



From jumpy interview questions to
the use of biographical narrative
interpretive method (BNIM)

How is identity capital constructed in
fathers' biographical narratives?

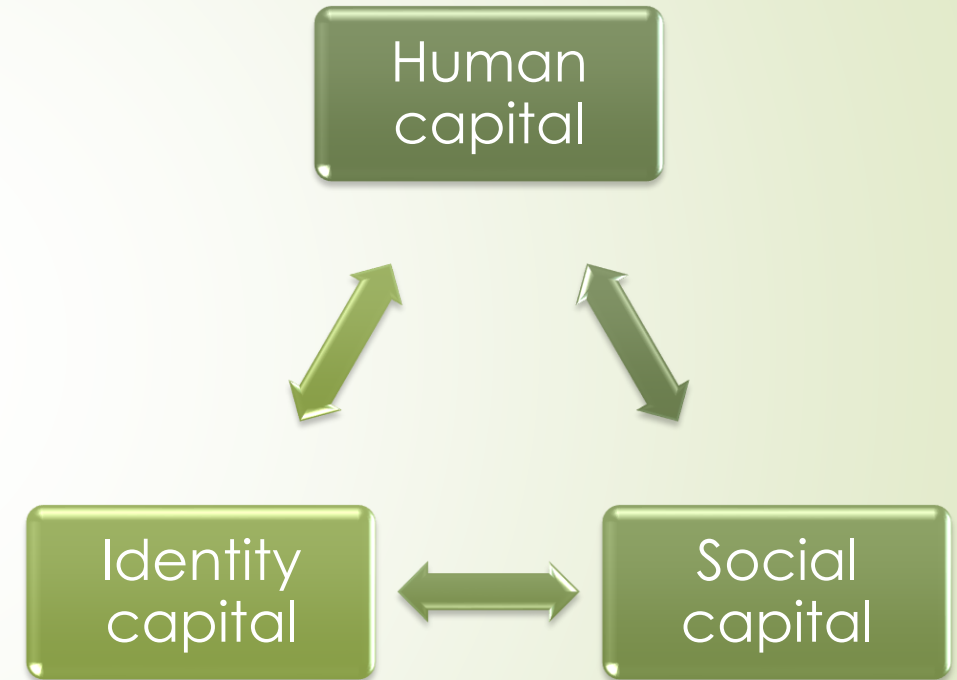


Research Study

- 6 fathers living in Flying Start areas
- Supported by Integrated Family Support Services (IFSS)
- Group or one to one support
- Literature tends to focus on risk, child health, educational attainment or employment
- View of such fathers either based on objective views, deficit models and words such as 'aspiration' or 'engagement'
- Lack of focus on the life stories of fathers as people in their own right

Identity capital literature:

- Psychological constructs: 'intangible' identity resources; self-esteem, internal locus of control, and sense of purpose in life (Côté, 1997; 2002; 2005; Côté and Schwartz, 2002; Côté and Levinge, 2016).
- "How individuals can negotiate life passages in increasingly individualistic, complex world" (Côté 1996, p. 435).
- "Set of psychosocial skills" (Côté & Levine, 2002, p. 157) or "a set of strengths" (Côté & Levine, 2002, p. 164).

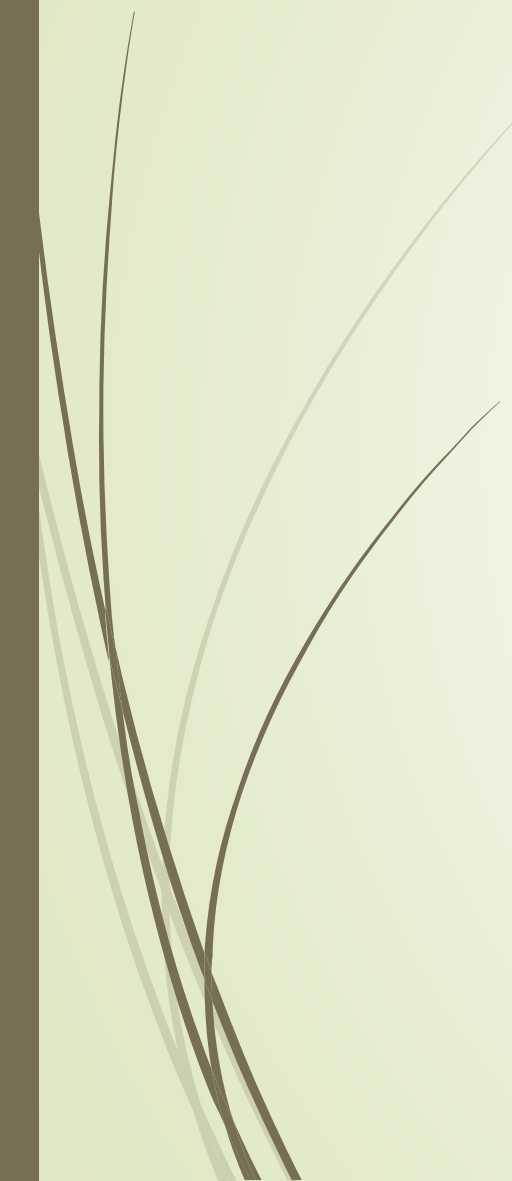


(Schuller and Watson, 2009)



Positioning – a social constructionist approach

- Influenced by Gergen – *Relational Beings* (2009)
- The purpose of this research is not to ‘find’ an absolute truth
- However, it was difficult to shift away from default thinking

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- 
- Qualitative interviewing and its techniques are sometimes taken for granted (Brinkmann, 2013)
 - There is a misconception that asking a 'correct' question, will stimulate a 'correct' answer (Gubrium & Holstein, 1995)
 - There are succinct epistemological differences in the way in which interviews are designed and data is collected, depending on the way in which knowledge is perceived



The pilot study

- 9 months in total
- Development of methodology and conceptual framework
- Moved from F/M parents to solely male
- Initially focus group interview - 9 mothers*
- One to one interviews semi structured interview questions related to my understanding of identity capital from literature
- BNIM

6 parents from IFSS full one to one interviews

5x10 min friend interviews to hone in on the technique

5 days BNIM training with Tom Wengraf



Initial one to one interviews – the start of the change

- List of questions based on initial “tell me about yourself” and literature review of current definitions of identity capital
- Listening ears for any phrase that would peak my interest and fit into the predefined definition
- Follow up questions on these

Jumpy questions provide jumpy answers

Interview 1: “Violet” - STRENGTH

lines: 175-186

V: yeah, I miss my dad and all that but I think it done me the world of good. Yeah, brought me strength.

J: Strength keeps ...

V: Yeah, I want strength tattooed on my arm

J: So, what does this strength mean to you then?

V: I'm so passionate about strength!!

J: Tell me more...

V:(laughing) I dunno, I'm just so passionate about this and I'm still here and I know... everyone said you're stronger than you think and all this. and I thought. I am strong...but it takes me a lot to realise that I'm strong.

J: How do you know you are strong?

V: Cos I haven't jumped in front of a train!

Lessons:

- Using the interview solely for coding, strips meaning from the socio-relational aspect of the participants story (Holloway & Jefferson, 2009; Mischler, 1986)
- Light bulb moment: confidence, self esteem, and locus of control are 'inside' psychological cognitive constructs. The study is focussed on the relational aspect. The 'outside' constructs. This led to a shift in the conceptual framework. Identity capital became **relational**
- 'Finding' or 'mining' for 'inside' psychological constructs whilst claiming to be concerned with the relational, social constructions
- A turn to narrative inquiry - the whole is greater than the parts

The turn to Biographical Narrative Interpretation Method (BNIM)

- “Tell me about your life story” initial questions were always fruitful
- Predefined questions made assumptions about knowledge and reality that are based on **my** pre-existing knowledge. They failed to take into account the participant a whole being, with different epistemological constructions.
- Using narrative inquiry changes the focus from a “knowledge-privileged investigator” to a semi-passive participant in a story telling process (Jones, 2004, p. 36)
- The researcher does not find narratives but participates in their creation (Riessman, 2008)
- Although a more passive method, can be argued an active interview – interviewer is part of the construction (Holstein and Gubrium, 1995)

...But, what about the 'Truth' ?

- Stories do not reveal 'Truths' that show 'what exactly happened'
- Give us insight into how the world is constructed at a certain point in time, by certain people.
- There are always a possibility of deceit or emboldenment, and stories are performed differently in different contexts (Andrews, et al., 2013) – This can be said for most of the methods used in research.
- When this happens it can tell a lot about the socio relational world.
- Makes for great analysis and thinking: Why would they embolden a story? Why leave things out? Why say they hate someone but the story says differently?

BNIM – 3 stage process (Wengraf, 2004)

- SS1 Main narrative inducing question:

As you know, I'm researching the world of fathers. So, I want you to tell me your life story, all the events and experiences up until now. Start wherever you like. I'll listen first and I won't interrupt. I'll just take notes for after you've finished telling me about your experiences.

J's transcript (SS1: 1:58 min)

- yep. (10) <laughs> Um, one of four (5). I describe myself as the black sheep of the family. Um (3) Grew up in a... I would call it a loud household, quite a lot of shouting growing up. (8). Umm, went through the alcohol and drugs at quite a young age, about 14-13-14 (3) Ran away from home. Done the usual teenage rebellion.
- J: uhhuh...
- I spent a lot of time with my nan and bamps growing up (5). My nan was the one who taught me how to cook. My gramps taught me a lot about cars... left home when I was 16. Never really looked back ((laughed)). Uhh, moved to America when I was 20 (2) come home 6 months later, with a pregnant girlfriend. My now ex. Who has my eldest son (4). We separated when he was 10 months old. It was at that point with me the shit hit the fan. Um, depression, suicidal sort of bad time in life. Um, six years of court to try and get access to him, constantly up and down with mental health. And ended up with nothing. I don't even get to write to him, well, I can write to him but that's about it. Um, married now, two other boys who I ADORE (2) and too many animals ((laughs)). I don't know what sort of depth you want? Umm...

SS1 Notepad

- Writing down verbatim all salient points that could lead to further Particular Incident Narratives (PINs)
- After it has finished, take about 10 mins to think about the ones most important to the study
- Use the first, the last, and some in the middle
- The beauty of the technique is that the person will tell their story regardless of which one that is picked.
- Has to be in order
- From these, further narratives are told and the process is used

1 of 4.

- ① Black sheep of family
lot of shouting growing up. → blow vals. ader. eggs.
Alcohol drugs at young age 13-14.
Nan + bumps growing up.
- ② ↙ cook ↘ cars.

↓ America 20 - came home 6 months later
Pregnant of ex - eldest son.
Separated 10 months old.

- ③ * The shut but the fan.
6 years of court access up and down
mental health.

- ④ - married x 2 boys. + adone
⑤ Too many animals.

You said.....

**Do you
remember**

**a/ any / that
particular/ any
more detail
about**

SS2 questions

PINS

(Most commonly used)

**...time / example /
situation / phase /
period**

(Best)

**...occasion / moment
/ incident / event /
day / happening**

...particularly strongly?

**...when / how it all
happened?**

**... when you felt that
way?**

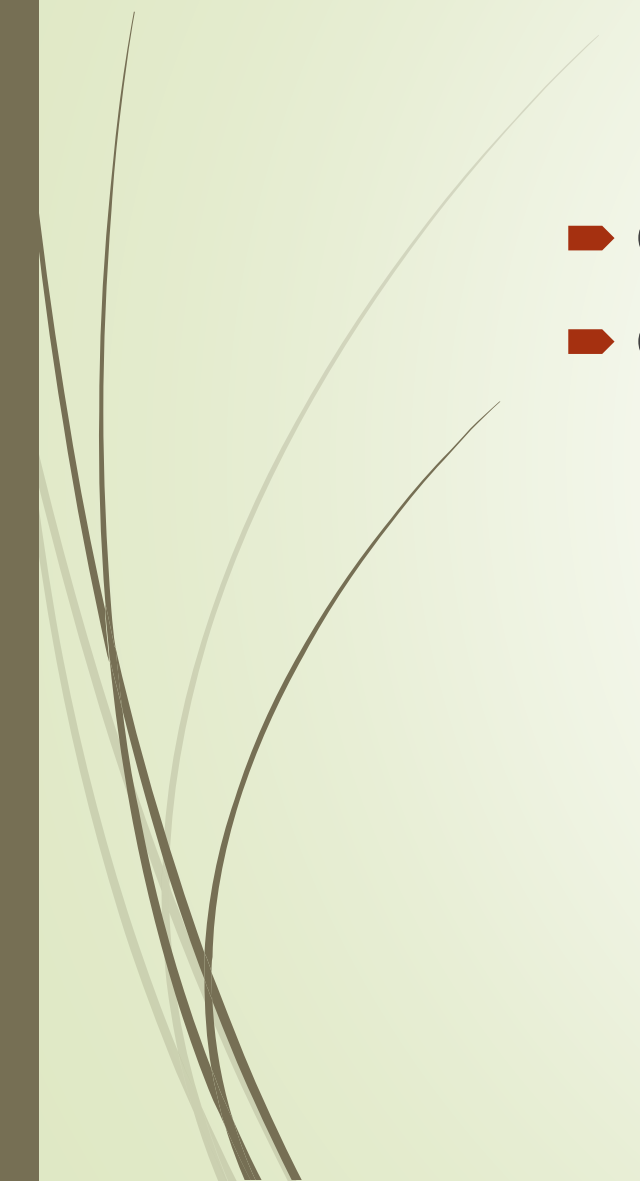
*[what exactly happened?]
[any more detail about how
it all came about?]
[any more about that?]*

48	<i>R: You said about growing up with your nan and bamps and your nan teaching you how to cook. Can you remember a</i>	
49	<i><u>particular moment particularly strongly?</u></i>	
50	I remember being told for pinching a Mars bar from their shop. They had a shop	Fishing... didn't get anywhere
51	<i>R: ok, you said about your nan teaching you how to cook. Do you remember that time particularly well?</i>	
52	Making cakes with my nan. Welsh cakes. What they called... queen of tarts... little jam tarts with sponge on top of	
53	them. Treacle tarts. mainly baking with my nan. But then as I got older it was like cooking.	
54	<i>R: Can you remember a particular...</i>	
55	I remember I went fishing I was about 14? 15? I went down the Marina and caught a four-foot five-foot silverback eel.	Difference in
56	Took it home, my mum wouldn't let me in the house with it ((sad intonation in voice)). So, I took it to my nans and me	response to him
57	and my nan, sounds a bit gross, but, gutted it, skinned it and cooked it up and everything and I sat there with my nan	mum v nan and
58	and my bamp around the table eating eel, that I'd caught a few hours before. That's one thing I will always remember	bamps
59	((laughs))	An acceptance
60	<i>R: you say about sitting around this table and eating the eel. Can you remember any more details about that?</i>	of him rather
		than dismissal

61	The eel was cooked in butter and mixed herbs. I had mine with chips. My nan and bamps had new potatoes and a little	Chatting not
62	bit of veg. An we just, sat there, around a table, just chit chatting, having food	shouting
63	R: Yeah?	
64	((mumbles)).	{became animated} – in PIN
65	<i>R: Do you remember any other incidents of cooking with your nan?</i>	
66	More recently, I still go down to my nans for cakes and stuff. I made L's birthday cake. A couple of years ago, I made my	Resource!
67	first cake. it was a Transformers cake my nan helped me do that. I cut out the Transformers thing out of icing, the logo,	How nan helped him do stuff
68	and laid on the side, and it was a Bumblebee cake black and yellow with a model on top of it. And I made their last cake	with his own children.
69	I made L cake, a joint party. It was a multi coloured 4 layered cake with chocolate buttons, Maltesers, Minstrels and	In SS3 he states he's called a
70	popping candy in the middle, so when you cut into it, there was all layers with a hole in the middle where there <u>was</u> all	'housewife' kindly, by his
71	sweets. I done a Bee, a blue Bee for B's birthday as well as a couple of other cakes in between. I still go down and took	friends
72	with my nan and help with my bamps car.	



SS3

- Chronological questions, the how's, where's and when's
 - Can be semi structured if needed for the project
- 



Analytical framework

BNIM focusses
on analysing
the subjective

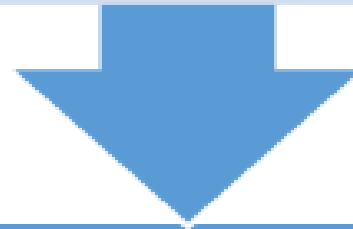
Grounded
theory
approach

Need to look for
new analytical
framework

(Tamaboukou 2003; Reissman 2007; Wengraf; 2004)

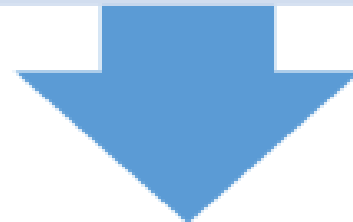
1. Nominal level

The phrases or words that strike you.



2. Read again - additional statements that relate to the larger concept

Theoretical questions (TQ's)* (Wengraf, 2004). Statements about IC. Relationships between fathers and society: Themes related to prior knowledge that may have been challenged by fathers narratives





TQ's show the underpinning knowledge of the research question from related literature prior to the commencement of the field study.

TQ's then relate to main thematic categories to be assigned to the first round of thematic coding (Kuckartz, 2014)

CRQ:

How is identity capital constructed
in the narrative experiences of
fathers?

TQ1: What are the relational aspects
present in the interview?

TQ2: What are the implications of
these relationships?

TQ3: How are relationships of the
past different/similar to their own
present life choices?

TQ4: In what way is relational
agency apparent?

TQ5: In what way does poverty and
disadvantage play a part in the
narratives?

Expressed experiences

How were these themes expressed?

How do fathers express their lived experiences "The shit hit the fan"

Don't miss the nuance of the narrative experience.

1. Of relationship

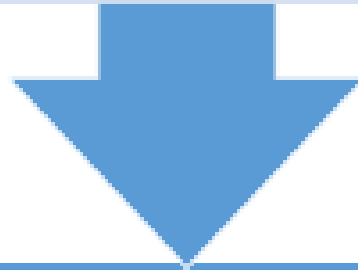
2. agency

3. poverty



4. Themes that require further exploration of literature

Are there issues, problems, perspectives that have been highlighted that were missed in the literature review?



5. Puzzles, contradictions and paradoxes

What's clashing in the narrative?

Nodes

Name	Sources	References
1Nominal Nodes	1	9
cake	1	4
cars	0	0
spiky Bob	1	1
the quiet six months	1	1
the wedding day	0	0
2TQ codes	1	2
TQ1 Relational aspect	1	2
Animals!	1	1
As a family	1	1
grandparents	1	1
Relationship with children	1	2
Relationship with parents	1	4
dad	1	3
mum	1	1
society	1	1
with women	0	0
being taken the micky out of by one's dad	1	2

Drag selection here to code to a new node

JCNVIVO

Drug misuse

[Click to edit](#)

Annotations

1 Content

8 Having relationship with son would mean leaving employment for this father. This would also mean relying on a parent who he didn't have such a good relationship with

9 The relationship and blending of trying with child and failing and the impact on the next children and family. The impossibility of the situation.

1 A lot of fun as a family. Lots of love and adventures and also linked to animals which will be seen later

1 The peace that is found in being outdoors. This is also similar to camping.

1 The interesting thing is about people within the culture around them asking if they would have any more kids. Different for me as I was always encouraged not to have children that

Nodes

Name	Sources	References
TQ3 SimilaritiesDifferences to previous thought	0	0
TQ4 Relational Agency	0	0
TQ5 Disadv	0	0
Suicide	1	1
Drug misuse	0	0
3Experiences of the relationships	0	0
4New Themes	1	1
court and custody	1	1
Domestic abuse to father	1	1
Drug misuse	0	0
Early home leaver	1	1
Parental ailiation	0	0
5Contradictions	0	0
home	1	2
relationship with mum	1	2

JCNVIVO

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