interpretation of the studied phenomenon (Charmaz 2006). This type of theory “assumes emergent, multiple realities, indeterminacy; facts and values as inextricably linked; truth as provisional; and social life as processual” (Charmaz 2006). Goulding (1998) suggested that all findings are theory laden based on
the proposition that researchers approach the research situation with a theoretical perspective developed from their academic background and personal interests.

In this dissertation, the interpretivist view of theory will be used with the hope of understanding the social world from the point of view of the child living in it. Elder (1991) suggested many family transition studies conclude without an account of why such changes make a difference in behavior. It is answering the “why” questions that lie at the strength of qualitative research which serves as the impetus for the choice of research methods. Also, qualitative research is employed when there is a need for a complex, detailed understanding of an issue. This detail can only be established by talking directly with people, allowing them to tell their stories unencumbered by what is expected or explained in the literature (Creswell 2007).

WHAT IS GROUNDED THEORY?

Grounded Theory is “a methodology that has been used to generate a theory where little is known, or to provide a fresh slant on existing knowledge” (Goulding 1998, p. 51). Further, grounded theory is a qualitative research design in which the researcher generates a general explanation, or theory, of a process shaped by the views of a large number of participants who have experienced that process (Strauss and Corbin 1998). As transitions are family processes, this methodology offers a guide to generate an explanation, or theory, of the process of transitioning to the single-father household. Stories told from the perspective of the children contain the thick, rich description of this transition necessary for developing a grounded theory. During the interview process, the interviewer was allowed to probe, delving deeper into the lived experience of
participants. The three elements of grounded theory include open, axial, and selective coding. During the open coding stage, data is coded for major categories. These categories are then evaluated and a core category is identified. Other categories are then created around this central phenomenon and an axial coding model is created (Creswell 2007). In selective coding, a story is assembled around the model that describes the interrelationships of the categories. Propositions may also be develop during the selective coding stage. This process will be more specifically detailed in a later section.

According to Strauss and Corbin (1998, p. 12), grounded theories are likely to “offer insight, enhance understanding and provide a meaningful guide to action.” Goulding (1998) suggested that grounded theory as a methodology was developed for, and is particularly suited to, the study of behavior. In marketing, grounded theories have been developed recently in the areas of retailing (Manning, Bearden, and Rose 1998), advertising and mass media (Hirschman and Thompson 1997), and consumer behavior (Commuri and Gentry 2005; Goulding 1999).

According to the grounded theory philosophy, “knowledge is seen as actively and socially constructed with meanings of existence only relevant in the experiential world” (Goulding 1998, p. 53). That is, the theoretical renderings offer an interpretive portrayal of the studied world, not an exact picture of it (Lincoln and Guba 1994). Therefore the focus becomes one of how people behave within an individual and social context. O’Callaghan (1996) suggest that researchers should have (1) a perspective to build analysis from, (2) an awareness of substantive issues guiding the research questions, (3) a school of thought to help sensitize the emergent concepts, and (4) a degree of personal experience, values, and priorities. This helps to distinguish what is known and what can
be discovered (Guba and Lincoln 1981).

SAMPLING

In planning this study with children, the age of the children was considered carefully (Roper 1989). A major institutional review board (IRB) review was conducted (see procedures section and Appendix II for more details). The age range of the respondents in this dissertation will be from 11-years-old to 19-years old. Recognizing the varying levels maturity and understanding of their place in the family, it is understood that some children will be more able to respond to certain questions than others. However, because some 11-year-olds may be more mentally aware, or developed, than other 14-years-olds, it is also understood that some interviews will provide richer description than others and I am prepared to stay in the field as long as it takes to reach theoretical saturation. I expect to conduct 15-20 interviews with children of single fathers and create an informant table that will list demographic and family structure descriptions. I will first attempt to solicit interview participants from the father’s that participated in the first study. Once that pool of potential participant is exhausted, I will recruit additional fathers being specific about my intentions to also interview their children. Though I have reached a comfortable level of theoretical saturation from the previous study of single fathers, I will also interview new fathers in order to obtain the dyadic perspective of the family. Also, I expect that fathers will be more likely to give permission for their child to participate if they have intimate knowledge of the questions, content, and purpose of the study. I will also be cognisant of the timing of the interviews. There will be a time lag difference between the timing of the interviews with the first
group of fathers and their children and the group of new fathers (if necessary) and their children. I would have interviewed the fathers 3-4 months before interviewing the children, in the first group, and the new group time difference most likely will be 1-2 weeks.

Purposeful sampling will be employed as participants will be selected because they can purposefully inform an understanding of the research problem and central phenomenon (Creswell 2007). Further, in grounded theory studies, participants are chosen who can contribute to the development of a theory. Participants will be required to be children of single fathers. Single fathers are defined in this dissertation as men who have full or close to full custody with there being no adult female presence in the household. Theoretical sampling will also be employed, that is, the process of sampling individuals will focus on those who can contribute to building the axial coding model of theory. Theoretical sampling follows a different logic than sampling techniques for traditional quantitative research design, as the former’s emphasis on sampling to develop emerging theoretical categories distinguishes it from quantitative forms of sampling (Creswell 2007; Dey 1999). The purpose of theoretical sampling is to obtain data to assist in explicating emergent categories. It pertains only to theoretical and conceptual development, not representing a population or increasing the statistical generalizability of results (Creswell 2007). Charmez (2006) suggests that qualitative researchers are often advised to make their samples represent distributions of larger populations. The error in this advice is that it assumes that qualitative research aims for generalizability (Charmaz 2006). Theoretical sampling is specific, strategic, and systematic in that it is used to refine already identified theoretical categories by seeking out statements, events, or cases
that illuminate categories. It not only helps fill out the properties of major categories, but aids understanding of how a basic process develops or changes, and can “elaborate the meaning of your categories, discover variation within them, and define gaps among categories” (Charmaz 2006, p. 108).

While some grounded theorists have recommended ranges for the number of participants to include in grounded theory research, such as more than 25 (Charmaz 2006), more than 12 (Goulding 1998), eight to 24 (Riley 1996), or 20-30 (Creswell 2007), the general rule when building grounded theory is to gather data until each category is saturated (Glaser 1978, pp. 124-126; Glaser and Strauss 1967, pp. 61-62; Strauss and Corbin 1998, pp. 212). This is achieved when “(a) no new or relevant data seem to emerge regarding the category, (b) the category is well developed in terms of its properties and demonstrating variation, and (c) the relationships among categories are well established and validated” (Strauss and Corbin 1998). Others suggest that theoretical saturation is “achieved through staying in the field until no new evidence emerges which can inform or underpin the development of a theoretical point” (Goulding 2002, p. 70). Many qualitative researchers confuse saturation with repetition; however, saturation suggests that there is nothing new happening (Charmaz 2006). Glaser (2001, p. 191) suggested:

Saturation is not seeing the same pattern over and over again. It is the conceptualization of comparisons of these incidents which yield different properties of the pattern, until no new properties of the pattern emerge. This yields the conceptual density that when integrated into hypotheses makes up the body of the generated ground theory.
REFLEXIVITY

Reflexivity is the process of reflecting critically on the self as researcher, the “human as instrument” (Guba and Lincoln 1981). It is “a conscious experiencing of the self as both inquirer and respondent, as teacher and learner, as the one coming to know the self within the processes of research itself” (Lincoln and Guba 1994, p. 183). Reflexivity forces us to come to terms not only with our choice of research problems and with those with whom we engage in the research process, but with our selves and with the multiple identities that represent the fluid self in the research setting (Lincoln and Guba 1994).

As a product of a single-parent household, my personal life experiences have guided the development of this dissertation topic, its research questions, and the analysis of the data. My personal perspective of life as a child of a single mother is in some ways similar and in some ways different from the stories that the fathers told about their children in my first study. This led me to wonder about the children’s perspective as I have wondered before what it would be like living with just your father and not your mother. Also, during the development of this dissertation, I became a father to a daughter and my interest in the topic of fatherhood increased. I began to feel like an ethnographer delving into somewhat of an unknown culture, when I spoke to men about fatherhood.

Reflexivity should also be considered as a critical part of the research process when researching children, as interviewers should reflect on their role and assumptions. Children are used to having much of their lives dominated by adults, as they tend to expect adults’ control over them and they are not used to being treated as equals or as experts by adults (Punch 2002). Further, children are not used to expressing their views
freely or being taken seriously by adults because of their position in an adult-dominated society. Reid et al. (1990) suggested children vary in their ease and enthusiasm in conversing with adults. Thus, the challenge for researchers is how to best enable children to express their views to an adult researcher and how to maximize their ability to express themselves and their willingness to communicate. As with all research, the clarity of language is vital (Punch 2002). As there is little guidance on qualitative interviewing of children (Greig and Taylor 1999), a licensed clinical social worker, who specializes in working with children, was consulted about building rapport with children. She suggested:

Start talking about things that they are interested in...or things that you have in common...school...you may focus on the fact that you are both students. You should let them know that what they have to say is important because a lot of times kids don’t feel heard.

She also suggested using different techniques when talking to more and less mature children. She suggested:

With younger kids my voice is a little higher and I’m smiling and a little sillier, with older kids my voice isn’t as high...I will use rapport building questions about music and friends. Basically, you want to get them talking and the best way to do that is to talk about things that they like to talk about.

Thus, when interviewing children for the dissertation, I will consciously vary my style of communication. I will also mention to the children that I grew up in a single-parent family, in an attempt to establish rapport. The interview guide has been pre-tested on two adult children of single fathers, one male, one female, ages 36 and 37 respectively. The pretest was used to evaluate the interview guide, providing me with an idea of when probes may be needed and what questions may be difficult to answer or
understand. After the pretest, three questions were added. These were definition questions I deemed important after talking to the participants. Both participants wanted to provide a definition of what parenting means to them. So, these questions were added to the interview guide. The interview will begin with a discussion of the individual’s family background before discussing the transition itself (see Appendix 1).

ACCESSING RESPONDENTS

A conversation that I had after presenting a paper on gender role transitions in single-father families at the 2007 European Association of Consumer Research Conference prompted me to write this section on accessing consumers. A professor in the audience came up to me after the session and said that I should talk more about gaining access to participants, as it is a critical, yet rarely discussed aspect of conducting consumer research. In the early stage of this project, I had the feeling that finding single fathers was not going to be an easy task, so after identifying single fathers as the context for which to explore gender role transitions in families, I then had to develop a plan for finding these men. My first source was the Internet, where I found my first respondent. I reviewed web pages generated from Yahoo and Google search engines using the following key words: single fathers, single dads, lone fathers, lone dads, full custody dads, and full-custody fathers. After hours of searching through over 800 pages that included mostly single men looking for dates, I came upon a profile of a man raising two daughters who had received a scholarship to attend a local community college. I looked his name up in the phone book and set up an interview. Unfortunately, this was the only participant that I found via web page searches. However, subsequent searches lead me to national support group websites for organizations such as Parents without Partners, and
singleparentsnetwork.com. Unfortunately, these sites did not have any local male members that qualified for the study. This led me to explore more offline resources and into the local community. Disappointing results at local family resource centers, social service agencies, community centers, and the YMCA, led me to the Nebraska Fatherhood Initiative where I met the program coordinator who happened to be a son of single father. He became a valuable resource and invited me to attend monthly meetings where area social service leaders discussed and created local fatherhood programs. Through this network, I found a few more single fathers. As winter break approached, I knew that I was heading home to Michigan for the holidays and so I made few phone calls to friends and family to help recruit respondents. A former colleague at the Kalamazoo Gazette had written a story about single fathers and referred me to a man in Kalamazoo, Michigan. I also conducted an interview with a friend of a friend of my family, in Ann Arbor, Michigan. Upon returning to Lincoln, I realized that I needed more resources. I developed a flyer and posted it at day care centers, churches, and various campus locations. Unfortunately, the posted flyers did not yield respondent participation. I then visited area churches and spoke with more than a dozen pastors about the project. The pastors who knew of single fathers in their congregation told me that they would ask those fathers if they would be willing to participate. Through this resource, I secured several informants. Overall, I was surprised by the lack of local and national online support groups for single fathers. Ultimately, the best resource came from a local high school phone directory. This directory listed information in columns including the student’s names, phone number, mother’s names, and father’s name. Thus, if the mother’s name was omitted, there was a chance that I had found a single-father
household. Cold calls to these families produced by far the most qualified participants than any other method. Ultimately, respondents were found in four cities in two Midwestern states. Gaining access to the fathers is relevant to this dissertation because it is through these relationships that I expect to obtain the child participants for this project. Also, if theoretical saturation is not reached after eliciting respondents from the participating fathers from the previous study, additional families will be solicited using access methods described above. I will then interview new fathers and their children to gain multiple family member perspectives.

PROCEDURES

The interviews will be conducted using the long interview techniques outlined by McCracken (1988). Again, the participants will be located through contacts made with single fathers from a previous study. I have obtained IRB approval to proceed with this next study. Both participants and their parents will be familiarized with the purpose of the study through the Informed Consent Form (see Appendix II), and the interview will proceed only when consent is obtained from both parties. The average length of the interviews will be between 75 and 90 minutes. The interview will begin with broad, open-ended questions (as outlined by Strauss and Corbin 1998) about what it is like being the child of a single father. Because the participants are young, my need to probe throughout the interview may be intensified. Pre-interview follow-up questions were generated to probe for more detailed information (Rubin and Rubin 2005). Interview questions will be asked to elicit stories of the lived experiences of these children with the goal of having long passages of text, with thick descriptions (Strauss and Corbin 1998).
The names of the participants will be changed to insure confidentiality. The interviews will be audiotaped and transcribed verbatim. The interview recordings will be stored in a locked cabinet at the researcher’s office and will only be accessed and used by the researcher for academic purposes. The recordings will be stored for four years after the completion of the study and will be deleted afterwards.

Bartholomew and O’Donohoe (2003, p. 434) urge researchers to “look through the eyes of a child rather than the lens of adult researcher.” This involves adapting methods of communication to incorporate language that conforms to children’s conversational norms. Further, as Greig and Taylor (1999) suggested, children are special interviewees requiring the researcher to take both their competency and motivations into account. Thus, establishing rapport becomes much more of an issue and familiar settings such as home and school should be used to increase comfort levels (Greig and Taylor 1999). The interviews will take place at the informant’s residence or in a conference room at the nearest public library. These familiar locations should aid in increasing respondent comfort levels. If the respondent should want to meet at a different location, arrangements will be made to do so.

Also, special consideration will be made when interviewing certain participants, as certain topics (e.g. the death of a parent) may warrant special attention. Because participants sometimes share painful stories during an interview that they may have never imagined telling or that may not pertain to the study, Charmaz (2006, p. 30) highlights several principles that serve as a guide for such instances:

First, I assume that participants’ comfort level has higher priority than obtaining juicy data. Second, I pay close attention as to when to probe. Often, I just listen, particularly when the participant appears to be re-experiencing feelings in the
described incident. Third, I try to understand the experience from the participant’s view and to validate its significance to this person. Fourth, I slant ending questions toward positive responses to bring the participant back to a normal conversational level before ending. No interview should end abruptly after an interviewer has asked the most searching questions or when the participant is distressed. The rhythm and pace of the interview should bring the participant back to normal conversational level before ending.

Further, after several meetings with a licensed child mental health practitioner, it was determined that the interviews should focus on the lives of the children and adjustment to life with only the father, to the point of avoiding conversations about the mother in instances of death. Additional sensitivity training and techniques were discussed to handle negative reactions during the interview including reassuring participants that they do not have to answer any questions with which they are uncomfortable and looking for signs of discomfort such as cracking voices, changing subjects, teary eyes, and sudden silences.

Your purpose is to gather information, not to bring up uncomfortable issues…you need to remember to be sensitive to the children making sure to tailor your questions so that they are not upsetting. They should be phrased differently for children who live with their father because of death and incarceration…most importantly you need to be prepared to stop the interview if the child is having a difficult time (Licensed Clinical Social Worker).

In collaboration with the institutional review board, a list of the area mental health counselors was compiled in case of emergency. The fathers of the children will be consulted specifically to access whether their children can handle the interviews. The children will be recruited from families wherein the fathers will also be interviewed. The reason for interviewing more fathers is twofold. First, to gain an understanding of the
entire family, multiple-member interviews are needed, since I will want to compare perspectives. Second, I feel that if the father has been interviewed and is thus aware of the types of questions being addressed, he will be better equipped to access their children’s comfort with the topic of conversation. In an article discussing research ethics when conducting research with children, Ahuja et al. (2001, p. 90) noted that the American Marketing Association does not provide specific guidelines for research with children and suggested that the enhanced version of the limited paternalism standard (ELPS) functions as “good basis for a code of ethics when gathering information from children.” Per this code of ethics, not only will I be providing the parents with all of the interview material and information about the project to make sure that they can gauge their child’s comfort level effectively, but my responsibilities as a researcher also obligate me to protect children from harming themselves or others, even after parental consent is obtained.

ANALYSIS OF DATA/CODING

Qualitative coding is the process of defining what the data are about, by naming segments of data and adding a label that categorizes, summarizes, and accounts for each piece of data (Charmaz 2006). The first step in analyzing the transcripts involves rereading them in order to familiarize oneself with the text. The transcripts are examined for common categories across participants in order to categorize the factors and conditions relevant in understanding the lives of the participants (Auerbach and Silverstein 2003; Rubin and Rubin 2005). Further, the process of developing a grounded theory begins with an open coding process of coding data for its major categories of
information (Creswell 2007). Coding is the link between collecting data and developing an emergent theory to explain the data (Charmaz 2006). A category represents a unit of information composed of instances, happenings, or events (Strauss and Corbin 1998). Strauss and Corbin (1998) suggested that open coding techniques involve examining the transcripts looking for interesting points of description and patterns significant to describing the lives of the participants. Categories are then clustered into groups that seem to indicate a relationship which says something about the behavior (Goulding 2002). The clusters start a process of abstraction, moving from mere description to linking the categories together with the aim of exploring exploratory concepts (Goulding 2002).

Further, open coding categories help the researcher separate data into categories and to see processes. To do so, the researcher must first identify and focus on one open coding category, called the central phenomenon. Strauss and Corbin (1998, p. 147) developed criteria for choosing a central phenomenon:

1. It must be central; that is, all other major categories can be related to it.
2. It must appear frequently in the data. This means that within all or almost all cases, there are indicators pointing to that concept.
3. The explanation that evolves by relating the categories is logical and consistent. There is no forcing of data.
4. The name or phrase used to describe the central category should be sufficiently abstract that it can be used to do research in other substantive areas, leading to the development of a more general theory.
5. As the concept is refined analytically through integration with other concepts, the theory grows in depth and explanatory power.
6. The concept is able to explain variation as well as the main point made by the data; that is, when conditions vary, the explanation still holds, although
the way in which a phenomenon is expressed might look somewhat different. One also should be able to explain contradictory or alternative cases in terms of that central idea.

I will produce a table that includes the open coding categories and describe the development of the central phenomenon. The establishment of the central phenomenon is the beginning of the axial coding process whereby the researcher then goes back to the data and creates categories around the central phenomenon (Creswell 2007). Further, the axial coding process involves “relating categories to subcategories along the lines of their properties and dimensions” (Strauss and Corbin 1998, p. 124). Thus, the number of categories will be reduced by relating them to each other and then relating the categories as a whole. In sum, several open coding categories are identified from the data during the open coding stage of data analysis. The identified coded categories will then be synthesized as a theory develops producing the axial coding model. An axial coding model describes how categories relate to and surround the central phenomenon. These categories consist of causal conditions, strategies, contextual and intervening conditions, and consequences. These categories represent what factors cause the central phenomenon, the actions taken in response to the central phenomenon, the broad and specific situational factors that influence the strategies, and the outcomes from using the strategies, respectively. The final step is selective coding, in which the researcher develops propositions (or hypotheses) that interrelate the categories in the model.

Creswell’s (2007) image of the grounded theory data collection process is that of a zigzag process: out of the office and into the field to gather data, then back to the office to analyze the information, then back to the field to collect more data, then back to the office to analyze, and so forth. Selective coding is the final step in analysis and includes
the integration of concepts around the central phenomenal and the filling in of categories in need of further refinement of development (Strauss and Corbin 1998). As theory building is the goal of the research, findings will be presented as a set of interrelated concepts, not a list of themes. These grounded theory techniques mentioned above are used to construct a theory that is “systematically gathered and analyzed throughout the research process” (Strauss and Corbin 1998, p. 12). This construction process involves the reduction of data from many cases into concepts and sets of the relational statements that can be used to explain, in a general sense, what is going on (Strauss and Corbin 1998). Specifically, I will produce an axial coding model and develop a substantive theory of the transition process from the children’s perspective. I will then compare this model and theory with the model that was created from the father’s study to develop a “family” model incorporating both perspectives. This process will be further explained in the following section.

MULTIPLE PERSPECTIVE ANALYSIS

The following definition of family suggests that there are multiple perspectives within its ranks:

A family is a group of people living in a social kinship system extending over several generations through birth, adoption, marriage or partnering. Members of this group are at times interconnected and interdependent emotionally, physically, intellectually, spiritually and financially, sharing certain values, beliefs and behaviors (Perlesz and Lindsay 2003, p. 32).

Among others, Palan (1998) suggested the need to analyze familial relationships using several family members’ perceptions. Others suggest that access to multiple
accounts within the family opens up the field of investigation for the research, and may
ultimately allow for a richer and more complete story (Song 1998). However, qualitative
studies in other disciplines that attempt to gather multiple perspectives on family life
offer little discussion of the methodology or analysis related to the analytic process and
choices involved in dealing with related family members (Ribbens-McCarthy, Holland,
and Gillies 2003). Interpretation from this constructivist view point is about making sense
of different accounts and how these are produced (Mason 1994; Silverman 2001). Thus,
multiple perspectives in qualitative research, presents analytical challenges. In the
following section, I will discuss the following research sub-question:

Ribbens-McCarthy et al. (2003) discussed several analytic categories for use in
analyzing interview texts from multiple members of a family. The first two analytic
categories involve rounding out and confirming the picture and contradicting and
pointing out gaps. Jessop (1981) suggests that researchers may intuitively become more
confident in the reality behind reports corroborated by another family member.
Examining dyadic agreement within the family is a way of checking the extent and
ramifications of the problems of individuals’ differential perceptions and reporting
(Jessop 1981). The third analytic is described as same stories-different versions (Ribbens-
McCarthy et al. 2003). In regards to this third analytic, parent and child accounts have
usually been analyzed and reported on as distinct and strangely unrelated (Smart and
Neale 1999). Further, others suggest that divergent data are likely to be more common in
family research than convergent data (Perlesz and Lindsay 2003). Family members may
each “live in rather different worlds” (Olson and McCubbin 1983, p. 220), and hold
somewhat different perceptions of their family (Sweeting 2001). As Song (1998)
suggested, multiple family member perspectives helped to reveal the complexities, contradictions, and tensions in member accounts of family life. Early studies of parent and child reports of family life found low- to -moderate associations between the reports of family life by parents and by their children and some tendency for parents to give more socially desirable responses than their children (Jessop 1981). Parental reports of family interaction have been criticized because they may not be aware of certain aspects of their own behavior (Cook and Goldstein 1993). Perlesz and Lindsay (2003) offered guidance in analyzing divergent data, suggesting that divergent data can be complementary or dissonant. They suggest that divergent data can lead to the generation of new theories and further exploration. Complementary data do not validate or disconfirm a particular reality, rather they combine to produce a composite research construction (Perlesz and Lindsay 2003, p. 34). Multiple perspectives may produce a coherent and more grounded picture of reality. Thus, in this dissertation, I will be mindful to not simply look for convergence of the parent/child perspective by rounding-out the picture, but to also allow for the children’s voice to be heard as they tell their own stories about the transition.

Doing this involves the development of a grounded theory of the process of adjusting to the single father household from the child’s perspective. I will also analyze the results of the children’s study, comparing it with data from my previous study of single fathers, to round-out the family portrait of the transition. Ultimately, the theory of the family perspective is contingent upon the degree of divergence in the two perspectives. However, it is unlikely that the two perspectives will completely converge because was mentioned previously different family member may live in different realities.
VALIDITY

The open and axial coding data analysis will be tested in a collaborative data conference with several additional researchers trained in the interpretive paradigm. The participants for the data conference will be recruited from the marketing, communications studies, and educational psychology departments. The data conference will be conducted wherein scholars work together to check and refine the initial analysis and categories. This conference is used to test the accuracy of the analysis (Miles and Huberman 1994).

The results of both the children and family perspectives will also be taken to select participants to judge the accuracy of the accounts; to ascertain whether, ‘I got it right’ in the eyes of the participants. I will recruit 3-5 children and 3-5 fathers to assist in this process. According to Riley (1996, pp. 36-7):

When establishing the credibility of analysis, the tradition of investigator-as-expert is reversed. This process is called “member checking” and is an invited assessment of the investigator’s meaning. Informants can be invited to access whether the early analyses are an accurate reflection of their conversations.

Further, member comments serve as a check on the viability of the interpretation (Miles and Huberman 1994; Wallendorf and Belk 1989). Member checking is considered by Lincoln and Guba (1985, p. 314) to be “the most critical technique for establishing credibility.” Informal member checks will also be conducted throughout the fieldwork to enhance interpretive validity (Wallendorf and Belk 1989).

Finally, the researcher needs to be clear about claims of generalization. While some grounded theories take research into a variety of settings or context, it is not a necessary condition of all grounded theories. Accordingly:

Transferability is not considered the responsibility of the investigator because the
knowledge elicited is most influenced by each individual’s life context and situation. Indeed the varied social constructions of knowledge are what the investigator is searching for. In its stead the investigator is to accurately describe the contexts and techniques of the study so that subsequent follow-up studies can match them as closely as possible (Riley 1996, p. 37).
CHAPTER FOUR

FINDINGS

Due to the adjustable nature of grounded theory, the findings may be far different from the original questions and ideas upon which it was conceived (Riley 1996).
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APPENDICES INDEX

Appendix I: Interview Guide

Appendix II: Informed Consent Forms

Appendix III: Dissertation Timeline
APPENDIX ONE
CHILDREN’S INTERVIEW GUIDE

We are talking to kids of single-fathers to gain a better understanding of how SFFs (single-father-headed families) live, work and play.

Background
Tell me a little about yourself: name, age
Can you give me a little background about your family?
What is it like living with your father?
What are some of the challenges of living with just your dad and not mom and dad?

Life style changes
How have your daily routines changed since you started living with just your father?
Is your bedtime the same?
Who cleans, cooks, washes, does laundry?
What are your chores around the house?
What were they before? Do you have more chores?
How much time do you spend alone?
Is the house cleaner or dirtier, now compared to before?

Questions about shopping and preparing dinner
Tell me about food shopping in your family.
Who does the grocery shopping?
How often do you go to the store?
Do you have a list?
Tell me about shopping before?
What happens when you get home with the groceries?
Describe the last food shopping experience, I know with me I usually start at the far end of the store and work my way forward. How do you do it?
What are some things that you always get?
How do you decide what to buy?
How has the shopping experience changed since you it is just been you and your father?
How was dinner prepared before?
And after?
At what time do you usually eat dinner?
Is that the same on most nights?
How often do you use the microwave?
Talk a bit more about the dinner process.
Do you eat together frequently?
What types of food is made? What do you make for yourself? What does your dad make for himself?
How is the food the same or different?
How often do you eat out? Bring food in? Get delivery?
Tell me about how dinner is prepared.
Do you like your dad’s cooking?
Are the meals healthy?
Are the meals planned ahead of time?
Do you cook? If so,….what do you cook? who taught you to cook?
How often do you microwave your own meals?

Tell me about back to school shopping.
Where did you go?
What did you get?
How was the shopping experience similar or different from when your mom was there?
Tell me about Christmas shopping
Where do you go?
What do you get?
How was the shopping experience similar or different from when you were not living just with your father?

**Relationship with father**
Describe your relationship with your father.
Are you closer than you used to be?
Have you noticed any changes in your dad? Do you see him more or less?
Is he more or less fun?
What are your favorite activities with your father?
How much influence do you have on various decisions about relationships, toys, movies, vacations?
Is that different now that you are SF family? What was it like before?
What do you think about fathers on television and films?
Do you see families like yours on television?
How are father portrayed on television?

**Relationship with family**
What are grandparents role in the family, on both sides of the family?
How often do you visit your grandparent?
And your other set of grandparents?
How often do you visit your aunts and uncles?

**Relationship with mother**
Describe your relationship with your mother.
Are you closer than you used to be?
How often do you visit her?
Does she have the same rules as your dad?
How much influence do you have with her on various decisions about relationships, toys, movies, vacations?
How does that compare with influence with dad?
Do you miss the presence of a woman in the house?
What difference would that make?

**Relationship with siblings**
How many siblings do you have?
How old are they?
(If you have older ones), what have you learned from them?
(If you have younger ones), what do you teach them?

What is a “father” supposed to do?
What is a “mother” supposed to do?
What is a “parent” supposed to do?
APPENDIX TWO
INFORMED CONSENT FORMS

PARENTAL INFORMED CONSENT FORM
IRB # ___________________

A Study of Consumption in Single-Father Households: A Children’s Perspective

You are invited to permit your child to participate in this research study. The following information is provided in order to help you to make an informed decision whether or not to allow your child to participate. If you have any questions please do not hesitate to ask.

Your child is eligible to participate in this study because your child is a member of a single father household and is under the age of 19. Your child will also be asked if he/she is willing to participate. The interview will be carried out on the premises of UNL campus or alternatively in a location of your choice. During the interview, your child will be asked to respond to a number of general questions related to his/her experiences of adjusting to a single-parent household. Also, I would like to obtain your permission to audiotape the interview so that I can get an accurate transcription of the interview.

This is a research project that will investigate consumption by single-father households. The purpose of this project is to develop an understanding of this under-studied segment of society.

This study will take approximately 45-90 minutes of your child’s time. This study will be conducted at home or at a negotiated location.
Your child will be reminded that any question that may be uncomfortable or sensitive does not have to be answered. Also, the interviewer will steer questions away from sensitive issues.

Any information obtained during this study which could identify your child will be kept strictly confidential. The audiotapes will be kept in a locked file in the investigator’s office for four years and then will be erased. The information obtained in this study may be published in scientific journals or presented at scientific meetings, but your child’s identity will be kept strictly confidential.

Your child’s rights as a research subject have been explained to you. If you have any additional questions about the study, please contact me at 472-3279. If you have any questions about your child’s rights as a research participant that have not been answered by the investigator or to report any concerns about the study, you may contact the University of Nebraska-Lincoln Institutional Review Board (UNL IRB), telephone (402) 472-6965.

You are free to decide not to enroll your child in this study or to withdraw your child at any time without adversely affecting their or your relationship with the investigator or the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. Your decision will not result in any loss of benefits to which your child is otherwise entitled.
DOCUMENTATION OF INFORMED CONSENT

YOU ARE VOLUNTARILY MAKING A DECISION WHETHER OR NOT TO ALLOW YOUR CHILD TO PARTICIPATE IN THE RESEARCH STUDY. YOUR SIGNATURE CERTIFIES THAT YOU HAVE DECIDED TO ALLOW YOUR CHILD TO PARTICIPATE HAVING READ AND UNDERSTOOD THE INFORMATION PRESENTED. YOU WILL BE GIVEN A COPY OF THIS CONSENT FORM TO KEEP.

__________________________________________________________________________
Child’s Name

__________________________________________________________________________
Signature of Parent       Date

IN MY JUDGEMENT THE PARENT/LEGAL GUARDIAN IS VOLUNTARILY AND KNOWINGLY GIVING INFORMED CONSENT AND POSSESSES THE LEGAL CAPACITY TO GIVE INFORMED CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS RESEARCH STUDY.

__________________________________________________________________________
Signature of Investigator       Date

IDENTIFICATION OF INVESTIGATORS
PRIMARY INVESTIGATOR

Robert Harrison, PhD Student, Co-Principal Investigator       Office: 472-3279
James. W. Gentry, Professor, Co-Principal Investigator       Office: 472-3278
YOUTH ASSENT FORM
IRB # ________________

A STUDY OF CONSUMPTION IN SINGLE FATHER HOUSEHOLDS: A YOUTH’S PERPECTIVE

We are inviting you to participate in this study because you a child of a single father and we are interested in how understanding how your family lives, works and plays. This research will take you about 45-90 minutes to do. Being in the study will not have direct benefits to you, except for maybe the benefit of having someone listen to your life story. Your responses will be strictly confidential. Fake names will be used to ensure that your identity and your responses would be totally confidential.

We will also ask your parents for their permission for you to do this study. Please talk this over with them before you decide whether or not to participate.

If you have any questions at any time, please ask one of the researchers.

If you check "yes," it means that you have decided to participate and have read everything that is on this form. You and your parents will be given a copy of this form to keep.
________ Yes, I would like to participate in the study.
________ No, I do not want to participate in the study.

______________________________________________
Signature of Subject                           Date

______________________________________________
Signature of Investigator                      Date

INVESTIGATORS
Robert Harrison, Ph.D, Student - Office: 472-3279
Dr. James W. Gentry - Office: 472-3278
APPENDIX THREE

VISUAL DIAGRAM OF PROJECT

VISUAL DIAGRAM OF MULTIPLE FAMILY MEMBER PERSPECTIVE STUDY

The Father’s Perspective
Harrison et al. (2007)

SINGLE-FATHER FAMILY

The Children’s Perspective

The Family Perspective

The Children’s Perspective

72
<table>
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<tr>
<th>DATE</th>
<th>EVENT</th>
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<tr>
<td>Completed March 15</td>
<td>Dissertation Proposal Defended</td>
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<tr>
<td>March 15 – June 25</td>
<td>Data Collection – Children interviews and Analysis*</td>
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<tr>
<td>Completed September 25</td>
<td>Children of Single Fathers Grounded Theory**</td>
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<td>Completed October 1</td>
<td>Family Convergence Analysis</td>
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<td>Family Divergence Analysis</td>
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<td>Completed February 1</td>
<td>Dissertation Write-up</td>
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<td>Budget</td>
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* Conditional timeframe, dependant on theoretical saturation timeline. (Approx. 25 interviews)

** Conditional timeframe, dependent on selective sampling outcomes.