Women's narratives of everyday precarity in the Mangaung township (Bloemfontein, South Africa)

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by

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DECLARATION

I declare that the dissertation hereby submitted by me for the Magister Artium degree at the University of the Free State is my own independent work and has not previously been submitted by me at another university/faculty. I further more cede copyright of the dissertation in favour of the University of the Free State.

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CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGICAL ACCOUNT

INTRODUCTION

Poverty, unemployment, poor service delivery, limited economic opportunities and high levels of inequality are an omnipresent reality that still hauntmany South Africans despite the country having been under a non-racial, democratic dispensation for twenty years. The post-apartheid and democratically elected government is constantly implementing new policies and regulations to promote infrastructural, economic and political equality since 1994 as a means to remedy and to address these social ills. The poor resource areas of townships (including the research setting of this project – see Appendix F) and informal settlements suffer the most from these social ills. Moreover, "Black" African[1] women, especially those with minimum schooling and saddled with the upbringing of children of all ages bear the brunt of this scourge, resulting in the majority of their households being poverty-stricken. This reality has been described and analysedin several studies (Ndimande 2012: 525-526; Benjamin 2007:175; Sekhampu 2012: 9504; Petersen 2011: 1; Moller and Radloff 2012: 633-634).

This research project aims to explore and understand the precarious life-worlds of "Black" African women from the Mangaung townshipin Bloemfontein, South Africa. On the one hand, these women are faced with an everyday reality of making a living from part-time employment (or "piece jobs" as they are referred to colloquially) as they are not equipped with sufficient skills to enable them to compete for employment opportunities in the formal sector. On the other hand, they are also faced with the difficult tasks and challenges of taking care of their children and households – with inconsistent wages that they earn and dubious support networks in many instances. These financial constraints and family responsibilities shape the life-worlds of these women and can be characterised by omnipresent precarity, as their living conditions tend to be vulnerable, insecure, uncertain and unpredictable: everyday survival is often equated with an ongoing battle. These precarious life-worlds result in these women often being in a fragile and unbalanced state, where they are unable to plan or predict their lives and daily living as they struggle to make

[1]Throughout the text, I refer to the socially constructed racial categories of "Black" and "White" that is entrenched in the South African society after years of apartheid and racial oppression. "Black" roughly refers to those categories of people who were disadvantaged by the apartheid regime, and include so-called "Coloureds" and "Indians" although this research was conducted solely among "Black" African women..

ends meet (Ettlinger 2007: 319-320; Waite 2009: 414; Neilson and Rossiter 2006: 10; Duck 2012:128).

The “Black” African women from the Mangaung township experience precarious living conditions because they oftenfind themselves in a defenceless and frail position as a result of structural and contextual factors greatly shaped by decades of apartheid rule. Today, the post-apartheid government is struggling to uplift them from this position,despite the implementation of new legislation and the application of measures such as providing social security grants. This vulnerability results in these women having to survive with limited resources which restrict them from being able to take authority in decision-making with regards to the circumstances of their lives. They often find themselves caught in a reality that prevents them from participating fully in the economic and political life of the country (Waite 2009: 416; Herrmann and van der Maesen 2008: 13-14). Thus, these “Black” African women depend on their “piece jobs”, remittances and social grants for household income; an income which tends to be insufficient to securely sustain and support their families and households according to their wishes. This meagre household income typically allows these women to afford basic foodstuffsonly, leaving other requirements, considered luxurious and non essential,lacking (Moller 2010: 148; Mosoetsa 2011: 1).

These women often have no other option than to turn to their own support structures for some form of assistance. These support structures usually consist of their family members (especially their own mothers), their friends, and the community at large, who are needed to assist with bothmaterial and non-material resources as these women strive to survive on a daily basis. Religion also forms part of these women’s social capital, where they rely on a higher power for strength and resilience overcoming their daily struggles. These support structures are underpinned by the philosophy of Ubuntu/Botho, where sharing, assisting and reciprocity are promoted. The ties of this philosophy are seemingly not as strong as they were in the past, but the presence of other people contributes to the continuation and survival of many poor households. The looseness and instability of these ties leaves the majority of poverty-stricken households in a crisis, as they are faced with challenges such as the shrinkage of social capitaltogether with inadequate household income to maintain family and household members’ needs (Moller 2010: 148-149; Mosoetsa

2011: 2; Broodryk 2002: 13; Marx 2002: 52; Barbarin and Khomo 1997: 197; Ciabattari 2005: 3).

What is more, these experiences are embedded in a lasting patriarchal legacy that is still entrenched in South African society: a society where women are constantly regarded as inferior to men, and in which they face deep-seated discrimination in economic, political, social and family spheres of life. This patriarchal philosophy expects women to take complete and sole responsibility for ensuring the successful operation of their households, as well as being required to look out for the well-being of their family and household members, especially their children (Horn 1991: 27; Coetzee 2001: 300; Groenmeyer 2011: 250-251; Department of Social Development 2011: 39). However, transitionsin South African economic life have also forced women to enter the employment sector for various reasons. Now that they are free to do any kind of job, their families are often reliant on them to bring in money. This is compounded by the fact that they are often single mothers, whose own partners or ex-partnersoften also earn their living through “piece jobs”,orface complete unemployment. This, in turn, renders financial support problematic. “Black” African women with lacking educational qualifications find themselves experiencing high levels of gender and racial inequality in the employment sector, which forces them to earn their living through part-time employment, especially domestic work, which tends to lack the security and other benefits provided by the formal sector (Valodia *et al*. 2006: 90-91; Oosthuizen 2012: 173-174; Posel and Muller 2008: 466).

These women are then often faced with the reality of being both the “breadwinners” and “managers” of their households – which increases their hardships and struggles to juggle the various roles. Therefore, these women are often caught between the two precarious worlds of their families and their employment, where they are expected to work for minimum wages and where those wages are used first and foremost to feed and maintain their families and households. This results in these “Black” African women being strained to fulfil multiple roles where they might even experience forms of double exploitation or intersectional inequalities– at the workplace and in their homes (Horn 1991: 27-28; Bentley 2004: 248).

The reality of life for the majority of South African women is characterised by oppression, discrimination and exploitation, especially for unskilled and semi-skilled

"Black" African women. Nonetheless, these women are not necessarily passive (despite these precarious living conditions) as they apply different survival strategies to empower themselves and improve their opportunities. The women studied in this research project engage in various activities to ensure the livelihoods of themselves and their dependants, and a sense of pride and achievement can also be detected in some of their narratives.

The following narrative (told by one of our[2] participants called Pinky) is especially poignant in depicting the combination of precarity and hope, as it gives an overall picture of the everyday struggle experienced by women in the Mangaung township:

> "*You know, I always think to myself that people who do not have problems, do not know what problems are. There are some days when we sleep without having eaten for two to three days, but we do not worry. We just stand there and drink water and clean the house like everybody else. People do not need to see the problems inside your house, and yet life still goes on*".

This quote encompasses so many of the aspects that this study deals with. Firstly, it indicates the purpose of conducting this project: an attempt to understand the subjective experiences, meanings and precarious realities that these women have to endure on a daily basis. This participant expresses the view that one can never truly understand the hardships and challenges that other individuals have to tolerate and overcome until the individuals who are experiencing these problems share the stories of their experiences.This justifies the narrative approach of such a study. This project is therefore aimed at understanding the precarious life-worlds of "Black" African women from the Mangaung township, who survive on "piece jobs" – and we will be "walking in their shoes" through their narratives to access their subjective understanding and experiences.

The quote also tells of the combination of physical precarity and simultaneous family resilience experienced that co-exist in people faced with these challenges. The majority of poverty-stricken households experience physical and emotional deprivation and they are forced to survive on the minimum that they possess. Sleeping on an empty stomach often becomes the "norm" due to their lack of buying

[2] Pinky is one of the eight participants who shared their everyday surviving narratives in this research project.

power (money). The absence of continuous paid employment sees these women relying on their support networks for any form of assistance (money or hand-outs),but in most cases, these support networks are themselvespoor. As a result, the participants often do not have an option other than to rely on their support networks less, as they fear the implications ofincreasing the burden on these support structures. The participants are then faced with the reality of having to change something as fundamental as their eating patterns, from three meals a day to only one meal, and sometimes, to no meals at all. This adaptation enables these families to survive and take things one day at a time. These women and their households show resilience within their circumstances in the hope that someday in the future, things will change for the better.

The quote also indicates the emotional and psychological resilience possessed by many of these women and their families whereby they hide their lack (in this case, their hunger) by doing what they can in the midst of their difficult circumstances. They also project a picture of their family life being ordinary in the eyes of society. These women show pride when they encourage their children to help keep their homes clean, thereby trying to remove the social stigma of poverty and hunger. Appearance is important to these women, as they do not want the community to view them and their children as dirty and poor. So they maintain themselves, their families and their householdsin such a way as to fit into the community, to avoid being excluded and discriminated against due to being poor. The ability to show and live an ideal picture in these conditions indicates emotional and psychological resilience.

These women often show stoic acceptance of their circumstances, as they and their families endure pain and hardships without complaining. These women refuse to expose themselves and their families by not allowing other people (besides the researcher and their support networks) to have access to their struggling spaces. These women believe that their household problems should not be known to anyone and everyone– these stories of struggle are shared only with the people who are supposed to assist by giving advice, listening or providing resources. The sentence “yet life still goes on” indicates the participant’s glimmer of hope as life continues regardless of their problems. Thus, hope and aspirations play major roles in the lives of these women, as it gives them the strength needed to overcome their daily adversities.

This research project will therefore draw on the women's stories of survival as a means of answering the following underlying research questions:

- How do these women manage to survive with their limited and erratic sources of income?
- How do they negotiate their conflicting and multiple roles and balance their various responsibilities?

This research project is structured and presented in six chapters. The first chapter serves as an introduction to the project where the overview of the project will be discussed, including the objectives and aim of conducting this project. The second chapter is the theoretical framework, where this project will be theoretically grounded – choosing the interpretive/constructivist paradigm and phenomenology, existential sociology and feminist theories as the theoretical lenses. The third chapter is the literature review, which gives an overview of other literature addressing the precarity within the "Black" African families in South Africa. The fourth chapteris the methodology, where the work plan of data collection is discussed in detail. The analysis and interpretation is divided into two chapters where the first part addresses the family life and household dynamics, and the second part focuses on the survival strategies employed by the participants under precarious living conditions. The dissertation ends with a conclusion, providing a brief summary of the research project as a whole.

CHAPTER 1: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

1.1. Introduction

This chapter introduces and describes the theoretical lenses and assumptions of the interpretive/constructivist paradigm (interpretive sociology) as guidelines to explore the research project. The theoretical lenses of phenomenology, existential sociology and feminist theories will serve as the background which ground this project theoretically and place it within the interpretive/constructivist paradigm. According to Ritzer, (1975: 7) a paradigm is "a fundamental image of the subject matter within science. It serves to define what should be studied, what questions should be asked, how they should be asked and what rules should be followed in interpreting the answers obtained. The paradigm is the broadest unit of consensus within a science and it serves to differentiate one specific community (or sub-community) from another. It subsumes, defines and interrelates the exemplars, theories and methods and instruments that exist within it". Wills (2007: 8) defines paradigm as a "comprehensive belief system, worldview or framework that guides research and practice in a field". Therefore, the concept of paradigm can be explained as "a basic set of beliefs that guide actions" ranging from everyday activities to discipline inquiry (Guba 1990: 17).

The interpretive/constructivist paradigm is "informed by a concern to understand the world as it is, to understand the fundamental nature of the social world at the level of subjective experience" (Burrell and Morgan 1979: 28). The interpretive/constructivist paradigm is interested in people: how they think, interrelate with others, their subjective perceptions and their ideas about the world – the manner in which they construct and understand their world (Thomas 2009: 75; Wills 2007: 6). Interpretivists/constructivists aim to understand the meaning that individuals ascribe to their actions and their interactions with others in the social world (Weaver and Olson 2005:460; Outhwaite 2005: 110). The meanings that individuals attach to their world are formed when they interrelate with one another (Creswell 2007: 20). People interpret what is happening around them when they interact with each other, which in turn results in patterns occurring in social life (Johnson 1995: 146). The interpretivists/constructivists are interested in uncovering and understanding how

individuals create meaning in their everyday life (Van Wynsberghe and Khan 2007: 89) as their main interest is to understand the “essence of the everyday world” (Burrell and Morgan 1979: 31). The interpretative/constructivist paradigm thus regards meaning, actions and understanding as the fundamental features of human beings’ activities (Lock and Strong 2010: 6; Scott and Marshall 2009: 370).

Interpretive sociologists are concerned with human beings’ knowledge of “what it is like to be a social actor of a particular kind” (Outhwaite 2005: 111) and how these actors understand their situations (Outhwaite 2005: 111). Therefore, interpretivists/constructivists are interested in uncovering how people know what they know, in other words, how they construct, acquire and maintain their everyday knowledge (O‘Leary and Wright 2005: 257; Cavalcanti 1995: 1338). The interpretivists/constructivists argue that human beings “create and maintain the knowledge in their cultural heritage” (Cavalcanti 1995: 1338). Each individual is born into a certain cultural group that is characterised by its own norms, values and traditions that regulate behaviour and actions (Cavalcanti 1995: 1338). Thus, this paradigm studies the way in which human beings agree upon and define their reality (Williams 2001: 11362). Reality is the human being’s “natural attitude towards the external world” which is made up of their common sense knowledge. This form of knowledge consists of assumptions, ideas, beliefs and interpretations that are accepted and prevalent in everyday life. Thus, humans first draw from this common sense knowledge to make sense and understand their “external world” (Brewer 2003: 229).

Human beings co-construct their knowledge, and as a result, people’s knowledge is to a great extent socially constructed. Humans internalise what they have been taught (knowledge) by their families, friends, neighbours, acquaintances and the media. Knowledge is continually shared and transmitted between individuals (Brooks 2002). Knowledge in everyday life is also socially distributed as different individuals possess different types of knowledge. The research participants in this study might not possess the same level of theoretical knowledge as qualified professionals, but they might share equal knowledge of traditional and spiritual aspects with their family members, and to some extent, with their community members (Berger and Luckmann 1966: 60).

Also, language is very important as it enables people to communicate and construct new ideas and concepts as their practices and procedures are culturally specific and embedded. Cultural groups differ from one another as they are not necessarily influenced by and exposed to similar factors and backgrounds. People first have to listen, learn, remember and communicate the skills that they have acquired, in order to be able to think and solve problems. Thus, language plays a major role in people understanding their daily lives and activities (Berger and Luckmann 1966: 52-53; Brooks 2002). Language and knowledge act in "coordinating and integrating symbolic resources" by making human interaction logical and understandable (Schneider 2005: 725). As a result, a person's cultural background does not only influence his or her knowledge, but also his or her thinking process (Brooks 2002).

Human beings share similar views, assumptions and interests, and therefore share a common understanding. This allows particular groups of people to have common ground, which in turn makes it possible for them to interact and live together. Members of the community are often able to communicate with each other as they share similar ideas, views and values (Kim 2001). The African communities where the research participants in this study reside are often guided by the philosophy of Ubuntu/Botho which translates as "humanness" or "human feeling" and this philosophy encourages and promotes social cohesion. The philosophy of Ubuntu/Botho emphasises the sharing of material and non-material commodities between family members and communities. It also encourages people to care about one another's well-being in order to strengthen community spirit. Therefore, Ubuntu/Botho sees individuals within communities caring for one another by sharing their resources to make sure that nobody suffers and everybody is well taken care of. This will beexpounded upon in Chapter 5's, sub-theme "Understanding Ubuntu/Botho". The philosophy of Ubuntu/Botho is an African traditional ideology which the majority of the African community use as a means to survive. Simultaneously, this philosophy of Ubuntu/Botho does not necessarily apply to every individual in an African society, as some people believe in individualism - focusing on one's own needs and wants (Togni 1996: 111-112) or an intermingling of the two concepts of Ubuntu/Botho and individualism is also more prevalent nowadays.

Social meaning is constructed and attached intersubjectively among groups of people because they are always negotiating their knowledge. Knowledge is built when people interact with each other and their world and this knowledge is embedded in culture. Thus, the way in which this knowledge is constructed is also influenced by cultural and historical aspects (Creswell 2007: 20-21; Kim 2001).

Interpretative sociologists assume that the world consists of multiple realities because individuals belong to different cultural groups and they experience things differently (Denzin 2007: 103; Bradley and Postlethwaite 2003: 3). Using this interpretative approach, this project will examine the daily struggles that women from the Mangaung township (an underserved area) encounter. This ubiquitous precarity is characterised by poverty, unemployment, dependence on social grants and other hand-outs, emotional insecurities, uncertainties and irregularities, fragile interpersonal relationships, and constant preoccupations about their children, their extended family and their own welfare. This research project thus focuses not only on the precarity of insecure work and job opportunities, but also on the precarity of everyday life (living conditions) and the lack (or not) of social capital. These women often make ends meet through part-time employment or “piece jobs” in the informal employment sector. These “piece jobs” are characterised by high levels of uncertainty. They have to negotiate and balance family commitments with employment demands and various other roles that they fill. These roles are often in conflict with one another. This research project is therefore interested in uncovering narratives and in providing descriptions of how Mangaung township women live under these precarious and strenuous conditions. The theoretical lenses which will be used to shape and reveal how these women understand their experiences and overcome their daily challenges arephenomenology, existential sociology and feminist theories.

1.2. Phenomenology

The first theoretical lens that I will use to make sense of my research findings is the phenomenological approach. A phenomenological approach about the narratives of everyday precarity of women in the Mangaung township of Bloemfontein is part of the broader interpretivist paradigm in sociology. The main purpose of the phenomenological approach is to study or examine the subjectivity and

consciousness of human beings (Mouton 2001: 19). Phenomenology can be explained as “the science of the experience of consciousness” (Silverman 2013: 705) or the “systematic study of human consciousness or experience” (Graumann 2001: 11358). Phenomenologists argue that human beings are able to operate and navigate their world through their experiences. Humans are also able to understand their world by using their senses as they interpret them in their minds or their consciousness (Brewer 2003: 228). Phenomenology studies society; in particular, the meaning that its members attribute to it (Fontana 2005: 774). It also studies how individuals construct and interpret their reality. Phenomenology is therefore interested in how people “define their situations to give orientation to their actions” (Srubar 2005: 557).

The word phenomenology originates from the Greek words *phenomenon,* which means “an observable occurrence” and *logos,* which is the “study of something” (Inglis 2012: 86; Silverman 2013: 706). Therefore, phenomenology is interested in how people understand and perceive their own lives and their surroundings. Phenomenology is concerned with people’s consciousness of the phenomena of the world and the manner in which these phenomena occur, by focusing on how people observe and interpret their surroundings. People’s consciousness is examined in order to reveal how they understand and view their world and also to try to reveal the emotions and feelings that people experience (Inglis 2012: 86; Silverman 2013: 704). The phenomenological lens will be used as a tool to examine the way the women who participated in this research make sense of and interpret phenomena in their lives.

1.2.1. Making sense of everyday life

A phenomenological approach highlights that human beings make sense of their daily lives, actions and the world they live in by attaching meaning to the things they encounter. Human beings employ the following techniques to give meaning to their lives: they constantly “create, interpret, define, explain, justify and rationalise” their actions (Babbie and Mouton 2001: 28; Mouton 2001: 19). This results in humans attaching subjective meanings to their daily lives and experiences (Creswell 2007: 20). The ability of human beings to attach subjective meaning to encountered activities is based on knowledge which was passed down from previous generations.

Because of their socialisation, the women in this research were taught how to live and interact with other people and their surroundingsfrom a young age. They are able to make sense of and understand their world because it is meaningful to them (Williams 2001: 11361). These women's interpretations of their own common sense are important and this is taken into consideration in this study, because they too are always "constructing, developing and changing" how they view their world (Babbie and Mouton 2001: 28; Mouton 2001: 19).

Phenomenology seeks to understand how people "see, perceive, understand, experience and make sense" of their world (Inglis 2012: 86). Phenomenology is interested in understanding people's actions and daily activities. There is a special interest in studying how they are influenced by their particular ideas/notions, and the insight/observation in viewing their world,both of which also determinehow they act and interact with other people. Phenomenology is therefore concerned with how people's consciousness determines their ability to act and interact with other individuals. Inglis (2012: 86-87) refers to this ability to act and interact as "practical consciousness," whereby people are not fully conscious or aware when they act and think about their daily activities because they are used to doing these things. Human beings, including the participants in this project, are taught from childhood how to do everyday actions (bathing, eating, talking, or dressing), so they do not need to think about how to do these things, as they are so used to doing these activities on a frequent basis. As a result, they do not need to think too much when engaging in their daily activities, as these activities have become "second nature" (Inglis 2012: 86-87).

These individuals' everyday actions are collectively known as "stock of knowledge" constituted in and by past experiences and actions (Inglis 2012: 87; Lock and Strong 2010: 36) resulting in humans taking them for granted (Appelrouth and Edles 2012: 521). This "stock of knowledge" provides humans with regulations and rules which enable them to interpret and understand their "interactions, organisations, relationships, institutions and the world" (Appelrouth and Edles 2012: 521). This "stock of knowledge" then accumulates and becomes part of these individuals' consciousness where their experiences are stored (Inglis 2012: 87; Lock and Strong 2010: 36). Alfred Schutz (1899-1959) is the founding father of phenomenology in sociology and he compared "stock of knowledge" to the "cookery-book knowledge"

because humans, just like cook-books, have recipes, ingredients, formulas and instructions that make it possible for them to accomplish their everyday life. Thus, human beings perform their daily activities and routines by "following recipes that are reduced to automatic habits or unquestioned platitude" (Appelrouth and Edles 2012: 522). The phenomenological approach will guide this research in understanding how these women experience and understand their actions, their daily activities and the various experiences that have now become second nature to them.

1.2.2. Life-world

Phenomenology is also concerned about the life-world of human beings, or their everyday life-world, the pre-scientific and experimental world that is rarely questioned, and which is often taken for granted. This life-world is very familiar to its inhabitants because they live and operate in it (Overgaard and Zahavi 2009: 97) and it is where their existence is centred from birth to death (Costelloe 1996: 253). As a result, we tend to take this life-world for granted (Overgaard and Zahavi 2009: 97). Human beings are able to understand their life-world because they make use of their familiar and ordinary beliefs, knowledge and ideas (Brewer 2003: 228). Rogers (1983: 49) defines the life-world as "the world in which we are always already living" and "the surrounding world that provides the grounds of conscious existence, within that world, human beings exist" (Rogers 1983: 49). The life-world is characterised by existing assumptions that human beings experience and make meaningful in their consciousness. Human beings observe and experience their life-world as made up of objects and relations that are meaningful to them as opposed to an "objective reality". Individuals are able to understand, describe and explain their reality according to the meaningful structures that they employ to perceive their world (Appelrouth and Edles 2012: 522). Therefore, the life-world results from people's everyday actions, communication, interaction and interpretation from which social reality occurs (Srubar 2005: 560).

The life-world is culturally bound because culture serves as a tool that guides and enables people to interpret and understand their life-world (Rogers 1983: 51). As a result, the life-world is created by cultures of social groups. Culture provides common sense that is then experienced by the inhabitants of the life-world (Inglis 2012: 90). Human beings are social beings and they are affected by their natural and

social worlds because of the positions they occupy and the experiences they undergo within their life-worlds. Social groups create their own life-worlds, but this life-world acts as though it has a life of its own because of the cultural aspects, norms, values and knowledge that are transmitted from one generation to the next within the social group. Human beings are generally unaware that they play major roles in constructing their own social world in which they live. This unawareness sees humans taking their life-world for granted because they receive and perceive things just the way they are (Cavalcanti 1995: 1338; Williams 2001: 11361; Rogers 1983: 51). Therefore, human beings normally view their life-world in an unquestioned way, as they accept things in the manner in which they occur (Williams 2001: 11361: Schutte 2007: 3402).

Phenomenology, just like other scientific theories, tries to examine the pre-scientific evidence from this life-world to uncover the knowledge that shapes the perspectives people have about their world (Overgaard and Zahavi 2009: 97). Phenomenology strives to understand social reality by focusing not only on the experiences that the participants (in this case the women who participated in this research) go through, but also on how they experience their life-world. Therefore, phenomenology addresses people's experiences of their life-world. This study is interested in the experiences that these women have had, and continue to have in their everyday lives. From these experiences they will be able to tell their stories of struggles, challenges and happy moments as they live in situations of precarity (Williams 2001: 11362). The life-world serves as the "source of evidence" of how people give and attach meaning to their surroundings. Theoretical assumptions and results are often unknowingly part of people's daily practices, and are therefore absorbed to form part of the life-world. Therefore, science is grounded in people's experiences of everyday life (Overgaard and Zahavi 2009: 97).

1.2.2.1. The shared life-world

According to Cavalcanti (1995: 1338) life-world is the "world of daily life along with the corresponding knowledge needed to exist in it; a world and knowledge shared by members of a society or social group". The life-world is shared by members of a particular group or society and it gives them a sense of belonging as it makes things "real" to them (Cavalcanti 1995: 1338; Williams 2001: 11361). Therefore, the life-

world is an intersubjective world that is known and also experienced by other individuals (Appelrouth and Edles 2012: 520). The concept of intersubjectivity is defined by Munroe (2007: 2400) as “shared perception of reality between or among two or more individuals,” and defined by Johnson (1995: 146) as being “a condition of social life that makes it possible for people to share understanding and expectations with others”. The life-world is not for the single individual but rather an intersubjective world that is common to all its inhabitants (Flaherty 2009: 223). Human beings of specific groupings do not only share the same empirical or material world but they also share, to a great extent, the same consciousness. This shared consciousness allows individuals from different social and personal backgrounds to function and interact with one another (Appelrouth and Edles 2012: 520).

Human beings are able to live together because of their shared social meanings and the common understanding in their everyday lives. Individuals tend to “know” and “understand” the life-world in similar ways and act and think socially in an expected way as they draw from their common sense knowledge resulting in the “standardised sameness” of their social reality (Munroe 2007: 2400: Brewer 2007: 229). Common sense knowledge is knowledge that individuals share in their everyday lives, which enables them to experience reality (Appelrouth and Edles 2012: 534). Thus, human beings experience the life-world as common and shared “objects, events, values and goals” which in turn results in social life being sustained (Appelrouth and Edles 2012: 525).

This shared life-world comprises the stock of knowledge that is transmitted from generation to generation and between generations. This socio-cultural knowledge therefore enables individuals to adapt to their life-world and also to be able to interact with other individuals, to belong and to fit into society (Cavalcanti 1995: 1338; Flaherty 2009: 224). Thus, the existence of a society and community depends on human beings developing meanings that they share in their environment, which allows their actions to fit together (Appelrouth and Edles 2012: 524). The stock of knowledge enables humans to interpret their past and present experiences in order to try to determine the future (Cavalcanti 1995: 1338; Flaherty 2009: 224). People from different social classes will not necessarily have similar tastes and ideas about things as they experience things differently. The participants in this study are from resource-poor areas, therefore they are from the lowerclass and they share similar

challenges of unemployment and trying to make ends meet from piece jobs with minimum earnings. These participants experience reality differently compared to individuals who have stable employment and everyday life security. Therefore, their living conditions are to a large extent unpredictable, irregular and uncertain and their lives are often emotionally and financially fragile.

1.2.2.2. Typifications guiding the life-world

Alfred Schutz argued that the life-world consists of multiple realities, each having its own meaning and existence (Overgaard and Zahavi 2009: 99). According to Costelloe (1996: 251), Schutz defined social reality as the "sum total of objects and occurrences within the social cultural world as experienced by the common sense thinking of men living their daily lives among their fellow-men (*sic*), connected with them in manifold relations of interaction" (Costelloe 1996: 251). The manner in which human beings experience their reality is influenced and guided by their social location. Human beings are able to adapt and survive in their environment by creating "material" and "ideal" products which serve as a guide or map to navigate social reality (Cavalcanti 1995: 1338). The material and ideal products are issues such as rules and regulations that are used to control disputes and conflicts,as well as values and customs that promote solidarity and harmony between social groups. Human beings also develop "categories of thought" and "habitual patterns of behaviour" as a means of bringing order to the social interaction and relations, as well asmaking them predictable, making them a way of life (Cavalcanti 1995: 1338). Schutz named these thoughts and behaviours collectively as "typifications" which act as recipes (for action) that guide humans to deal with the encountered situations of their everyday lives and the various roles each individual fulfils (Cavalcanti 1995:1338; Schutte 2007: 3402).

Cavalcanti (1995: 1338) defines these "typifications" as the "the shared idea about a relationship or a category that focuses on its generic characteristics" whereas Appelrouth and Edles (2012: 522) describe them as being "the process of constructing personal ideal-types based on the typical function of people or things rather than on their unique features". "Typification" thus refers to the practical knowledge that guides life-world experience and the ability of humans to make sense of their reality. This knowledge enables humans to understand and deal not only with

the world but also with each other (Overgaard and Zahavi 2009: 102; Cavalcanti 1995: 1339). Human interaction results in the development of routines, habits and customs in their life-world which enables them to determine, categorise and perceive things and relate to their surroundings (Cavalcanti 1995: 1338; Williams 2001: 11361; Inglis 2012: 94). Human beings are guided by these “typifications” (patterns of behaviour and social types that people take for granted) in their life-world on how to perform daily tasks and responsibilities. People - including the women in this study - do not necessarily invent new methods of doing things in their daily lives, instead they rely on the knowledge they have acquired in their lifetime. These women are able to adapt to their daily lives because of the accumulated knowledge they have learned and gained. Therefore, these “prescribed” ways of thinking and acting can be referred to as recipes, which can be explained as formulas that are used to do particular things in particular ways. These recipes and typifications are embedded and deeply rooted in each person’s consciousness (Inglis 2012: 94).

People do not necessarily experience these typifications as social constructs (created by them and transmitted from one generation to the other), but rather as natural ways of doing things. These women might “claim” that it is natural for women to become a domestic worker, or to take sole responsibility for the upbringing of their children, or even to be at the receiving end of abusive treatment by their partners or their relatives. Their consciousness is shaped by these human products (typifications and recipes) that determine people to see things as “real”. Therefore, humans (in this case, these women) often perceive and experience their reality the way it is, rather than viewing it in terms of its socially constructed nature (Inglis 2012: 94-95). However, this reality is what they experience every day, and it is therefore real to them as it is their primary encounter with life. Like most human beings, they tend to treat and see their reality as objective (Schneider 2005: 725).

Schutz named the typification of the life-world as “first–order constructs” and these are shared intersubjectively by the social groups (Schutte 2007: 3402). These social groupings take these typifications for granted, because they have accepted them and do not question them (Schutte 2007: 3402). This is so because people’s perceptions are organised and categorised from the shared stock of knowledge. The shared stock of knowledge includes recipes that guide social action and interaction and this is from where typifications are drawn. The shared stock of

knowledge,together with typifications and recipes for social actions, make the everyday life of human beings practical and realistic. Therefore, the world makes sense to humans as they are guided by typifications and recipes for social actions (Williams 2001: 11362). People are very familiar with the objects (trees, houses, cars, animals, etc.) they find in the life-world, even though they might not have extensive knowledge about their qualities. As a result, people have immediate knowledge of their environment and this knowledge is gained from their own past experiences and experiences of family members, neighbours and their community (Overgaard and Zahavi 2009: 96, 99,102).

According to Henry (2007: 1088), the interpretive sociologists Schutz, Berger and Luckmann introduced the concept of “dialectical relationship” that takes place when people are guided by typifications when experiencing their reality. This dialectical relationship exists between human beings having experiences through typifications that occur as independent and objective, while at the same time they are constructed from their subjective meaning and experiences. Typification takes place from these three linked procedures: “externalisation”, “objectification” and “internalisation” (Henry 2007: 1088). Firstly, externalisation happens when individuals communicate and interact with each other. Human beings, through communication, create categories and concepts to explain and define the events that they experience. Secondly, as time progresses these categories and shared concepts become objectified as they are “institutionalised, formalised and codified” (Henry 2007: 1088).

This process of objectification sees people’s experiences appearing to be independent regardless of the fact that these experiences were created by them by developing and passing on knowledge and routines to perform them. Finally, individuals communicate this knowledge back to their social groupings as individuals internalise this knowledge. Thus, individuals tend to take this knowledge that defines their social reality for granted (Henry 2007: 1088; Inglis 2012: 95-97; Schutte: 2007: 3403; Berger and Luckmann 1966: 86-88). The effects of these three processes are then known as “reification” which is the “habitual patterns of behaviour and categories of thought that are apprehended by individuals as being external to them and having a life of their own” (Cavalcanti 1995: 1338). Thus, individuals tend to lose

sight of the reality they have created and take their ability to change their objective reality for granted (Henry 2007: 1088).

1.2.3. Multiple realities and experiences of individuals

According to Babbie and Mouton (2001: 28) Schutz named the multiple realities of the life-world 'sub-worlds' and he concentrated on analysing and examining the world of everyday life and the world of theoretical inquiry. The world of everyday life, or life-world, is the one that human beings spend their lives in and that they share intersubjectively. This world therefore consists of how people interpret, experience and give meaning to their daily activities and how they understand the social reality that they live in and experience. Overgaard and Zahavi (2009: 93) argue that social reality is constructed by the individuals who are living, acting and thinking within it. However, individual subjectivities should not be ignored, even though most of the assumptions, expectations and prescriptions are socially determined. This social reality offers "multiple experiences" and meanings as people experience and understand things differently from each other (Overgaard and Zahavi 2009: 93).

Human beings do not have identical experiences because each person has his or her own "biographically articulated stock of knowledge which varies from individual to individual because personal and subjective experiences are never exactly the same" (Appelrouth and Edles 2012: 525). Each individual interprets actions and situations based on his or her "uniquely articulated world-life". Therefore, individuals can never have exactly the same experiences as these tooare different from one another (Appelrouth and Edles 2012: 523-524). The women in this research study might share similar views and meanings with their families, friends and society, but each individual will experience things in her own way. For example, these women will not necessarily have similar challenges and struggles, as they might not be deprived of similar things; have different support structures (social connections), financial resources and different methods of coping with the requirements of everyday survival. Babbie and Mouton (2001: 28) explain that the world of theoretical enquiry is one where researchers try to make sense of this social reality; in other words, they make this life-world a "subject of inquiry". Phenomenology will thus be an approach used to reveal how these women from the Mangaung township view their social reality which is steeped in precarious living conditions.

1.3. Existential sociology

The next theoretical lens that is used to focus on my research findings is that of existential sociology. Existential sociology can be defined as the "study of human experience-in-the-world (or existence) in all its forms" (Kotarba 2007: 1519; Kotarba 2009: 140) and also "it is a sensibility, a way of life, a passion for living, an orientation to the flux and emergence of actual lived experience" (Kotarba 2009: 141). Existential sociology therefore focuses on how individuals act and behave in their usual space in the everyday life-world which they inhabit. This theoretical tool investigates people (participants) in their everyday life by paying attention to how they live their lives; respond to their responsibilities and how they make their choices and decisions (Kotarba 2009: 142; Fontana 1980:156; Bogart 1977: 507-508).

The concept of change plays a very important role in existential sociology, because people are constantly experiencing change. Hence their "experiences, lifestyles, sense of self, how they interact with each other and the culture that gives their lives meaning" are always undergoing change. The tenet of existential sociology is to investigate how people view and understand their constantly changing, uncertain reality (Kotarba 2009: 140). Everyday life then tends to be situational (specific to that moment) because human life is constantly changing (Kotarba 2007: 1519; Kotarba 2009: 140; Fontana 1980: 15). The existential sociology approach will guide this study in uncovering how these women view their ever-changing reality – today's certainties can be shattered by tomorrow, and more so in situations of ubiquitous precarity.

1.3.1. Emotions and feelings in everyday life

In addition to the emphasis on change, existential sociology also focuses on emotions. Existential sociology views human beings as a species that is both emotional and irrational (Adler *et al.* 1987: 223). Therefore, humans' actions are determined and influenced by their feelings and moods. Human beings' feelings and emotions shape and guide how they live their lives, the decisions they make, how they interpret their meanings and also how they perceive their reality and world (Adler *et al.* 1987: 223; Fontana 1980: 156). Therefore, individual experiences and interactions are influenced by emotions that determine and shape all their subjective

and intersubjective meanings and actions, social divisions, social exchanges, as well as the bonds that exist between individuals (Kotarba 2007: 1521).

Social interaction and communication are made possible by people's feelings, passions and emotions. Feelings such as "love, hate, pleasure, pain, sympathy, spite, comfort, discomfort, hope and despair" (Kotarba 2009: 143) serve as the base or foundation which people's lives are built upon. These emotions determine how human beings react, behave and interact in their daily lives (Kotarba 2009: 143). According to Kotarba (2009: 144) emotions such as "greed, envy, power lust, pride, shame and anger" on the one hand, can cause disturbances and disruption within the community and the close circle of the family. On the other hand, notions such as "gratitude, liking, obligation, respect and concern" promote and encourage the community to bond and live in harmony with each other (Kotarba 2007: 1521; Kotarba 2009: 144; Manning 1973: 209-210). Emotions, therefore, play an important role in both the formation of human society, as well as in disrupting social order (Kotarba 2009: 144). The "brute being" is important in the existential sociology approach, because it is where the core of feelings and perceptions is situated - in the innermost self of humans, their beings (Kotarba 2007: 1521; Kotarba 2009: 143).

The existential sociology approach emphasises the importance of feelings and emotions, particularly when people are faced with challenges and problems which they attempt to solve. Emotions and feelings guide cultural groups (social groups) in different ways as they try to make sense of their reality by defining, labelling and constructing rules, roles, values and knowledge. This is known as "emotional culture" (Kotarba 2007: 1521). Thus, the concept of "emotional culture" refers to the emotions that different cultural groups experience when faced with emotional situations. It emphasises how individuals are affected by these emotions and the sentiments that they attach to these emotional situations. This theoretical approach also deals with the importance of emotions when people draw from their stock of knowledge. What happens when individuals express their emotions to other people? The recollections of the research participants will certainly be guided by the emotions they feel (Kotarba 2007: 1521).

1.3.2. The existential self

Existential sociologists regard the concept of the "existential self" as important and this concept can be defined as the "individual's unique experience of being within the context of the contemporary social condition, an experience most notably marked by an incessant sense of becoming and active participation in social change" (Kotarba 2007: 1522; Kotarba 2009: 145). The notion of "existential self" is interested in the experiences of individuals, and how individuals manage to adapt and cope in their everyday life situations. This theoretical lens of existential sociology is designed to monitor the nature of trends that occur in contemporary lifestyles, especially among people who are not satisfied with their current situation. These people might not be content with who and what they are,as well as bearing the demands and expectations that they themselves, their families and society have placed on them. The "new social forms" (innovative or reconstructed) indicate that people are constantly looking for better ways to re-invent how they think and feel about themselves (Kotarba 2007: 1521; Kotarba 2009: 145).

People often strive to improve their own lives and those of the ones for whom they are responsible. In this research, strategies and tactics will be described as to how these women try to sustain and uphold their households. In reality, however, these women have limited choices to try to better their lives and the lives of their dependents. Individuals are constantly trying various ways of improving their livelihood through the social roles that shape their reality. It is therefore important to ascertain the amount of "social capital" these women dispose of that might contribute to their everyday life requirements: materially, emotionally and spiritually. The concept of the "existential self" is characterised by the following three features (Kotarba 2007: 1521; Kotarba 2009: 145-151):

1.3.2.1. The existential self is embodied

Firstly, the "existential self is embodied" means that feelings and perceptions serve as a foundation for the existence of human beings in the world. The individual's body serves as the vehicle that experiences life, therefore the body is the entity that actually senses these feelings. This means that when an individual is not feeling well - either by being sick, tired, or stressed - the body itself feels and goes through this

discomfort. The individual is alerted by his or her body when he or she is not feeling well. In response, the individual tends to seek different means to heal his or her body to return to normal functioning by allowing other people - especially family members - to know about their discomfort. Discomfort is caused by feelings such as pain, fear, anxiety, uncertainty and people hope to interact with and alert other people to these manifestations of discomfort. Therefore, the distress and discomfort of the body are existential feelings that the human body experiences directly (Kotarba 2007: 1522; Kotarba 2009:146). The everyday life struggles of these women are embodied in the experiences of constant fatigue, gnawing pains, and bodies exposed to hard, physical labour – both in the workplace and at home. In addition to this, the body is exposed to constant deprivation – both physically and psychologically, and in some cases, the body is even exposedto various forms of abuse (Kotarba 2007: 1522; Kotarba 2009: 145-146). Inevitably, these experiences of the body shape people's subjectivities in a very direct manner.

1.3.2.2. The existential self is becoming

Secondly, the "existential self is becoming" is another characteristic that is relevant for this discussion.Here it is argued that in order for individuals to be able to cope effectively, their becoming must be grounded in the social world. Humans are encouraged by life's brutal reality to develop and acquire strategies and styles to realise their maximum potential in adapting to their environment. This portrays the relationship of "self-to-society" whereby the self is confronting and facing society. Individuals are always trying to manipulate and shape how they experience society in order to operate and function within it as they pursue fulfilmentof their basic needs and desires (Kotarba 2007: 1522; Kotarba 2009: 147). Human beings engage and participate in social activities such as religion, music, spirituality and various forms of art to give their lives meaning and purpose. These social activities enable the lives of the women in this study to be important and worthwhile by giving them meaning and intention. The existential self is always evolving and developing throughout the life span of individuals (Kotarba 2007: 1522; Kotarba 2009: 148).

The experiences of human beings are always "unfolding as individuals adapt to new situations and possibilities for self-growth" (Kotarba and Johnson 2002: 8). The participants in this research project have gone through changes from childhood to

adulthood; their lives will continue to evolve as they are still developing towards the next stages of their lives. These participants had different priorities and responsibilities before they had children, and as they grow older, their priorities and responsibilities will continue to change. Therefore the lives of the participants in this research, as with most human beings, will constantly change and evolve as time progresses. According to Kotarba (2009: 147), the self is always in a constant state of becoming because of the social roles it occupies, as it gives shape to and meets certain requirements as "self confronts self". In this sense, the purpose of the human body is to serve as the source of "unending and ever-changing feelings and emotions", to be the measure and principle in which the objects of the world are assessed, and also to present events that can either be self-fulfilling or self-threatening (Kotarba 2009: 147).

1.3.2.3. The existential self and social change

Lastly, "the existential self and social change", is based on the idea that the relationship between social change and individuals is characterised by the concepts of culture and role (Kotarba 2009: 151). Social change occurs when there is an adjustment or modification to some features and aspects of culture. Change occurs in the social world because of many factors that include science and technology advancing, the distribution of economic resources and the society itself evolving. Humans find themselves faced with the challenge of re-organising and re-ordering their expected traditional actions as change inevitably brings about new expectations related to their actions (Kotarba 2009: 151). Social change sees individuals perceiving and noticing change which brings uncertainty to their world. This change might bring disturbance and conflict to their existence and their very being. Human beings experience uncertainty when their values, rules, attitudes and other realms of their social life are disturbed and unsettled (Kotarba 2007: 1522: Kotarba 2009: 152).

Therefore, human beings need to see these changes which cause uncertainty in their lives as a means of maintaining and satisfying their "sense of self" (Kotarba 2009: 152). People are social beings, which means that they will either seek out new social forms with other people who are experiencing similar changes, or they will use social forms that were created by other people. The women in this study are most likely to employ strategies that they have learnt throughout their lives to overcome

situations that bring forth uncertainty in their lives. They will look to people who have experience of similar situations to help them deal and cope with the changes through which they are going (Kotarba 2007: 1522-1523; Kotarba 2009: 152).

1.3.3. The multi-cultural society

Existential sociologists propose that the community or society is multifaceted and multicultural (Adler *et al*. 1987: 223). Power struggles divide social groups into different social classes, whereby those with more power have more money,and form the upper class, as they can afford to maintain certain lifestyles (Adler *et al*. 1987: 223). In the case of the research participants in this study, they form part of the lower classes because of their generalised lack of resources, education and formal employment. They occupy the resource-poor areas of the Mangaung township and often lack the power and resources to empower themselves.

These women often depend and survive on assistance from the government in the form of social grants,which includeold-age pensions(R1260/$116.05)[3] or disability pensions (R1260/$116.05),foster care grants(R800/$73.68) for those who are a child's guardian and child support grants (R290/$26.71) (Brockerhoff 2013: 31). They might also get assistance (on either a continuous or an erratic basis) from family members, friends and partners in the form of remittances. These women also often contribute to the household income by means of part-time employment or "piece jobs" that bring in small amounts of money. Each individual fulfils numerous roles, and negotiating between these can cause conflicts within individuals. These women are not only mothers, but also daughters, friends, wives, lovers, employees, carers and guardians. These different roles are accompanied by different responsibilities and expectations, and fulfilling them to everyone's satisfaction might be strenuous for these women. All these roles require these women's time, and they might find themselves neglecting some of these responsibilities. They need to negotiate how much time is spent on each of the dutiesfor which they are responsible, often to the detriment of another (Adler *et al*. 1987: 223). Therefore, the theoretical lens of Existential sociology uncovers the manner in which individuals (participants) respond to their everyday responsibilities, including their decisions and choices.

[3]The exchange rate between the US dollar and the South African Rand is 1$= R10.89c (21 March 2014)

1.4. Feminist theories

Feminist theories are “wide-ranging systems of ideas about social life and human experience developed from woman-centred perspectives” (Lengermann and Niebrugge 2012: 454). Feminist theories strive to reconstruct women from being seen as objects to being seen as subjects, concentrating on the lives of women (Shayne 2007: 1685). Feminist theories are concerned with women’s situations, relationships and experiences in their various communities. These theories portray the social world of women from their own understanding and points of view (Lengermann and Niebrugge 2012: 454).

According to Beasley (1999: 1) and Shayne (2007: 1685) the notion of feminism is very complicated and complex to define.For the purpose of this study, the following definition of Delmar (1986: 13) will be used, which states that feminism is “an active desire to change women’s position in society”. Feminism strives to break down and remove the structures that position women in the lower echelons when it comes to status and power (Burn 2005: 3). Therefore, feminists want women to be recognised as equal to their male counterparts in all aspects of social life (Burn 2005: 3; Lengermann and Niebrugge 2007: 1666). Feminism can also be defined as challenges that women encounter every day, viewing them as inferior members of society as they endure discrimination and oppression because of their gender (Roberts 2006: 98). This approach sees women being the victims of various forms of inequalities (Inglis 2012: 235). Feminism attempts to transform the social roles and responsibilities that society assigns to women, such as domestic and household chores and lower paid jobs. The community at large assumes and expects women to fulfil household chores such as cleaning, cooking and laundry and being the primary caregiver to children. Women are also expected to look after and take care of the sick and the elderly (Shayne 2007: 1685). Women’s roles tend to be perceived as subordinate and less privileged compared to those of their male counterparts (Lengermann and Niebrugge 2012: 455) and this status quo is accepted as such by many men and women.

Feminism simultaneously questions and challenges the gender power system. It also advocates for “women’s right to equality and personal autonomy” (Shayne 2007: 1685). Feminism strives to uncover and understand how women see and

comprehend their surroundings, and how they live and make sense of their own reality in their everyday lives (Winkler 2009). Gender plays an important role in feminist theories because it is “a lens that brings into focuses particular questions” (Creswell 2007: 25). The generalised assumption of this enquiry is that gender is socially constructed and is based on more than people’s biological (sex) differences (Lengermann and Niebrugge 2007: 1666; Lengermann and Niebrugge 2012: 455). Therefore, the concept of gender is defined by Moffett (2008: 105) as “socially constructed rather than biologically determined notions of femininity and masculinity”. Gender explains the social differences between women and men (Sydie 2007: 247; Holmes 2009: 2). However, “feminism” is not a unified notion and there are particular approaches that each identifies different problems with regards to women in society.This research project will partially draw on all of these approaches which include: Liberal feminism, Marxist/Socialist feminism, Radical feminism and Post-modern feminism (including the branch of Black feminist thought).

1.4.1. Liberal feminism

Liberal feminism is one of the major feminist theories that issimply interested in addressing inequalities between the sexes that are evident between women and men (Inglis 2012: 239; Lengermann and Niebrugge 2012: 466). In society, women and men are positioned both differently and unequally, as women tend to have less access to material resources, social status, power, education and opportunities. Women carry traditional expectations to fulfilcertain roles within their family lives, often to the detriment of other roles such as their professional careers (Langermann and Niebrugge 2012: 466). Liberal feminism emphasises the rights of women and a desire for equal treatment between women and men (Inglis 2012: 239). Inequalities between men and women include women’s rights to participate in political issues, economic rights whereby women are financiallyindependent, equal treatment in the work place where salaries are all the same regardless of sex, and cultural changes to see to it that women and men are treated with the same level of respect (Inglis 2012: 239; Burn 2005: 97). These inequalities are caused by the manner in which society is organised, and not by personality or biological differences between women and men per se (Lengermann and Niebrugge 2012: 466).

The democratic South African government has implemented policies and legislation to promote and officialise equality between men and women (McEwen 2000: 75; Goetz 1998: 242), but these policies and legislations have not completely eradicated inequalities sufficiently, as these processes often do not materialise in the lives of ordinary women. Women - especially “Black” African women - dominate the informal employment sector and witness worse development indicators compared to their male counterparts. This situation leads to a generalised context of precarity, in terms of employment, access to health and education, and in terms of personal and household matters. Many “Black” African women in South Africa with limited skills and opportunities suffer the most from inequality because they do not have proper qualifications to enter the formal sector (Inglis 2012: 240; Newton 2012: 198). Despite the outmoded nature of “first wave feminism” as characterised by liberal feminism, inequality is still rife in the South African context, which makes this wave of feminism still relevant in South Africa today, especially among the research participantschosen.

1.4.2. Marxist/Socialist feminism

“Second wave feminism”, including Marxist/Socialist feminism, is concerned with the “gender-based exploitations” that women face in their daily lives. Historically, women have been exposed to exploitation, especially economic and political exploitation whereby they have been considered inferior to and dependent on men. The employment sector of South Africa was organised and structured by the apartheid system in such a way that the rich and dominant classes exploited the poor and lower classes. “Black” African women are exploited more than others, as they suffer most from poverty and unemployment (Inglis 2012: 241; Hamilton 2007: 45).

On the one hand, these women earn their living from part-time employment with low pay, low skills and uncertain and insecure working conditions. The gender pay gap (women earning lower wages and salaries compared to men) exists, because “Black” African women in particular still dominate low paying jobs because of their lack of education and marketable skills. These women find themselves working under uncertain and insecure conditions (Burn 2005: 97; Hamilton 2007: 46: Inglis 2012: 241). On the other hand, these “Black” African women are also homemakers, whose primary responsibility it is to take care of their households. These women

clean, feed, clothe and cook for their children and families, and they are expected to perform these duties without payment or even recognition. These household activities consume a lot of time and energy and are often performed without any assistance from partners (who are often absent from the lives of their children). This unpaid work is of primary importance to the family's well-being and that of the community at large (also referred to as the "care economy"), but it is often taken for granted. Therefore, according to Marxist feminism, "Black" African women are exposed to double exploitation - both in their work places and also in their homes (Burn 2005: 101; Hamilton 2007: 46; Inglis 2012: 241-242).

1.4.3. Radical feminism

Radical feminism is a major feminist theory that addresses "gender oppression" where men tend to have the "fundamental and concrete interests in controlling, using and oppressing women" (Lengermann and Niebrugge 2012: 470) in the form of domination. Women find themselves being dominated, oppressed and subservient to men. This domination is deeply entrenched and embedded within society by the system known as patriarchy, where men's interests are of primary importance. This system of patriarchy promotes men's privileges and regards men as superior to women (Hamilton 2007: 46; Lengermann and Niebrugge 2012: 470-471).The social order is structured in such a way that women's interests and values are overpowered by those of men. Women are oppressed in spheres such as employment, the economy, the family and even the media, as their interests, experiences and benefits are of second priority. As a result, they are seen and perceived as inferior and under the authority of men (Hamilton 2007: 46; Roberts 2006: 99; Inglis 2012: 244).

South African society is still influenced by patriarchal ideologies which consider men as supreme with the highest level of authority. Men are considered (and expected) to be the heads of households (breadwinners), and women are often relegated to a position of inferiority, having to fulfil predetermined tasks predominantly linked to the household (Coetzee, 2001: 301-302; Milkie and Peltola 1999: 477-478; Davis and Greenstein 2009: 90; Gronlund 2007: 481, Lachance-Grzela and Bouchard 2010: 769). The reality is that these women often have to fend for themselves and for their dependents without the assistance or even the presence of a man. Women are often left to look after children where biological fathers simply disappear or contribute

nothing (or very little) to the raising of their children. Women are therefore often forced into assuming the traditionally male-reserved role of breadwinner or head of the household, as well as fulfilling their traditional "female roles" because of the absence of their partners or husbands. Despite this reality, patriarchy is still rife in the South African context and is evident by the domination that women face, which in many cases leads to domestic violence, rape and various other forms of abuse. Adding to the oppression of women, is the tendency of women to internalise these notions of patriarchy and the division of labour themselves (Mosoetsa 2011: 44; Steinberg 2008: 30-32).

1.4.4. Post-modern and Black feminist thought

"Third wave feminism" includes post-modernist feminism and can also be referred to as post-structuralist feminism. The main argument is that women across the world do not all share the same burdens and problems as portrayed in the previous feminist approaches (Inglis 2012: 237). Post-modern feminism therefore discourages the usage of "one unified voice" of women because they differ in terms of "race, class, ethnicity and sexual orientation" (Braidotti 2003: 202-203). Thus, the notion of "sisterhood" cannot be assumed on the basis of gender, because women do not all face similar situations, especially in terms of inequalities and everyday life challenges (Pelak 2007: 2396). This theoretical lens therefore emphasises the fact that women differ from one another, as they face different challenges and respond differently to those challenges (Langermann and Niebrugge 2007: 1678; Inglis 2012: 246-247; Burn 2005: 4).

In South Africa, for example, poor "Black" African women are faced with different challenges and obstacles compared to the middle and upper class women – mostly "White" women. For example, the predominant family structure for the majority of "White" women is the nuclear family, usually consisting of parents and children (Cheal 2008: 2). For "Black" African women, however, it is usually the multigenerational extended family whichenables these women to somehow withstand hardships such as poverty and unemployment (Henn: 2005: 44). As a result, the group often referred to as "women" do not necessarily share one identity, but instead have "multiple and fragmented identities" (Inglis 2012: 246-247; Burn 2005: 4) under the post-modern view of feminism (Inglis 2012: 247; Burn 2005: 4).

The Black feminist train of thought shares similar sentiments to the post-modern feminist approach: both these theories feel that earlier feminist theories were mainly based on the struggles and perspectives of “White” middle-class women (Hamilton 2007: 50; Hartsock 1990: 15). These Black feminists felt excluded, side-lined and inferior as they were devalued in mainstream feminist studies (Hamilton 2007: 50; Hartsock 1990: 15). Patricia Hill Collins is one of the main contributors to the Black feminist line of thought, and she is responsible for conceptualising “Intersectionality theory” which sees “race/ethnicity, class and gender as the interlocking systems of oppression, forming the matrix of domination” (Lengermann and Niebrugge 2007: 1676).

“Intersectionality theory” can then be defined as the “lived experience in an individual biography of the daily workings of social power as multifaceted and involving besides inequalities of gender, inequalities of race, class, geosocial location and age” (Lengermann and Niebrugge 2007: 1668). “Intersectionality theory” can also be defined as “particular forms of intersecting oppressions; for example, intersections of race, gender and nationality” (Pelak 2007: 2395). “Black” African women are exposed to and experience different systems of oppressions (racism, patriarchy and exploitation based on class) and these oppressions cause multifaceted injustices, often leaving these “Black” African women more powerless than other women. Therefore, the “Intersectionality theory” is interested in the marginalisation of “Black” African women and in the differences *between women* rather than differences between women and men (Pelak 2007: 2395).

This model indicates how these systems of inequalities are cross-cutting (working together) and do not function in isolation (Pelak 2007: 2395). The labour market is organised and arranged in such a way that women of different race and class backgrounds are situated differently in the hierarchy of jobs, with“Black” African women often being on the lowest level in terms of payment. Poor, “Black” African women find themselves working for other women (as domestic workers) and this working relationship is shaped by race and unequal class status. As a result, “Black” African women tend to experience discrimination and oppression more than “White” women (Lengermann and Niebrugge 2012: 481: Pelak 2007: 2397). Thus,Collins

(2000: 1) argues that “Black” African women experience more poverty and unemployment because of their race, gender and class.

“Black” African women experience multiple forms of discrimination despite the fact that some have moved up the career ladder. The fact remains that the majority of “Black” African women in South Africa still dominate the informal employment sector, which is characterised by precarity. African traditional cultures contribute to women’s subordination to men as they often dictate men to be superior to women, regardless of the women’s age, education level or marital status. Practices such as the *lobola* (bride-price) system, see men paying a certain amount of money to women’s families and the women in return have an obligation to look after their husbands’ family as their primary priority. A woman’s family of origin then becomes her secondary priority, so in most cases these families of origin do not see the need to educate and “invest” in their daughters (Lessing 1994: 14).

Some South African men are uncomfortable with women earning the same or higher wages than them, as this means that the woman is the main provider of their family, as they subsequently control the operation of the household (Lessing 1994: 14-15). The status of men is connected and tied to their position in the activities of the economy. The traditional role (breadwinner) and status of marginalised “Black” African men in South African is undermined by unemployment. These men tend to question their masculinity when they lose the ability to earn an income to provide for their families. Therefore their social power is destabilised by their inability to earn money. This sees the majority of these marginalised men feeling powerless and shameful. Their status is weakened and this perpetuates the mistreatment of women and children at the hands of men (Mosoetsa 2011: 60-61).

1.5. Chapter overview

This chapter discusses the three theoretical lenses under the Interpretivism/Constructivism paradigm that this research project draws from in narrating the stories of precarity of “Black” African women in the Mangaung township. The phenomenological approach will uncover the lived experiences of people that determine and shape the way they think and interpret their social reality. Human beings understand and make sense of their everyday lives by attaching

subjective meanings to the objects in their life-world. Therefore, human beings construct their everyday reality based on their perceptions and past experiences. The knowledge that individuals gain is an indication of how they perceive and organise their past experiences. These experiences are stored in people's minds and their mental ability enables them to interpret and understand ideas, relationships, values and other sectors that make up their reality.

The theoretical lens of existential sociology is interested in participants' emotions and feelings in their everyday lives. This approach focuses on how individuals live their lives and react to their responsibilities, choices and decisions. Existential sociology is also interested in how individuals, including these participants, view and cope with their ever changing and uncertain reality, especially as they live under precarious and unpredictable conditions. Feminist theories are relevant in this research project because the participants are women. These feminist theories focus on how women experience their situations, especially within their families and communities. The chosen feminist theories include liberal feminism, as it focuses on gender inequalities where women tend to have less access to social status, power, education and opportunities.

Furthermore, Marxist/Socialist feminism focuses on "gender-based exploitations" as women tend to be exploited in the economic, political and familial sectors, leaving them to be considered inferior and dependent on men. The Radical feminist approach focuses on "gender oppression" as women are often dominated and oppressed by men and most institutions (such as the media, the family and the church) endorse this oppression. The system of patriarchy demonstrates this domination as it promotes the interests and privileges of men to be of primary importance. Post-modern feminism argues that not all women have the same challenges and experiences, and should not be assumed and examined as "one entity". Black feminist thought agrees with post-modern feminism, as the proponents thereof argue that "Black" African and "White" women do not share similar challenges, privileges and experiences. Black feminists argue that "Black" African women experience more oppression, discrimination, poverty and unemployment in comparison to "White" women, because of their gender, race and class and expand on the theory of oppression called the "intersectionality theory".

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Introduction

The purpose of the literature review chapter is to discuss and review other research that has been done on this topic that relates to precariousness of “Black” African families in South Africa, in particular, women who survive on low wage jobs -“piece jobs”.

The family is regarded as one of the key social units that is governed and controlled by rules (Makiwane *et al*. 2012: 5; Amoateng *et al.* 2004: 3) and it influences how society is structured and organised, and how it functions (Department of Social Development 2011: 5). The family serves as a source which provides the basic necessities related to life, health and well-being, such as love, tenderness, belonging and security. Also, the family provides a place for rest and meals to be had. Clothing, clean water and sanitation are normally made available to those belonging to a family (Kimani and Kombo 2010: 12; Allison and Belgrave 2005: 59).

A family facilitates the development and maintenance of its members and serves as the “primary agency that provides for the child's biological needs and development into an integrated person capable of living in society and of maintaining and transmitting its culture" (Walsh 1982 in Zwane 2004: 2). The institution of the family simultaneously affects and is affected by other institutions (social, political, economic and cultural) and together they form the social structure of society. Therefore, the family is multidimensional in nature (Amoateng and Richter 2007: 1). The family unit is also responsible for social order within society. It is widely accepted that the elders of the family teach the younger generation traditional norms, values, beliefs, knowledge and practical skills which equip the young to survive and to transfer the same skills to their own children. The family is often also regarded as the socio-biological unit that ensures reproductive continuity of the human race (Ocholla-Ayayo 2000: 84) by procreation, adoption and forming a partnership with individuals from other families (Amoateng *et al*. 2004: 4).

The family unit is a source of emotional, material and instrumental support to its members (Department of Social Development 2011: 5). It is said that family

members provide each other with economic, social and psychological security (Kimani and Kombo 2010: 12). Family members have an obligation to fulfil care responsibilities to one another and provide special care for the young, the old and the sick (Department of Social Development 2011: 5; Amoateng *et al*. 2004: 4; Kimani and Kombo 2010: 12; Togni 1996: 24). Worldwide, however, families are experiencing problems in fulfilling their critical roles and functions such as nurturing, caring and effectively protecting their members (Ginsburg 2011: 1; Department of Social Development 2011: 20). Families are becoming smaller, executing fewer traditional functions and becoming increasingly unstable, and it is said that the "cultural value of family is weakening as the majority of family members strive for self-fulfilment" (Bradley and Weisner 1997: 22).

The family is experiencing all these challenges because of the generalised failure of the political economy and the widespread devastation caused by prolonged periods of colonialism and in South Africa, by apartheid. This global phenomenon has resulted in the weakening of South African family structures - especially "Black" African family structures - exposing them to the challenges of high levels of poverty and unemployment, unequal distribution of resources, illiteracy, gender inequalities and absent parents. Women, especially "Black" African women with minimum schooling,suffer the most from the social ills of South Africa, with poverty and unemployment taking the lead (Ginsburg 2011: 1; Department of Social Development 2011: 20). Regardless of all these challenges, the family still serves as the most important social institution in the modern society (Togni 1996: 23) because it provides more support and care for its members than any other institution (Bradley and Weisner 1997: 22).

"Black" African women are faced with the formidable challenges of taking care of their children and households while simultaneously meeting the demands of low-wage jobs (piece jobs). These low-wage jobs are regarded as precarious employment because they lack security, protection andstability, and they are economically and socially fragile (Waite 2009: 416; Dodson and Dickert 2004: 318; Walsh 1993: 14; Vij 2013: 122; Munck 2013: 747). Precarious employment differs from full-time (permanent) employment because it is short-term (temporary) and not legally bound by a contract. As a result, precarious employees do not have benefits

and safety measures – such as pension, medical aid and various allowances (Waite 2009: 416). The life and time of precarious workers is determined by external forces (Neilson and Rossiter 2006: 10). Thus, precarious jobs are poorly paid which makes it difficult for these women to support and provide for their families (Dodson and Dickert 2004: 318; Walsh 1993: 14). These women find themselves living under precarious and uncertain conditions as they employ practices and sense-making strategies to overcome various hurdles as they struggle to make ends meet (Duck 2012: 128). According to Waite (2009: 415) the concept of precarity is double-edged, as on the one hand it describes the unstable employment situation of the individual,while on the other hand it also refers to the condition experienced by society as a whole.

Precarity can be defined as a condition of existence describing a human being's life-world that is characterised by "instability, vulnerability, insecurity, uncertainty and unpredictable" (Ettlinger 2007: 320; Waite 2009: 426) and as a "juncture of material and symbolic conditions which determine an uncertainty with respect to sustained access to the resources essential to the full development of one's life" (Precarias a la deriva 2004: 158). Precarity tends to "inhabit the micro spaces of everyday life" of human beings where their fragile and unstable situation hinders them from predicting and planning for their future, and that of their families and children (Ettlinger 2007: 319-320; Waite 2009: 414; Neilson and Rossiter 2006: 10). Thus, precarity is located within the spaces where individuals "think, feel, act and interact" (Ettlinger 2007: 234).

Precarity is a life condition experienced by individuals who occupy powerless and disadvantaged positions, largely put in place by the previous oppressive government regime known as the apartheid regime (Waite 2009: 416; Herrmann and van der Maesen 2008: 14; Davidson 2013: 130). This was manifest in "all forms of insecure, contingent, flexible, unsure, not guaranteed work, from illegalisedcasualisedand temporary employment to home working, piece jobs, so called self-employment and freelancing" (Davidson 2013: 130; Neilson and Rossiter 2006: 10). Precarious individuals have to endure the contingencies and uncertainties of their daily lives as they define their everyday living conditions (Ettlinger 2007: 320; Waite 2009: 415). Therefore, "to be precariatised is to be subject to pressures and experiences that

lead to a precariat existence, of living in the present, without a secure identity or sense of development achieved through work and lifestyle" (Standing 2011: 16).

The concept of precarity is "concerned not just with factors that constitute a threat of social exclusion in the short-term, but with factors that are likely to erode people's resources and capacities in a way that raises their risk of marginalisation in the longer-term" (Herrmann and van der Maesen 2008: 12). Thus, precarity can be explained as a tendency or expressionwhich further erodes society because of change being experienced in participation strategies, (Herrmann and van der Maesen 2008: 3; Precarias a la deriva 2004: 158-159) affecting aspects of "intersubjective life, including housing, debt and the ability to build effective social relations" (Neilson and Rossiter 2006: 10). Precarious individuals tend to lack the ability to participate in the social-economic life of their communities because of limited resources due to a lack of "decision- makingpower". Thisresults in society breaking up and disintegrating into "self-sustaining" individuals. Therefore, precarious living conditions refer to the "life patterns" relevant to the welfare of both individuals and society (Herrmann and van der Maesen 2008:13; Precarias a la deriva 2004: 158-159).

This chapter will draw on literature that firstly discusses the structure and challenges facing the "Black" African family, and secondly, the inequalities that "Black" African women experience and how they manage to survive under their everyday precarious conditions.

2.2. Definition of family

The concept of family is very difficult to define as it means different things to different people. Some people view family as a married couple living with their children (i.e. the nuclear family), while others also qualify unmarried couples who live together for a long time as family. Homosexual (lesbian and gay) couples are also recognised by some as family – whether or not they raise children in their households. Singleparents and their children are becoming a widespread type of family as well. Some even consider people they have close relationships with based on love, commitment, sacrifice and obligation, as their family (Newman and Grauerholz 2002: 7; Newman 2006: 217; Amoateng *et al*. 2004: 3; Amoateng and Richter 2007: 14).

These people are referred to as “fictive kin” as they are not related (by blood, adoption or marriage) but they serve as and function like a family. For example, friends who are regarded as fictive kin are “seen socially and emotionally as kin” and they can fulfil any role (mother, sister, cousin) depending on their relationship (Allison and Belgrave 2005: 59). Therefore, people have different explanations and perceptions of what family is (Newman and Grauerholz 2002: 7; Newman 2006: 217; Amoateng *et al*. 2004: 3; Amoateng and Richter 2007: 14).

For the purpose of this research project, family will be defined as an institution of social groups that are related by either “blood (kinship), marriage (civil, customary or religious), civil union or cohabitation, adoption, foster care, affiliation or emotional attachment and go beyond particular physical residence” (Amoateng *et al*. 2004: 3). Allison and Belgrave (2005: 59) define family as “kinship-structured group” (Lamanna and Reidmann 2012: 5) that is characterised by the primary functions of socialisation (raising children), sexual regulation, affection, companionship and providing members with economic, emotional and other practical support. These functions result in the solidarity and well-being of the community and society at large (Lamanna and Reidmann 2012: 5; Togni 1996: 23). The roles of family members and the role relationships are “constructed by institutional norms and the variations within these institutional norms determine and frame the family relationships” (Amoateng and Richter 2007: 13).

The concept of family tends to be confused with that of household and the terms are sometimes used interchangeably, but they are not synonymous. “Household” refers to one or more individuals living together in the same dwelling (house, flat, room) where they share not only a living space but food and other essential resources that are important for human survival (Newman and Grauerholz 2002: 7; Newman 2006: 217: 28; Goebel 2011: 879-380). Thus, household is a social arrangement responsible for managing and controlling everyday domestic life and resource allocation (Russell 2003: 7). On the one hand, the status of family is not determined by sharing a household, as in the case of economic migration, where the father (or another family member) migrates to seek employment so that he can support his family. The father (or the mother) is still part of this family even though he or she spends most of his/her time away from “home” (Russell 2003: 12). On the other

hand, the people who comprise a household are not necessarily related or family members (Department of Social Development 2011: 28; Department of Social Development 2012: 11; Newman 2006: 217) because roommates and flat mates share a common address, household chores and expenses,even though they may not be related. In this case, common residence is a result of economic convenience instead of emotional commitment (Newman and Grauerholz 2002: 9).

The “Black” African population in South Africa defines household in terms of shared resources instead of shared residence (Russell 2008: 163). Households tend to be “fluid” as individuals move between households,and individuals may also be part of more than one household simultaneously – eating, sleeping and sharing resources (Seekings 2008: 2-3). There are various types of families in South Africa, but this research project will only concentrate on those that dominate the “Black” African population, especially in lower socio-economic areas.

2.3. The “Black” African family in South Africa

The “Black” African families in Southern Africa tend to regard descent (common heritage) as a core principle on which their families are built, unlike the stereotypical “Western” society that bases its definition of family on marriage (Russell 2003: 8; Goebel 2011: 379). Lavenda and Schultz (2008: 386) define descent as “the cultural principle that defines social categories through culturally recognised parent-child connections”. Members of a particular group of descent explain and justify their belonging to that group by describing their relation to one another and also by theircommon ancestry connection (Lavenda and Schultz 2008: 285). Spradley and McCurdy (2006: 179) define descent as “a cultural rule tying together people on the basis of reputed common ancestry”. This notion of descent serves as means to “guide inheritance, group loyalty and formation of families and extended kinship groups” (Spradley and McCurdy 2006: 179). Therefore, family membership within “Black” African society is determined by shared clan name, which means that when members have common ancestors, they then regard one another as family (Russell 2003: 29).

Traditionally within this group, marriage is not viewed as an institution that is couple-based with the expectation of setting up an independent household where children

will be raised by their parents alone, but rather as connecting two kinship groups, whereby two families (bride and groom) are joined together (Russell 2003: 23) for socio-economic purposes (Van Vlaenderen and Cakwe 2003: 71). Thus, “Black” African marriage is the bond between two kinship groups made official both legally and customarily by the payment of bride-price or bride-wealth known as *lobola* (Nguni) or *magadi* (Sotho) in the form of cattle or money to the bride’s family (Hakanson and Levine 1997: 255; Togni 1996: 29; Henn 2005: 5).

The payment of *lobola* was traditionally understood as a “transaction of reciprocal rights, duties and prescribed relationships between the two groups of relatives which continue past the death of the individual marriage partners” (Posel *et al.*2011: 106). The union of marriage socially recognises a man and woman as father and mother whereby the man gets social paternity to all the children regardless of their biological paternity (Hakanson and Levine 1997: 255). However, this system of *lobola* can be perceived as a means for men to control their wives as they have officially “bought” them (Ramphele and Boonzaier 1988: 156; Hakanson and Levine 1997: 255). The payment of *lobola* gives men “wide-ranging authority” in their marriages as they are considered the head of their households (Hakanson and Levine 1997: 255). Therefore, marriage within “Black” African societies is constructed in a manner which secures male dominance and power in the social hierarchy (Amoateng *et al*. 2004: 70).

The majority of “Black” African families in South Africa use the patrilineal kinship system (descent from the father’s side) that is based on unilineal descent (Amoateng and Richer 2007: 13). Thus the tie and descent from the father’s line is stronger than that of the mother’s, but ironically, maternal kin and presence tend to be dominant in childhood experiences (Amoateng *et al*. 2004: 9). Unilineal descent assumes that an individual’s important kin relationships come either from his or her mother’s or father’s side of the family (Lavenda and Schultz 2008: 386). Kinship is defined as a “complex system of culturally defined social relationships based on marriage and birth” (Spradley and McCurdy 2006: 179). Kinship is thus important in “Black” African families because individuals attach meaning and significance to their relationships by describing them in kinship terms. Thus the importance of friendship is explained and described on the basis of kinship. For example, a friend who is dear to someone can

be described as a sister - because she fulfils that role (Russell 2003: 8). It was believed until recently that “Black” African families tended to have stronger family ties and kin support,resulting in closer social integration compared to “White” families. But some scholars have argued that the stronger family ties and kin support of the “Black” African family are something of the past, as social and economic changes have destroyed them, leaving “Black” African families with weaker ties and kin support than contemporary “White” families (Sarkisian and Gerstel 2004: 812).

According to Fortes (1969: 242), kinship can also be binding: “it creates inescapable moral claims and obligations”. But, the reality of kinship has changed over time as many people have restricted their responsibilities and narrowed their obligations to their kin members. Today, people “choose” the kin members that they want to support, for example a son might “choose” to financially support only his parents and not his elderly aunts and uncles who might also be in need of assistance. Therefore kinship is less binding than it was in the past because it now entails “choice” and “agency”. Kin members are able to negotiate and contest what others claim from them, as well as what they claim from others. This will be demonstrated in the analysis in Chapter 5, under the theme “Family” (Seekings 2008: 3-4; Harper and Seekings 2010: 2).

Family ties within the “Black” African population go beyond the members that are alive. Many within “Black” African society consider ancestors as important members that have departed the social world and are now residing in the spiritual world, from where they look after living family members. As a result, the ancestors play a major and important role in the functioning of daily activities and interactions of the living. Ancestors are believed to be mediators who are mainly responsible for protecting, providing and guiding the living in their everyday lives. It is not uncommon for “Black” African families to perform rituals and ceremonies to their ancestors to restore orderand peace, or plead for health, gifts and success. Ancestors are consulted for guidance when there are disturbances and conflict within the family. Ancestors are also thanked by the family members after receiving “gifts” such as jobs, cars, and overall well-being, such as good health. This ritual is then known as “*mphoyabadimo*” by the South Sotho speaking population which translates as “ancestral thanksgiving”. There is also a belief that ancestors can punish individuals

and families as a whole if they neglect their responsibilities. This issue will be discussed in the analysis in Chapter 5, under the sub-theme “Ancestors” (Togni 1996: 34; McCall 1995: 256-257; Mosoetsa 2011: 29).

The dominant family structure among “Black” African families in South Africa is the extended family, (Amoateng *et al*. 2004: 14; Makiwane *et al.* 2012: 5; Henn 2005: 13-14; Bozalek 1999: 86; Bundlender and Lund 2011: 928; Harper and Seekings 2010: 2; Nkosi and Daniels 2007: 15) followed by the fast emerging structures of the single-parent family and the female-headed family (Makiwane *et al*. 2012: 9; Henn 2005: 14). According to Siqwana-Ndulo (1998: 415) the extended family is a “collectivity of people who live together, whose relationship could be traced through kinship or marriage, and who consider themselves family”. The Green Paper document on families (promoting family life and strengthening families in South Africa) also defines extended family as a family that is “multigenerational in character and includes family members who are bound by either blood or legal relations. They may cohabit or may not share the same household” (Department of Social Development 2011: 29). The extended family therefore consists of two or more generations such as grandparents, parents and grandchildren. The extended family can also include relatives such as orphans, cousins and sometimes non-related members, for the purpose of care-giving and sharing resources. The extended family structure is also of convenience to relatives who are based in rural areas when they seek employment and schooling in urban areas inhabited by their relatives (Makiwane *et al*. 2012: 5, 9).

The extended family comprises large numbers of individuals which means that household chores can possibly be divided among individuals depending on their ages and physical strengths and capabilities (Nanda and Worms 2007: 3). These family members are able to help and support each other in numerous ways: emotionally, materially and spiritually (Martin and Martin 1985: 37). African cultures promote and emphasise a “communal ethos” which is why most “Black” African families are large (Amoateng *et al*. 2007: 45). The extended family, by “virtue of its nature” can be regarded as one of the strengths of “Black” African families because of its presumed ability to withstand hardships and challenges like poverty and unemployment (Henn 2005: 44). The family structures of single-parent families and

female-headed households are emerging at an alarming rate within the “Black” African population because of influences and changes such as separation of spouses, unwed motherhood and increasing rates of divorce (Henn 2005: 40; Makiwane *et al*. 2012: 9). Nevertheless, Harper and Seekings (2010: 2) state that some social scientists argue that the “Black” African family in South Africa has undergone change which has caused the “Black” African family to shrink with time. This shrinkage has resulted in “Black” African family structures also shifting from the common extended family to nuclear family structures. This shift has decreased the opportunities of individuals making claims on their kin (Harper and Seekings 2010: 2; Ziehl 2002: 30). The shrinkage within the“Black” African families is caused mainly by the dissolution and modification of family bonds because individuals have restricted their responsibilities and obligations towards each other. This results in poverty intensifying, as financial support, emotional support and practical assistance have been reduced in comparison to what they were in the past (Harper and Seekings 2010: 2).

2.3.1. Women in the “Black” African family

Women in the “Black” African tradition are considered to be the backbone of the family because they possess not only the power to organise their families, but also to bind the society together (Mosoetsa 2011: 44; Taiwo 2010: 230-231). Women as child bearers tend to be responsible for teaching their children language, history, oral culture, habits and other forms of knowledge. Men also transmit knowledge to their children - especially of traditions and rituals meant solely for men. Thus parents (women and men) who are involved in their children’s lives are assumed to instil traditional values and customs to their children, as well as to those who are in their care (Taiwo 2010: 230; Moorhouse and Cunningham 2012: 494). Men are assumed to be the head of the family and the leaders ofsociety, making them the controlling agents in the family, whereas women traditionally are supposed to serve as the supporting structure (Taiwo 2010: 232). However, women’s influence in family life is more enduring due to their “traditional care-giving roles” which place them in an exceptional position of producing and sustaining life as well as instilling “socio-religious values and morals in the family” (Taiwo 2010: 232). Thus, women are predominantly responsible for teaching their children social, ethical and moral values

which form part of the cultural standards that determine normative behaviour and actions. The “Black” African family is typically characterised by strong women who hold a significant position in the family. Therefore women play an important part in the survival of the “Black” African family – this issue will be discussed in the analysis in Chapter 5, under the sub-theme “Women are the backbone of the family” (Taiwo 2010: 231-232).

The gender division of labour is one of the factors that influence how “Black” African families in South Africa function (Mosoetsa 2011: 20; Department of Social Development 2011: 40). Women tend to be responsible for the operation of the household and the well-being of the family members, as opposed to men, who are mainly responsible for the family income (Perrone 2009: 4; Department of Social Development 2011: 40). Womanhood is then associated with informal work and caring while manhood is linked with formal wage labour (Mosoetsa 2011: 20; Bak 2008: 258). Traditional gender ideologies see women as homemakers who are responsible for the unpaid tasks of running the household, raising children and caring for the elders, whereas men are seen as breadwinners and providers for their households (Davis and Greenstein 2009: 90; Milkie and Peltola 1999: 477-478; Gronlund 2007: 481; Lachance-Grzela and Bouchard 2010: 769). These unpaid tasks, known as social reproduction, are characterised by three aspects, which are: biological (child-bearing); general (cooking, cleaning and maintaining the physical and mental life); and socialisation (transmission of values, norms and roles) (Mosoetsa 2011: 20). Therefore, women perform these unpaid tasks to ensure that the needs of their family members are met and to maintain themselves, their home, the possessions of the family (Davis and Greenstein 2009: 90; Milkie and Peltola 1999: 477-478; Gronlund 2007: 481; Lachance-Grzela and Bouchard 2010: 769; Mosoetsa 2011: 20) and the economy (Mosoetsa 2011: 20).

Everyday household tasks are not only time consuming but also physically strenuous and tiring (Milkie and Peltola 1999: 477-478; Lachance-Grzela and Bouchard 2010: 769; Rama and Richter 2007: 163). The tasks done by men are seen as more challenging and creative, whereas those of female family memberstend to be regarded as repetitive and dirtier (Milkie and Peltola 1999: 477-478; Lachance-Grzela and Bouchard 2010: 769). Thus, this gender division of labour in the “Black”

African population in South Africa is rooted in the pre-and post- colonial indigenous rural power structures (Bak 2008: 258). Nonetheless, a variety of factors have forced "Black" African women to enter the work force in search of mere survival. Even today, some "Black" African men are in charge of the upbringing of their children, which results in the reduction of the divisions between traditional gender roles as described earlier (Perrone 2009: 4).

Care-giving (especially to children and the elderly) forms part of the domestic responsibilities that women are expected to fulfil on a daily basis, sometimes with very few resources at their disposal (Amoateng *et al*. 2004: 14; Bozalek 1999: 85; Makiwane *et al*. 2012: 52). The process of care-giving is thus a gendered phenomenon that befallswomen. Women who are solely responsible for their household finances are still expected to provide care for their families – thereby having to fulfil both the roles of the "man" and the "woman" (Makiwane *et al*. 2012: 52; Budlender and Lund 2011: 927). The care-giving that is provided by these women is not formally acknowledged because it is unpaid work and normally taken for granted. At the same time, care-giving is perceived to be important to the survival and sustenance of the family. "Black" African families seemingly share the little they have with one another to promote the wellness of every family member. Reciprocity is valued in most "Black" African families, as care-giving is seen as a lifelong obligation to care for others, but also to be cared for in return, especially when experiencing difficulties, whether physically or financially. Older children - in particular daughters - tend to provide care to their younger siblings and grandparents in the absence of their mothers (Makiwane *et al*. 2012: 51, Bozalek 1999: 86). Parents (mothers) provide their children or dependents with daily necessities and to a large extent expect the children to care for them in return when they reach old age (Bozalek 1999).

Child-bearing is very important within the African culture because children give women the status of motherhood (Van Vlaenderen and Cakwe 2003: 70; Henn 2005: 6). Motherhood is a socially constructed ideology whereby women are perceived as "natural mothers, immediately able to care for their babies and ultimately fulfilled in this role of selfless carer and nurturer" (Choi *et al*. 2005: 168). Mothers are also seen as "primary caretakers and strong matriarchs symbolising familial ties, unconditional

love and loyalty" (Moorhouse and Cunningham 2012: 494). "Black" African women are defined by strategies of "survival" and "power" as they are constantly trying to care for their families (Moore 2013: 153). Society applies these ideologies of motherhood to determine and define good mothers as women who are physically and emotionally present in their children's lives (Moorhouse and Cunningham 2012: 494). However, in practice, motherhood tends to be complicated, as women have different circumstances and challenges (Choi *et al*. 2005: 198).

Many men, especially in the past, had polygamous marriages to prevent them from being childless. Children are very important members within the "Black" African family, because when older, they can assist their mothers with household chores and responsibilities. Children not only increase the family membership but also can improve the financial functioning of the family (Henn 2005: 6). Children (daughters) together with their mothers serve as the most important source of domestic labour as they help their mothers with daily preparation of food and taking care of dependents (Ocholla-Ayayo 2000: 99). Children's contributions to household chores and tasks is beneficial not only to the household, but to the children themselves, as it forms part of the learning process which is important for their adaptation and survival (Rama and Richter 2007: 141). Gender defines power differences within childhood, because most of the chores that children help out with are gendered. Therefore gender roles develop from an early age right through to the adolescent stage and young adulthood, and then get consolidated during adult life. This explains why "Black" African families are often run on fixed patriarchal principles internalised and accepted by both men and women – this issue will be discussed in the analysis in Chapter 5, sub-theme "Gender and the performance of mundane tasks" (Rama and Richter 2007: 141; Makiwane *et al*. 2012: 52; Van Vlaenderen and Cakwe 2003: 70).

2.3.2. Impact of socio-political factors on the "Black" African family

Socio-political factors such as those forged during the eras of colonialism and apartheid have caused disruptions and changes within the"Black" African families in South Africa. These factors led to "Black" African families being pressurised and disorganised politically, socially, culturally and economically (Mosoetsa 2011: 10; Russell 2003: 30; Henn 2005: 6). These socio-political factors left behind the legacy of the "state-orchestrated destruction of family life", "high rates of unemployment"

and the high and widespread “prevalence of HIV/AIDS” (Budlender and Lund 2011: 926). The “Black” African community went through difficulties and challenges which caused family structures to undergo serious transformations with deleterious consequences (Amoateng and Richter 2007: 6; Department of Social Development 2011: 24). The disruption of the family has resulted in a situation where the majority of “Black” African women“forced” to occupy both the roles of breadwinner and caregiver under the precarious circumstances of high unemployment and limited economic opportunities (Budlender and Lund 2011: 926). The “Black” African family life was systematically fragmented as family unity was threatened and undermined by institutions such as the still-prevalent migrant labour system (Appolis 1996: 1). Therefore, colonialism and apartheid played an important and major role in shaping and determining the outcome of South African families (Budlender and Lund 2011: 926; Nkosi and Daniels 2007: 13; Department of Social Development 2011: 24).

The history of the “Black” African population of South Africa is characterised and defined by “impoverishment, diminishment, exploitation and brutal treatment” from the colonial and apartheid governments (Nkosi and Daniels 2007: 13). The “Black” African people were excluded from their own government where they were “forbidden” from participating and they did not have the means to defend their infringed rights. “Black” African people did not lose only their freedom, but to some extent their customs and traditions as well (Henn 2005: 7). “White” settlers forcefully dispossessed land ownership from the “Black” African people in an attempt to force them to be wage labourers. Laws that restricted “Black” African people from owning land were implemented and “Black” African people were forced to pay tax in cash (which forced them into remunerated jobs and eroded subsistence survival). The Natives Land Act of 1913 prohibited the “Black” African population from either owning or occupying land situated outside the reserves and locations. This Act allowed “Black” African people to own only 7% of the land in South Africa (Kepe *et al*. 2008: 145-146). Therefore, the dispossessionof land has exposed the “Black” African people to a variety of struggles which resulted in the weakening and displacement of the ‘Black” African family (Kepe *et al*. 2008: 145-146; Department of Social Development 2011: 24).

The colonial rule further weakened the “Black” African family firstly by enforcing labour migration, which forced families to live apart. Men (husbands, fathers and sons) who were breadwinners were forced to leave their families behind in rural areas in search of urban employment (mining industry, factories and working as gardeners) which paid extremely low wages. This system of labour migration strained the “Black” African family severely because the men were absent for long periods of time (Amoateng *et al.* 2004: 11; Amoateng *et al*. 2007: 56; Bak 2008: 259; Holborn and Eddy 2011: 5; Henn 2005: 7; Nkosi and Daniels 2007: 13-14; Department of Social Development 2011: 25). The migratory labour system then destroyed family bonds and time spent apart caused misery to their loved ones, leading to a “lonely wife, anxious mothers and insecure children” (Holborn and Eddy 2011: 5). The separation of men from their families resulted in men participating in extra-marital sex in the urban areas and also provided them little opportunity to know and engage with their children (Budlender and Lund 2011: 298; Holborn and Eddy 2011: 5).

The migrant male workers sent cash remittances to their families which often served as their main source of income (Amoateng *et al*. 2007: 56; Russell 2003: 32-33). This resulted in the permanent change of division of labour, as women, with the help of their children, were left to do all the household work which included performing small-scale agricultural activities (Henn 2005: 7). Migrant workers on the mines were housed in same-sex hostels with dubious sanitary standards and no sense of privacy (Henn 2005: 12; Department of Social Development 2011: 25). As can be expected, this housing system undermined their traditional African set-up, culture and family system. The hostel housing system brought about social problems such as the erosion of roles and responsibilities of the family, and social and physical dislocation (Department of Social Development 2011: 25). Women also started migrating to the cities to work mostly as domestic workers. This was done to support themselves and their families, and during their stints in town they usually lived in the domestic servant’s quarters of private households - which is often still the case in South Africa (Ginsburg 2011: 1; Russell 2003: 32; Henn 2005: 12). These living arrangements were not culturally bound and prescribed as in the rural areas, and also led to the dysfunction of the “Black” African family as women were away from their children, their husbands and their traditional duties (Russell 2003: 32).

Secondly, policies, laws and practices were implemented to further deplete and diminish “Black” African families (Nkosi and Daniels 2007: 13; Henn 2005: 7). “Black” African people were discriminated against and dominated because of their race and their concomitant lack of power (Appolis 1996: 3). The Native Land Act served as the cornerstone that aimed at forcefully removing the “Black” African people from their rightful land (Kepe *et al.* 2008: 146; Henn 2005: 7; Department of Social Development 2011: 25-26). The government under “White” rule managed to not only drive the “Black” African people out from their own land, but also forcefully impoverished and weakened their family lives (Appolis 1996: 92) by causing them to experience economic, physical and psychological suffering (Bozalek 1999: 88). These already poor and struggling “Black” Africans were expected to pay tax to occupy their “own” land (homelands) and had to work as farmers on the land to sustain their families (Appolis 1996: 92).

“Race” and “culture” (socially constructed markers designed by “White” settlers used to determine the division between inferiority and superiority) were used as tools to exclude all African people from all forms of life opportunities. The “White” government defined “race” as a biological concept referring to “genetic inheritances, descent and physical features” (Erasmus 2008: 170) whereas culture was understood as “behavioural characteristics as an expression of race, in terms of progression of civilisation” (Erasmus 2008: 170). Thus, race was used to differentiate between population groups, whereby “White” people were considered to be full citizens, “Indians” and “Coloureds” were partial citizens and “Black African” people were at the bottom of the hierarchy and were seen as “tribal subjects” (Erasmus 2008: 171-172).

This classification resulted in unequal access to education, remuneration, housing, health, employment and other social services. Race became “normalised and naturalistic not only in its taken for granted visibility but also through assumptions about culture - which was understood as an expression of race” (Erasmus 2008: 172). Thus, “Black” African people were seen only as cheap labourers (domestic workers, physical labourers and gardeners) worthy of low earnings who occupied unviable geographical locations (townships or rural areas where the homelands were created) with little or no employment opportunities (Henn 2005: 7; Department of

Social Development 2011: 25-26). This race classification has caused immeasurable human damage within the “Black” African family (Lemon 1991: 10). It is therefore clear and evident that the colonial era not only introduced the generalised domination of “Black” African people but also drastically disrupted their family lives (Henn 2005: 8).

The introduction of the apartheid system in South Africa intensified racial discrimination and oppression, whereby “Black” African people, especially women, were excluded from socio-economic and other opportunities (Ginsburg 2011: 1; Department of Social Development 2011: 26). The discriminatory policies of the apartheid government weighed more on “Black” African women as their financial and personal options were limited and this left the majority of them living in poor conditions (Ginsburg 2011: 1). This led to unequal distribution of power, where “White” people gained supremacy by dominating “Black” African people (Henn 2005: 9). During this epoch in the history of South Africa, the unequal system of welfare advantages benefited only the “White” population group (Bozalek 1999: 88). The apartheid government also prohibited interracial sex and marriages between these groups as these were regarded as taboo (Bystrom 2010:142). The apartheid economy thrived because of the poorly paid labour of “Black” African workers, who were only allowed to stay in towns and cities on a migrant basis to fulfil the interest of “White” people. These “Black” African people had to carry so-called “passes” on their person that authorised them to stay in areas designated for “Whites” only (Budlender and Lund 2011: 298).

The policies and legislation of the apartheid system impacted the “Black” African family negatively. “Black” African people steadfastly fought against “White” domination for liberation which often resulted in the apartheid government arresting, executing, killing and torturing these protesters and activists (Henn 2005: 9; Department of Social Development 2011: 26- 27). Many struggle fighters were forced to go into exile as they were fleeing from the notorious apartheid police. Some of them disappeared off the face of the earth –with their families never seeing or hearing from them again. During these turbulent times, many families lived with constant anxiety and worry as they did not know their family members’ whereabouts and well-being. Many “Black” African people sacrificed their family lives for the

struggle of liberation (Appolis 1996: 1-2). “Black” African townships were in constant political upheaval where violence and fighting were daily occurrences, and these violent acts – becoming a way of life - also contributed to the erosion of the“Black” African family life (Henn 2005: 9; Department of Social Development 2011: 26- 27).

Influx control policies were intended to restrict and limit the movement of “Black” African people into citiesand urban areas (Budlender and Lund 2011: 929; Russell 2003: 30; Henn 2005: 9). “Black” African people who worked and lived in “White” residential areas needed to carry a valid pass which granted them permission to be within those areas. This resulted in “Black” African families being fragmented and disunited, as in most cases fathers were allowed to work in urban areas but they were not allowed to take their wives and childrenwith them. “Black” African people were not allowed to have permanent residence in urban areas, and only a few were allowed to work there. The laws and regulations of segregation promoted “Whites” to occupy the suburbs and “Black” African people to live in the townships. Thus, “Black” African and “White” people could not share residential areas and those “Black” Africans who lived in “White” areas without permission were forcefully removed (Budlender and Lund 2011: 929; Appolis 1996: 94-95; Bozalek 1999: 87-88; Henn 2005: 9-10).

Townships, including the Mangaung township (part of the geographical area of Bloemfontein within which this research was undertaken) are vivid manifestations of the racial segregation policies of the Group Areas Act of the apartheid government. The Act was enforced to relocate racial groups to separate residential areas and business sections (Krige 1991: 104; Pillay 2010: 1; Mosoetsa 2011: 10). Batho location (see Appendix F) was the first “African residential area” of the Mangaung township.It is situated 3.3 kilometres from the central business district (CBD), and was the first area to have services (pharmacy, crèche, post office, library and bus services) for the “Black” African population of Bloemfontein (Krige 1991: 107). Townships were designed and constructed to be far away from the “White” residential areas and closer to the industrial areas (Lemon 1991: 19). Townships then were built and reserved strictly for “Black” African people who were working in the cities. The township population increased rapidly as people migrated from the poor rural areas (villages) to the cities. The majority of people who live in townships

earn low wages and poverty is their everyday situation (Lemon 1991: 19; Bak 2008: 255-256; Mosoetsa 2011: 11). Therefore, townships were established as a means to create labourer reserves, and not to “maintain, nurture and reproduce families and kinship systems” (Mosoetsa 2011: 25).

The “White” government built sub-economic houses for “Black” Africans in the townships. These houses were built with cheap materials, having small rooms, and sometimes did not have doors inside and had little or no yard space. “Black” African families were further impoverished by the apartheid government, which made it difficult to access these houses because of the expensive rent (Appolis 1996: 94). The housing and living conditions, forced removals and segregation experienced by the “Black” African population have left both physical and emotional scars (Lemon 1991: 10). The apartheid legacy of spatial imbalances is still evident and visible in townships today (Mosoetsa 2011: 10) as livelihoods are characterised and shaped by past experiences of racial oppression, violence, poverty and intolerable living conditions (Bak 2008: 258).

2.4. Consequences of socio-political factors on “Black” African families

South Africa’s socio-political history has severely and harshly impacted “Black” African family life (Nkosi and Daniels 2007: 13; Henn 2005: 11) exposing it to social ills such as poverty, unemployment, unequal distribution of resources and limited economic opportunities. These social ills mostly affected “Black” African women as they were provided with fewer, if any, opportunities (Holborn and Eddy 2011: 1; Department of Social Development 2011: 31). “Black” African women were also deprived of educational opportunities, with the majority only going as far as the lower standards of secondary schooling (Makiwane *et al*. 2012: 35-36). The disruption within “Black” African families has resulted in the majority of women (especially those from the resource-poor areas) facing the challenges of fulfilling both the roles of breadwinner and of care-giver to their families and children. Women are then forced to participate in paid employment where they earn minimum wages as a means of caring for their childrenfinancially. The majority of “Black” African women, therefore, serve as both the main provider (household head) and care-giver to their children (Budlender and Lund 2011: 926-930).

Many “Black” African women have children outside of wedlock and they are faced with the challenges of raising these children without any assistance from these children’s fathers. Some of these women have children by different fathers, and in cases where fathers do not comply with the legal obligation of financially supporting their children, they have to raise these children on their own – without emotional or physical assistance from the fathers (Budlender and Lund 2011: 926-930). The pattern of absent fathers continues to haunt the “Black” African nation as they experience lower marriage rates, more couples cohabitating, high prevalence of extra-marital childbearing, and fewer men involved in childcare activities (Budlender and Lund 2011: 926-930; Posel *et al*. 2011: 102). Single mothers are often expected to keep their families alive and intact without any form of support from men. They serve as the main source of support to their own families, where they occupy different roles, including those of mother, sister, daughter, lover, guardian and care-giver (Bak 2008: 260).

2.4.1. Female-headed households

The majority of “Black” African women in South African are faced with the challenges of being single parents where they have to fulfil roles of both the mother and father in their children’s lives and upbringing (Budlender and Lund 2011: 926; Holborn and Eddy 2011: 3; Ratele *et al.* 2012: 554; Ocholla-Ayayo 2000: 94). As a result, the phenomenon of female-headed household families is the fastest growing family structure in post-apartheid South Africa (Kimani and Kombo 2010: 13; Henn 2005: 14; Ziehl 1994: 74). Absent fathers can be defined as fathers who do not interact with or are not interested in their children and their families on a regular basis (some have no contact at all) and therefore are not involved in family affairs and the family’s survival (Morrell and Richer 2006: 2; Kimani and Kombo 2010: 12). The absence of fathers is caused by factors such as migrant employment, death, separation, divorce, abandonment, alcoholism, unemployment, poverty, income inequality, gender power, masculinity ideologies and consequences of intimate partner violence (Kimani and Kombo 2010:12; Ratele *et al*. 2012: 554; Holborn and Eddy 2011: 3).

The age at which fathers leave their children is very important because it influences how these children perceive gender (socially constructed roles of being male or female) and the world (Kimani and Kombo 2010: 12). Absent fathers leave a gap in

their children's lives and development as this can have an effect on their "cognitive development, intellectual functioning, achievement in school and emotional support" (Holborn and Eddy 2011: 4). The absence of the father from home puts family life under pressure by creating tensions, family break-ups, motivation and disciplinary problems which in turn affect children's emotional, social, academic and psychological progress (Ratele *et al*. 2012: 554; Kimani and Kombo 2010: 12). This desertion not only leaves the remaining family members feeling rejected, but also contributes to financial, social and emotional problems (Kimani and Kombo 2010: 18).

Therefore the absence of fathers contributes to the family's experience of precarity both on a physical and on a psychological level (Kimani and Kombo 2010: 18). It is said thatmost fathers abandon their duties because they cannot bear the burden of failing as primary providers for their families(Holborn and Eddy 2011: 4; Kimani and Kombo 2010: 12).This is because they do not generate sufficient income as poorly educated, unskilled (or semi-skilled), and often low-earning workers (Holborn and Eddy 2011: 5). Fathers also abscond on their responsibilities because of frustration linked to their lack of money and resources (Kimani and Kombo 2010: 20). These men then often look for comfort in substances such as alcohol and they become unresponsive to the essential needs and requirements of their families (Holborn and Eddy 2011: 5).

South Africa is recorded as one of the countries with the highest rate of absent fathers in the world (Richter *et al*. 2012: 2; Ratele *et al*. 2012: 553). The post-apartheid era has witnessed an increase in children living without their fathers. This decline of active fathers serves as evidence that the "Black" African family is transforming and facing multiple crises (Ratele *et al*. 2012: 553). However, there are fathers who are active (fully or partially) in their children's lives despite not living together with them. Children with fathers who take interest in their endeavours tend to achieve better results at school, have higher self-esteem and are more secure in their friendships and relationships (Richter *et al*. 2012: 2).

Women, and especially those who are mothers who are in stable and supportive relationships with their partners tend to "experience lower levels of family stress, (are) less likely to suffer mental problems and (they) derive greater satisfaction from

their roles as mothers" (Richter *et al*. 2012: 2). The presence of fathers or partnerstends to contribute to the women's well-being and happiness and also acts as a buffer to protect children from mothers who might be "overburdened, distant and demoralised" (Richter *et al*. 2012: 2). Present fathers can also protect their children and families from potential abuse and exploitation from other men or the community at large (Richter *et al*. 2012: 2-3). Therefore, female-headed households are supposedly less resourceful in comparison to male-headed households (where there are both parents present), although single women strive to invest in the well-being (education, health, food, clothing) of their children (Richter *et al*. 2012: 3).

Most women then rely on support from their own parents, siblings and sometimes relatives to assist with the raising of the children and operation of the household (Holborn and Eddy 2011: 1-5). Single parents therefore depend on their family members for support (Kimani and Kombo 2010: 13; Madhavan and Roy 2011: 2) and sometimes male relatives (uncles, grandfathers, older brothers) act as social fathers by supporting the mothers and children, providing for children's livelihood and education and also providing paternal love and guidance (Richter *et al*. 2012: 2; Kimani and Kombo 2010: 13). Women are left to fill the responsibility of being the head of thehousehold, which in the "Black" African society and culture is regarded as a man's role. The head of the household is the main income earner and the primary decision-maker of the household. Therefore "Black" African women today fulfil the responsibilities of both the head of the household (they are the main income earner) and that of homemaker, where they take care of all the family members (Budlender and Lund 2011: 391; Richter *et al*. 2012: 4). These women tend to be overworked, as they take on all the family responsibilities, family maintenance and community commitments such as attending meetings, funerals and weddings. Thus, "Black" African women are forced to rise up to the challenge to fill the void left behind by their absent husbands and partners (Kimani and Kombo 2010: 21).

2.4.2. Patriarchal society (Gender inequalities)

The woman's position in South African society is still shaped by patriarchal ideologies that promote men's supremacy over women (Msibi 2009: 51). The apartheid government exacerbated this superiority as "White" men controlled the

country with unquestionable authority. Both “Black” African and “White” men,regardless of the inequalities between them, were seen as the heads (leaders) of their own families and households, and they were responsible for the income, decision making and they also held the power (Msibi 2009: 52). Patriarchy is defined in Coetzee (2001: 300) as the “system of domination of men over women, which transcends different economic systems, eras, regions and class”. Patriarchy is one of the main factors which characterise the typical “Black” African family, whereby authority and decisive power are vested in men, especially the elderly (Therborn 2006: 27).

In a traditional patrilineal system, a man is the head of the family (and never a woman) and even in the matrilineal society the leadership is given to the maternal uncle (Ocholla-Ayayo 2000: 94; Coetzee 2001: 300). Patriarchy dictates women to take care of their household and the well-being of their family members and to serve their male counterparts in silence (Horn 1991: 27; Coetzee 2001: 300). Working women are still expected to fulfil their daily household tasks on their return from work. Family and household duties are the primary responsibilities of women and employment is considered a secondary concern. Moreover, women are often exploited at their work place in addition to their households as they have to perform this double role (Horn 1991: 27-28).

Patriarchy is a cultural practice that is still embedded in South African society. It leads to the reinforcement of the exclusion and oppression of women - especially “Black” African women - from economic opportunities and other sectors (Groenmeyer 2011: 250-251; Department of Social Development 2011: 39). Culture can be defined as the “shared knowledge and schemes created by a set of people for perceiving, interpreting, expressing and responding to the social realities around them” (Ngubane 2010: 19). Culture can then be viewed as the totality of people’s ways of living (Meena 1992: 7) whereby patriarchal ideologies are constructed and perceived as part of the “way things have always been, were meant to be and always will be” (Horn 1991: 29).

According to Bentley (2004: 247-248) gender inequalities (as experienced in South African society) are a feature of culture and tradition. Thus, the unequal treatment that women experience in their homes, in their families, in the mainstream economy

and in other sectors is perpetuated and promoted by culture. Culturally, women occupy a lower status than men because their lives, agency and well-beingare perceived to have less value. This unequal status relationship is what underlies and triggers discrimination against women. Discrimination is more of a symptom than a cause because it is the product of the way this society thinks, functions and assumes. Economic inequalities serve as an example of this symptom which represents deeper inequality (Bentley 2004: 248). The “exploitation” and “subjugation” that women experience is not a natural phenomenon but rather a social occurrence, and it is materially based (Horn 1991:26). Therefore, gender oppression is socially constructed through social relations (Bentley 2004: 248).

South African society is still plagued by various forms of gender inequalities characterised by deep-rooted unequal sharing of the burden of adversities and hardships between women and men (Taiwo 2010: 233-234). The post-apartheid government has tried to remedy these gender inequalities by implementing gender sensitive policies which have benefited many women. However, uneducated “Black” African women still suffer as inequalities are part of their everyday life (Groenmeyer 2011: 249). Women, especially“Black” African women, bear the brunt of the majority of the hardships and misfortunes as they were and still are excluded and restricted or limited from actively participating in economic, social and political affairs. “Black” African people were exposed to an education system during the apartheid period that disadvantaged them all, especially women. Thus, “Black” African women had little opportunity to do or to become what they desired. This historic and ongoing domination and oppression of women makes it harder for them to enter the employment sector. Therefore, gender norms leading to gender inequalities see women – even today - suffering from injustices and other forms of oppression (Taiwo 2010: 235-237).

“Black” African women in South Africa with minimum schooling form part of the marginalised group because of their “social vulnerability status” as they have limited access to information and knowledge, employment opportunities and education (Newton 2012: 198, Van Niekerk and Van Niekerk 2009: 127-128). These women are then ranked at the bottom when it comes to their involvement and participation in the economic, social and political matters of the country as they are exposed to

fewer prospects (Krumer-Nevo 2005: 88; King 1988: 42-43; Windsor *et al.* 2011: 291; Ngubane 2010: 16). The "intersection of gender, race and class" categories have haunted "Black" African women for decades (Groenmeyer 2011: 256-257). Transformed South Africa is still struggling to overcome these burdens of race-, class- and gender-based inequalities which were inherited during colonialism and apartheid (Kehler 2001: 41) and are perpetuated in today's society. The economic sector still reflects racial inequalities, with "Black" African people being less active compared to other racial groups. This sector also entrenches gender inequalities, with women - especially "Black" African women - having fewer benefits (Bentley 2004: 247). Poverty and precarious living conditions are some of the practical challenges facing "Black" African women as a result of this "triple form of oppression" (Ngubane 2010: 16).

2.4.3. Part- time employment ("piece jobs")

As mentioned before, "Black" African women in South Africa dominate the informal economy (Ntuli and Wittenberg 2013: 1; Barcheisi 2008: 119; Oosthuizen 2012: 180) because of the consequences of being culturally and legally discriminated against in the past and even in the present (Ntuli and Wittenberg 2013: 1; Barcheisi 2008: 119). The majority of the "Black" African people were incorporated into wage labour with subordinate status characterised by "instability, political repression and racial segregation" (Barcheisi 2008: 119). The new post-apartheid government aims to remedy the situation by implementing constitutional change with laws that promote fair and equal treatment of "Black" African women in the labour market (Ntuli and Wittenberg 2013: 1). However, the labour market is often faced by the uncomfortable reality of social inequality which results in the majority of "Black" African people facing the challenge of being socially vulnerable (Barcheisi 2008: 120).

The participation of educated "Black" African women in the formal economy has increased, but uneducated and unskilled women are the majority of this group, and still dominate the informal economy in sectors such as agriculture, hospitality, domestic work, retail and street vending (Ntuli and Wittenberg 2013: 1; Oosthuizen 2012: 180; Lund 2002: 181). Some women are self-employed and work from their homes, and others do waged jobs from their own homes, street corners or rotating markets (Lund 2002: 181). These uneducated women (or women with very limited

skills and formal training) struggle to compete for employment in the labour market as they do not have the minimum requirements needed to enter the formal employment sector. They therefore settle for part-time employment – “piece jobs” - which remunerate them with low wages (Posel and Muller 2008: 467; Oosthuizen 2012: 180). Therefore, the “Black” African population – and especially “Black” African women with lower skills - tend to be found in the lower ranks of this precarious economy (Lund 2002: 180).

The employment opportunities within the informal economy are mainly part-time, temporary and wage-based, where employees do not have the same benefits as those of the formal economy, such as retirement packages, medical insurance and a housing allowance (Valodia *et al*. 2006: 91). Informal employees are not required to pay tax, given their meagre income (McKeever 1998: 1211). Part-time employment - “piece jobs” - is characterised by precarious conditions of insecurity, instability, unpredictability and unreliability. In most cases, working conditions tend to be unpleasant with higher risks, and the employer is often not held responsible for the safety of these employees (Lund 2002: 180). The working conditions and environment of the informal economy often do not have to meet governmental regulations as business owners often operate without a licence. The lack of structure sees the employees (who are usually poor “Black” African women) being exploited even more. The nature of this work makes them extremely vulnerable. Their overall lack of power renders them even more defenceless when they encounter injustices in the work place (McKeever 1998: 1212). This economy has effectively resulted in the “working poor” with no platform to negotiate their wages and conditions of employment (Valodia *et al*. 2006: 91).

2.4.4. Feminisation of poverty

As clearly indicated earlier, poverty and socio-economic inequalities are a chronic and persistent reality for many South Africans - especially unskilled “Black” African women. The past discriminatory and exclusionary policies of the apartheid government have seen the distribution of wealth favouring the rich, leaving poor households poverty-stricken (Mosoetsa 2011:1; Altman *et al*. 2009: 345; Department of Social Development 2011: 37). According to Mosoetsa (2011: 28) suffering in poverty is perceived to be the responsibility of the individual, and as a result, the

majority of poor people are ashamed of their situation and try to hide it. Households, being private, are the places where “people can conceal their poverty” (Mosoetsa 2011: 28). Thus, poverty prevents families from fulfilling their various roles within society and makes it hard for these members to meet their basic needs (Department of Social Development 2011: 37). The impact of poverty has left many households “on the brink of collapse” (Mosoetsa 2011: 1) and their strength and ability to go on is attributed to women, in particular older women, who are “fulcrums on which household survival turns” (Mosoetsa 2011: 1). Therefore, poverty is still a major social problem facing the post-apartheid government,despite the poverty alleviation policies and programmes in place (Adeola 2005: 3).

Family poverty can be described as a state in which a family earns less than a minimum amount of income, and this income is insufficient as it hampers the family from covering its basic costs (Adeola 2005: 3; Mokomane 2012: 1). Objective social indicators (income level, consumption expenditures and housing standards) and subjective social indicators (attitude, needs and perception of social condition) are important in determining the extent of the poverty. This generalised poverty is the “inability to maintain a standard of living” which is measured by the “basic consumption needs or income required to satisfy those needs” (Kehler 2001: 41). Poverty can be measured according to the determinants of well-being, or by the access people have to these determinants of well-being. Therefore, poverty can narrowly be understood as the “inability of individuals, households, families or the community to command sufficient resources to satisfy a socially accepted minimum standard of living” (Kehler 2001: 41).

Poverty in South Africa has a gender dimension that sees the claimed“equal status” of women challenged (Bentley 2004: 247; Bastos *et al*. 2009: 765). Poverty also poses a threat to their human rights as citizens. The feminisation of poverty is important to note because the United Nation Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA- report on the status of women in Africa, 1997) found that women and men experience poverty differently. Women tend to experience poverty more severely because of the burden they bear of caring for their children and other family members under these precarious and strenuous conditions (Bentley 2004: 247). On the one hand, women often represent social strength as they are able to raise their

children under very challenging circumstances. On the other hand, mothering and care under these circumstances can be extremely stressful, which puts these mothers in an even more vulnerable position (Bak 2008: 260). Single mothers live in more extreme poverty compared to married women and women with partners, because they are solely responsible not only for the household income, but also for the emotional and physical care of its members (Adeola 2005: 5). Changes such as an increase in the number of divorces and female-headed households have led to more women being vulnerable to poverty (Bastos *et al*. 2009: 765).

2.4.5. Unemployment

Unemployment still torments South African society and the government after 20 years of democracy (Naude and Serumaga-Zake 2001: 261; Klasen and Woolard 2008: 2; Kingdon and Knights 2004: 391) as many poor households have turned into the “sole node of production” (Mosoetsa 2011: 24). According to the December 2013 estimates compiled by Statistics South Africa, 24.1% of the South African population was unemployed, where women were in the majority with 26.3% compared to men who had unemployment rates of 24.1% (Statistic South Africa, Quarterly Labour Force Survey Quarter 4- 2013: 2). More men are employed than women and they tend to earn higher wages despite having similar educational backgrounds (Altman and Ngandu 2010: 53). Thus, unemployment differs according to gender, region (urban or rural) and education- educated people tend to have better skills and are more employable (Kingdon and Knights 2004: 391). Unemployment is of serious concern as it affects the “economic welfare, production, erosion of human capital, social exclusion, crime and social instability” (Kingdon and Knights 2004: 391). The increasing unemployment rate is a serious threat facing the South African population, especially disadvantaged women. People who are unemployed usually have lower levels of happiness and well-being because they lack monetary resources to meet their everyday needs (Kingdon and Knights 2004: 393).The primary goal for unemployed people who do not have other means of securing an income and sustaining their livelihood is pure survival (Mosoetsa 2011: 24).

Unemployment and poverty place many “Black” African families and households under threat,as vulnerable family members depend on their family and kinship networks for survival (Mosoetsa 2011: 25). As a result, the unemployed individuals

tend to be attached to their family members and households as they depend on them for access to the basic means needed to ensure survival (Klasen and Woolard 2008: 4). Thus, these households become the “source of security” for the unemployed (Mosoetsa 2011: 1).The unemployed therefore rely on the “ethos of communal support and sharing” (Mosoetsa 2011: 1).

However, the undesirable and difficult social and economic conditions in contemporary society have caused the erosion and depleting of principles and practices of sharing and solidarity (Mosoetsa 2011: 2). These circumstances see the unemployed delaying and postponing leaving their parents’ or relatives’ homes, as they are still dependent on them. Thus, households serve as the “private safety net” (Klasen and Woolard 2008: 4) that grant the unemployed access to resources (Klasen and Woolard 2008: 4; Mosoetsa 2011: 1). The households which support the unemployed are often themselves dragged further into the poverty net. Also, this strategy of coping with the unemployed has negatively influenced job seeking and employment prospects because itaffects labour mobility and keeps unemployed individuals in the townships – far away from labour market opportunities.This will be demonstrated in the analysis in Chapter 5, under the sub-theme “Families as sites for both stability (support and security) and conflict” (Klasen and Woolard 2008: 4-5).

2.5. Surviving/coping strategies

2.5.1. Family resilience

The term resilience can be defined as the “ability to embrace challenges of life despite stressful and difficult life circumstances and retain openness to the world in the face of adversity” (Dass-Brailsford 2005: 574-575). It is also defined as “overcoming adversity to successful adaptation to negative life events, trauma, stress or risk” (Van Wormer *et al*. 2011: 413). Resilient individuals draw on external support (mutual aid networks) and internal reserves (hope and determination) to rise above their profound challenges (Van Wormer *et al.* 2011: 413). Thus, resilience is the individual’s ability to bear with any challenges by progressing through difficult situations (Van Wormer *et al*. 2011: 413; Killian 2004: 33) and being able to cope with difficult situations. Resilient individuals - despite experiencing hardships and

adversity - are able to continue with their everyday lives, activities and interactions (Killian 2004: 41-42).

Family resilience refers to the characteristics of the family which enable the members to prevail by defeating hardships and harsh conditions (Bhana and Bachoo 2011: 132). In most cases, family members are guided by similar belief systems and values which represent their collective way of thinking, attitudes and values which assist them in reaching positive outcomes. Spirituality or the belief in a higher power (God/ancestors) serves as a tool that families use to "foster optimism and hope" (Bhana and Bachoo 2011: 133). Thus, families are able to prevail because of their belief that the higher power will assist and guide them through their hardships (Bhana and Bachoo 2011: 133-135). Low income families tend to have "high levels of warmth, affection and emotional support which serve as a source of strength and resilience" for the family (Bhana and Bachoo 2011: 135). In cases where parents are absent and not able to provide warmth and support to their children, then other kin members (siblings, grandparents, uncles and aunts) often step in to provide this necessary part of socialisation (Bhana and Bachoo 2011: 135).

Poverty stricken families tend to have "socio-economic stress" which might cause damage to their ability to trust and to their sense of safety and security. People born under conditions of poverty are most likely to be vulnerable, and the effects thereof tend to be far-reaching. The unequal distribution of wealth sees the majority of "Black" African families continuing to experience the social ills of poverty and unemployment. Therefore, children from poor families are exposed to numerous social risks such as material, emotional, physical and psychological deprivation and generalised inequality (Dass-Brailsford 2005: 575). However, Van Wormer *et al*. (2011: 413) argue that "Black" African families have been and still are able to survive social exclusion and societal oppression because of their cultural traits. These cultural traits range from "religiosity, self-confidence, respect for family, [and] high regard for the elderly to strong positive identity with their racial group" (Van Wormer *et al*. 2011: 413).

2.5.2. Social capital

Social capital refers to the features of social organisation such as systems of "networks, norms and trust relationships which assist individuals to reach their goals, co-ordinate their actions and address their common concerns" (Kovalainen 2004: 160; Maclean 2010: 495; Mallaccio *et al*. 2000: 55; Pronyk *et al.* 2008: 1560). Social capital is broadly concerned with people's values and their access to resources "which both result in, and are the result of, collective and socially negotiated ties and relationships (Edwards 2004: 2). Social capital includes both the social and cultural resources which are available to family members. It is characterised by features such as "capacity for modelling coping and problem-solving, social support and provision for intellectual stimulation" (Barbarin and Khomo 1997: 197). Therefore social capital refers to the non-material resources that individuals need for their growth and development (Barbarin and Khomo 1997: 197).

The concept of social capital, can be used on the one hand to describe different types of social behaviours, whereas on the other hand, it describes the human being's ability to access resources "through reciprocal social networks" (Ciabattari 2005: 2). These social networks tend to be responsible for facilitating how individuals access resources and also how they protect individuals (their family members) (Maclean 2010: 495). Social support and social leverage are the two types of capital that are provided by these resources. Providers of social support give individuals the strength to cope with the demands and burdens of everyday life and other stresses. The providers of social support usually provide emotional and expressive support to the people who are in need of help. These providers try to assist as much as possible in bringing order in the lives of the troubled individuals. The assistance ranges from loaning money, providing food, care-giving to the sick and providing accommodation in cases of emergency. Social leverage is when network ties are used for social mobility. Thus social capital can be viewed as a form of social support (Ciabattari 2005: 2).

The low-income community - especially within the "Black" African population - have a long history of these exchange networks. These support networks tend to be more common among "Black" African single mothers, as they are more likely to stay with their kin members and receive free childcare and income support (Ciabattari 2005:

3). However, the assistance provided by these networks has weakened, as resources are often in short supply as poverty and deprivation deepen and as relations of reciprocity have become more difficult to maintain. Yet regardless of the financial constraints, there is still evidence that this assistance continues to exist. This will be discussed in the analysis in Chapter 6, under the sub-theme "Support networks: Those you count on" (Ciabattari 2005: 3).

The notion of social capital shares similar features and characteristics with the African philosophy of Ubuntu/Botho which promotes caring and sharing within the family and community life (Maluccio *et al*. 2000: 57). The philosophy of Ubuntu/Botho is derived from and encompassed by a Xhosa proverb "*Umuntu ngumuntu ngabanye abantu*", or in Sotho, "*Motho ke motho ka batho*"– translated "*I am because you are*" (Broodryk 2002: 13; Marx 2002: 52). Ubuntu/Botho can therefore be defined as "a comprehensive ancient African worldview based on the values of intense humanness, caring, sharing, respect, compassion and associated values, ensuring a happy and qualitative human community life in a spirit of family" (Broodryk 2002: 13). Values serve as the basic foundation that guides human beings on how to live their lives. These values influence individuals' choice-making, attitudes and goals. Thus, values are regarded as the main instrument of both the cultural and general way of living (Broodryk 2002: 18). These core values: humanness (warmth, tolerance, understanding, peace), caring (empathy, sympathy, helpfulness, charitableness, friendliness), sharing (unconditional giving, open handedness), respect (commitment, dignity, obedience, order) and compassion (love, cohesion, forgiving) promote harmonious and tolerable lifestyles (Broodryk 2002: 19; Matolino and Kwindingwi 2013: 200). The philosophy of Ubuntu/Botho is known to be family and community orientated, thus encouraging communalism. This philosophy promotes solidarity and togetherness, features which are important to the survival of communities, especially in townships which are characterised by deep-rooted poverty. This will be discussed in the analysis in Chapter 6, under the sub-theme "Experiencing and practicing Ubuntu/Botho" (Marx 2002: 52).

Stokvels are an informal group savings scheme and they are a safety net for many South Africans, in particular "Black" African women as a stokvel provides financial security and social well-being. Stokvels serve as a "means for the poor to mobilise

financial resources in the absence of developed financial markets" (Irving 2005: 1). Andrew Lukhele is the founder and president of the National Stokvel Association of South Africa (NASASA) and he defines a stokvel as a "type of credit union in which a group of people enter into an agreement to contribute a fixed amount of money to a common pool weekly, fortnightly or monthly" (Lukhele 1990: 1). Different stokvels work differently as they are governed by different rules and members may withdraw money in rotation, or when there is an emergency such as a funeral. Thus the main purpose of joining a stokvel is primarily for mutual financial assistance, as well asfor social and entertainment reasons (Lukhele 1990: 1). This is an example of communal solidarity translated into physical assistance and is a practice that is widespread in the South African townships.

2.5.3. Social security grants

The post-apartheid government introduced a social assistance programme in an attempt to redress, reduce and remedy the economic and social inequalities inflicted on the poor by the previous regimes (Moller 2010: 146; Kaseke 2010: 160). The social assistance programme is aimed at accomplishing cash injection, where cash transfers act as safety nets for the poor population (Moller 2010: 146). Thus, these grants assist poor households in South Africa by targeting older people, children and the disabled (Moller 2010: 147). The social assistance programme comprises four types of non-contributory grants, namely child support grants, an old age pension grant, a disability grant and a foster care grant (Van Driel 2009: 127; Kaseke 2010: 160; Moller 2010: 147).

The child support grant was introduced in 1998, replacing the state maintenance grant (which excluded assistance to 'Black" African women). The child support grant is awarded to the primary care-giver (most often, women), who are responsible for the child on a daily basis (Case *et al*. 2003: 1; Case *et al*.2005: 472; Kaseke 2010: 160; Moller 2010: 147). The old age pension grant is paid to women over the age of 60 and men over the age of 65. This social pension system is characterised by strong gender dimensions where "different age eligibility, rules and different male and female mortality rates ensure that the pension reaches significantly more elderly women than men" (Burns *et al*. 2005: 103; Kaseke 2010: 160; Moller 2010: 147). The foster care grant is awarded to a primary care giver of (a) non-biological

child/children whereas the disability grant is for people who are medically certified as physically and/or mentally challenged. This disability grant is aimed at assisting people who cannot earn a living due to their disability (Case *et al*. 2003: 1; Kaseke 2010: 160-161; Moller 2010: 147). Nonetheless, there are concerns that the social assistance programme works on the basis of assisting only those not in full-time employment, as only the aged, the young and the sick qualify to be covered for assistance (Moller 2010: 146).

According to Moller (2010: 147) the introduction of these social grants has resulted in the re-structuring of intra-household dynamics where the financial burden of the household is shared by both the younger and the elderly women, while the unemployed family members remain dependent financially. The recipients receive social grants in monetary value, and this money is supposedly used to buy essentials (food and clothes) for survival. Cash grants allow the recipients to become decision-makers regarding how best to use the money for their own needs. Therefore, these cash transfers contribute to the empowerment of the poor population (Moller 2010: 148). The child support grant and the pension grant contribute mainly towards the income of a household, and in the case of unemployment, often serve as the only source of income. These grants contribute towards household expenditure on food, education, transport and small home-based enterprises. African pensioners, especially women, tend to be pressurised to share their grant with their families. This will be discussed in the analysis inChapter 4, under the sub-theme “Social security grants” (Moller 2010: 148-149).

2.6. Chapter overview

This chapter discusses literature on the precariousness of “Black” African families, especially “Black” African women who experience the hardships of poverty and unemployment. This chapter was divided into four sections, where the first section covered the complex dynamics of defining the term ‘family’. The second section discussed the components (descent-based, kinship system, the institution of marriage and the importance of ancestral links) and the structure (extended family) of the “Black” African family. This section further discusses the role of women within their families as well as the impact of socio-political factors. The third section discusses the legacy that still haunts the majority of the “Black” African population

(female-headed households, gender inequalities, part-time employment, poverty and unemployment) left behind by socio-political factors. Lastly, the surviving and coping strategies that disadvantaged “Black” African women employ in order to survive their everyday hurdles and challenges are discussed.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGICAL ACCOUNT

3.1. Introduction

The purpose of this methodological account chapter is to describe the strategies that were employed in conducting this research project, thus providing the overall practical process (work plan) of how this project was carried out (the data collection procedure). This chapter will first outline the qualitative research design that serves as the foundation of this research project. A qualitative research design was adopted for this study as it supports the researcher's interpretative stance. Secondly, the narrative approach to inquiry is the chosen methodology for this research project as the participants expressed themselves by telling their stories (relating events, activities and actions). Thirdly, the methodological account will follow, where fieldwork and data collection experiences of this project will be discussed. Lastly, the measures that ensure and enhance the validity of this research project will be discussed.

3.2. Qualitative research design

This research project has adopted the approach of a qualitative research design because it is an appropriate tool to answer the research questions, and it also fits with the chosen theoretical lenses that were discussed earlier (phenomenology, existential sociology and feminist theories). A research design can be defined as the "researcher's overall plan for obtaining answers to the research questions and it spells out the basic strategies that the researcher adopts to develop information that is accurate and interpretable" (Pilot and Hungler 1995: 139). It is also the "strategic framework for action that serves as a bridge between research question and the execution or implementation of the research" (Durrheim 2006: 34).Therefore, the research design serves as a blueprint/outline or overall strategy for conducting research (Pilot and Hungler 1995: 139; Ferraro and Andreatta 2010: 95). A research design also includes three detailed techniques which the researcher employs in conducting research. These techniques are the recruitment of participants, the data collection procedure and the method of analysing the data (Durrheim 2006: 48-49). Thus, the purpose of a research design is to "achieve greater control and improve

the validity of the study in examining the research problems" (Burns and Grove 2001: 247).

The approach of qualitative research design is also appropriate for the chosen methodology (narrative approach) of this project. This research project adopted the narrative approach as a methodological tool in which data was collected and analysed. The notion of qualitative research is rooted in different historical fields, thus qualitative research has a different meaning in each case (field). The following definitions of qualitative research are suitable for this research project: Denzin and Lincoln (2011: 3) define qualitative research as "a situated activity that locates the observer in the world. Qualitative research consists of a set of interpretive, material practices that make the world visible. These practices transform the world. They turn the world into a series of representations, including field notes, interviews, conversations, photographs, recordings and memos to the self" (Denzin and Lincoln (2011: 3).

Creswell (2013: 44), in turn argues that qualitative research "begins with assumptions and the use of interpretive/theoretical frameworks that inform the study of research problems addressing the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem. To study this problem, qualitative researchers use an emerging qualitative approach to inquiry, the collection of data in a natural setting sensitive to the people and places under study, and data analysis that is both inductive and deductive and establishes patterns or themes. The final written report or presentation includes the voices of participants, the reflexivity of the researcher, a complex description and interpretation of the problem, and its contribution to the literature or a call for change" (Creswell 2013: 44). Qualitative research is therefore concerned with providing descriptions that are detailed and an analysis of the "quality of the human experiences" (Marvasti 2004: 7).

3.3. Narrative approach to Inquiry

The narrative approach, which can also be referred to as narrative inquiry or narrative analysis, is part of the chosen research methodology for this project because it is a fitting instrument to address the research question (Mitchell and Egudo 2003: 2; Polkinghorne 1995: 5; Creswell 2007: 53-54; Connelly and Clandinin

1990: 2). The narrative approach to inquiry is multidisciplinary (relevant to sociology, anthropology, psychology, education and other disciplines) and is rooted in the interpretive/constructivist paradigm based on the story telling methodology - where narratives are used to describe and explain the interactions of human beings. The narrative approach serves as one of the approaches employed by qualitative researchers as they capture the rich descriptions within the stories (Mitchell and Egudo 2003: 2; Polkinghorne 1995: 5; Creswell 2007: 53-54). The term "narrative" can be used to refer to either a phenomenon ("story") or method ("inquiry/approach") of study (Gilbert 2002: 224; Creswell 2007: 53; Connelly and Clandinin 1990: 2).

Narratives (both as a story and as a method) combine human beings' feelings, thoughts and experiences into an integrated unit that is connected to a fundamental theme. The narratives in which individuals live are known as personal narratives, and they are a way in which individuals describe their everyday lives. Personal narratives serve as tools that help individuals to structure their experiences, where the narrator is provided an opportunity to better understand what has happened in his/her life. In other words, by expressing our experiences in words, we move closer to making sense of them (Gilbert 2002: 224: Jupp 2006: 186; Shapiro 2011: 19). However, some narratives tend to lack "an apparent order or organisation" (Goldstein 2012: 183) which usually structure people's stories. These narratives therefore, do not follow the sequence of events in a neat and tidy manner, as they are unsystematic and disjointed. This is evident in stories told (narratives) that are riddled with inconsistencies, contradictions and incoherencies (Barak and Leichtentritt 2014: 1-2; Shapiro 2011: 19; Smith and Sparks 2004: 691; Goldstein 183-184).

The concept of narrative has various meanings, but the following definitions are applicable to this research project: it is a "discourse form in which events and happenings are configured into a temporal unity by means of a plot" (Polkinghorne 1995: 5). Bell (2010: 19) defines narratives as:

> "The collection and development of stories, either as a form of data collection or as a means of structuring a research project. Research participants often speak in a story form during the interviews, and as the researchers, listening and attempting to understand, we hear their 'stories'. The research method can be described as narrative when data collection, interpretation and writing

are considered a ‘meaning-making’ process with similar characteristics to stories” (Bell 2010: 19).

The narrative approach “studies problems as forms of storytelling involving characters with both personal and social stories. It contributes to research on teaching and learning, through its ability to frame the study of human experience” (Webster and Mertova 2007: 12). Therefore, the narrative approach studies how individuals experience their everyday world and reality (Connelly and Clandinin 1990: 2; Polkinghorne 1995: 7).

The narrative approach positions both the affiliations (relationships) and self-understanding of human beings “in the experienced time of action itself” (Binkley 2007: 3141). Narratives intend to explain human actions and interactions by employing “specific linguistic conventions” that human beings use to make sense of their stories about their behaviours and choices (Binkley 2007: 3141). The explanations of the narratives emphasise and highlight cultural frameworks that surround human actions and interactions (Binkley 2007: 3141). Thus, narratives can be explained as the “linguistic form uniquely suited for displaying human existence as situated action” (Polkinghorne 1995: 5). Narrative descriptions show that human activity is composed of conscious interactions and engagements in the social world. Individuals do things froma certain awareness and with a purpose of what they want to achieve in mind - things do not happen outside of human interactions or participation. These human actions, events and happenings are brought together, forming an integrated, organised whole by means of a plot (Polkinghorne 1995: 5; Webster and Mertova 2007: 19).

3.3.1. Story-telling

Story-telling is a powerful mechanism that human beings use as a means to communicate and verbalise their thoughts and expressions. The process of story-telling is constructed where human beings explain and describe certain events and the characters involved and explain what these characters say and do (and mean) (Koch 1998: 1182: Lillejord and Soreide 2003: 89). Language plays an all-important role in story-telling because the power of the story is dependent on the ability of the story-teller to interpret his/her personal experiences (Bell 2010: 20). Human beings

express themselves by telling stories as they arrange their everyday actions and activities into tales. They pattern the important elements of their experiences and verbalise them in a story set up. Thus story-telling plays a major role in how human beings live, make sense of their life-worlds, express themselves and deal with the notion of time (Webster and Mertova 2007: 3; Bell 2002: 207; Lillejord and Soreide 2003: 89; Polit and Deck 2004: 260; Jupp 2006: 186). Stories are thus an interpretation of how human beings view their reality and world as they are constructed by the participants' life experiences (Webster and Mertova 2007: 2-3; Lillejord and Soreide 2003: 89; Jupp 2006: 186).

The voices of individuals echo one another when they express themselves; this is evident in how their stories are crafted and the content of these stories. People's stories are part of real life for them because they form connections that give meaning to that life (Webster and Mertova 2007: 2-3; Lillejord and Soreide 2003: 89). "Stories help to make sense of, evaluate, and integrate the tensions inherent in experience: the past with the present, the fictional with the 'real', the official with the unofficial, personal with the professional, the canonical with the different and unexpected" (Dyson and Genishi 1994 in Webster and Mertova 2007: 2). Therefore the narrative approach is concerned with capturing the "whole story" of the participants (Webster and Mertova 2007: 3).

Stories can be understood as a "discourse production that is situated as the linguistic form in which human experience as lived can be expressed" (Polkinghorne 1995: 7). Stories serve as a defining feature of human beings' cultures as they influence how people view and make sense of their life-world. Stories inform humans' worldview (Polkinghorne 1995: 7; Bell 2002: 207; Gilbert 2002: 226). Human beings tell stories as a means of "understanding specific events and situations that require linking an inner world of desire and motive to an external world of observable actions" (Polit and Deck 2004: 260). In order to understand people's way of living, the researcher needs to take the "shape of their stories, range of roles available, the chains of causation and the sense of what constitutes a climax or an ending" into consideration (Bell 2002: 207). Stories consist of sequences and a series of human events, actions and experiences on a large scale. The lives, actions and historical existence of human beings are designed and structured in stories, where individuals

and society at large experience, act and live in those stories (Webster and Mertova 2007: 3; Polkinghorne 1995: 7; Gilbert 2002: 225). Thus, we can conclude that human beings areorientated to story-telling (Gilbert 2002: 225; Connelly and Clandinin 1990: 2) as they are “organisms who individually and socially lead storied lives” (Connelly and Clandinin 1990: 2). Therefore, the narrative approach allows the researcher to collect, describe and write the participants’ narratives of experience (Connelly and Clandinin 1990: 2).

The existence of human beings is characterised by stories and the process of story-telling gives humans the opportunity to modify, reaffirm and create new stories (Koch 1998: 1183). New information, telling and re-telling of the story influences how individuals understand and interpret their own story elements (Gilbert 2002: 225). Stories are defined and coloured by human experiences, and the continuous process of re-telling and re-experiencing these stories forms part of the overall human experience. As a result, individuals’ personal narratives turn out to be “an experience of the experience” (Gilbert 2002: 225; Koch 1998: 1183; Clandinin 2006: 46) and understanding these experiences is achieved by an ongoing “experience of the experience” (Gilbert 2002: 225; Clandinin 2006: 46). Therefore, the process of story-telling allows and guides both the teller (participants) and the listener (researcher) to have a better understanding of, and to make sense of, the story being told (Koch 1998: 1183).

Story-telling is regarded as a social act whereby human beings establish and maintain both their individualities and personalities. The process of recollection (remembrance) of a story teller evolves over time to allow individuals to recall their life events. Thus, stories can be considered tools that assist in organising memories of human beings. Stories structure and shape human lives and the reality that they perceive, while at the same time, human lives and their perception of reality help to structure their stories. Therefore, individuals create their stories which allow them to see their world and themselves through the lenses of their stories. People adapt and learn to survive in their world through stories – as they learn how to live their life-worlds through other people’s stories and through their own experiences (Gilbert 2002: 225-226).

3.3.2. Narratives of human experience

The narrative approach to inquiry is situated in the stories lived and told by individuals about their experiences (Webster and Mertova 2007: 1, Creswell 2007: 54; Clandinin 2006: 45). This approach grants qualitative researchers with a rich framework, allowing them to investigate the manner in which individuals experience their reality through telling their stories (Webster and Mertova 2007: 1). According to the French philosopher and existentialist Jean-Paul Sartre "people are always tellers of tales. They live surrounded by their stories and the stories of others: they see everything that happens to them through those stories and they try to live their lives as if they were recounting them" (Sartre 1964 in Webster and Mertova 2007: 1). The narrative methodology approach addresses "complexities" and "subtleties" that human beings experience in their processes of teaching and learning. The ability of the narrative approach to focus on critical life events by employing the holistic view technique "holds valuable potential for researchers in a broad range of learning areas" (Webster and Mertova 2007: 1).

The narrative approach to inquiry has aimed to interpret and describe human beings' lived experiences and actions since ancient times (Webster and Mertova 2007: 1). Human beings need to be understood not only as individuals but also by how they relate to their social context (Clandinin 2006: 46). Narratives construct and re-construct personal stories by documenting and recording human beings' experiences (Webster and Mertova 2007: 1). Narratives should not be perceived and understood as an exact replica of the incident being described as they are "representational". Instead, they should be viewed as illustrations of humans' lived experiences which are subject to change and re-interpretation (Gilbert 2002: 225).Narratives are able to address issues of "complexity, cultural and human-centeredness" because of their ability and capability to re-tell and record events that influence how individuals view their world. These issues tend to play an important part in various areas of individuals' activities. Human beings are able to make sense of their activities in their everyday lives according to the narratives (stories) that are available to them (Webster and Mertova 2007: 1).

Narratives do not exist in isolation as they are influenced and shaped by stories and tales told by other individuals and society at large (Webster and Mertova 2007: 1;

Clandinin 2006: 46). They are also evolutionary and they should not be “seen as the equivalent of videotapes of a life experience, they are more like a continually evolving sketch book of memories and life experiences” (Gilbert 2002: 225). Therefore, narratives are continuously being restructured as they are constantly undergoing change, especially when individuals re-tell the same incident or event over and over again at different points in time (Webster and Mertova 2007: 1; Gilbert 2002: 225; Clandinin 2006: 46). The narrative approach is a suitable methodology because it allows researchers to present the experiences of participants “holistically in all its complexity and richness” (Webster and Mertova 2007: 2; Duff 2002: 209). Thus, narrative inquirers are concerned with individuals’ experiences that are “storied both in the living and telling and that could be studied by listening, observing, spending time together and writing and interpreting text or data” (Clandinin 2006: 46). Therefore, the narrative approach is interested in the ever-changing experiences of participants, recognising that participants interpret and understand their everyday activities and events differently from one another (Webster and Mertova 2007: 2; Gilbert 2002: 225).

3.3.3. Narratives as social construction of meaning

The narrative approach is concerned with how human beings “construct their system of meaning for their experiences” (Cihodariu 2012: 31). This approach is interested in understanding the features that characterise human thoughts and experiences and better scientific understanding (Cihodariu 2012: 31) and how human beings construct, negotiate and communicate meaning (Schultz and Lavenda 1998: 42). Thus, individuals “make sense of their world and communicate these meanings by constructing, reconstructing and narrating stories” (Polit and Deck 2004: 260).Bold (2012: 13) uses the narrative approach as a technique of investigation and expresses herself as follows: “I am interested in how people construct meaning of the world around them, and how researchers make sense of what they see. I believe narratives of various kinds help people to construct and understand their social world” (Bold 2012: 13). Thus, researchers (myself included) applying the narrative methodology share a common assumption and belief about the importance of subjective meaning (as individuals are social beings), and share emotions in an attempt to make sense of the events, settings and relationships in the social world,

as well as the need for reflexivity in this process of sense-making (Bold 2012: 13; Cihodariu 2012: 31).

Reflexivity refers to the self-awareness of researchers by showing "self-critique" and "self-appraisal" as they explain whether or not their own experiences have influenced the stages of the research process (Dowling 2006: 8). Reflexivity is "thinking critically about the way one thinks, reflecting on one's own experiences" (Schultz and Lavenda 1998: 39). Thus, reflexivity is the process of "thinking about thinking" (Schultz and Lavenda 1998: 39). Therefore, reflexivity is an important means of understanding "what to make of what people perceive and what to make of what others make of everything" (Cihodariu 2012: 31).

The narrative approach to inquiry serves as a means to the social construction of reality, where reality is lived through narratives told and lived by human beings. This approach is thus a product of the social construction of human experiences, since individuals can only express their experiences by telling stories (narratives) about their lives. Everything that human beings feel, imagine and communicate is both socially and culturally constructed. However, it is only when people realise the social construction of reality – and become truly reflective about it, that they are not merely "unconscious transmitters of cultural scripts" (Smith and Watson 2010 in Cihodariu 2012: 32).

3.4. Collection of the Narratives

3.4.1. Pilot Study

This research project is part of an umbrella topic that focuses on "*crises in contemporary African families".* Three researchers are working on different aspects under this umbrella topic. The first thing we did in preparation for our fieldwork was to pilot the study, where we sat together as a team to draw up our various interview schedules. A pilot study is the "smaller version of a proposed study conducted to refine the methodology" (Burns and Grove 2001: 49). Each of us conducted our interviews in our home towns during the June holidays (2013) to see whether our questions would provide rich data. The first section in our interview schedule covered *family relations and perspectives* and we all asked the same questions and

exchanged ideas afterwards. The interview schedule was also discussed with our supervisors and subsequently refined. We also discussed various other challenges, especially the challenge of translating concepts and idiomatic expressions. However, this first round gave us a good idea of how to conduct our interviews,as well as pitfalls for which to look out.

3.4.2. Participant recruitment

The participants who took part in this study were recruited from an NGO (non-governmental organisation) situated in the CBD (Central Business District) of Bloemfontein. Dr Amanda Young-Hauser (co-supervisor and postdoctoral fellow in the programme The Narrative Study of Lives) met with the chief social worker from this NGO through a common friend. Dr Young-Hauser informed us about her contact with the chief social worker and asked us if we were keen to use the social worker as our gatekeeper to introduce us to women who might be potential participants. A gatekeeper is an “individual who controls access to the community, group of people or source of information” (LeCompte and Schensul 1999: 6). We were all keen on that idea because the social worker has access to and works with “Black” African women in the township on a daily basis. The three of us were tasked with sending the social worker an email, asking for a suitable day and time for us to go to her office to introduce ourselves and our respective topics. She responded after a few weeks with a date and time, and so we organised with Dr Young-Hauser to drive us there.

The day of the visitation arrived and we drove to the CBD to see the chief social worker at her office. She welcomed us as she took us to the conference room and invited her second in command (also a social worker) to join us in our meeting. We introduced ourselves and discussed our research project where we each specified the types of people (participants) we wanted to involve in our project. I requested to speak to women who have children (either biological children or as a guardian) and who make their living through piece jobs. I also told them that I would be happy to speak to women who are currently unemployed but have had a job before. These women needed to be based in the resource-poor areas of the Mangaung township. The social workers already had at least one participant in mind for each of us, and

these women were based in the Batho area, which is the oldest section of the Mangaung township. The chief social worker told us that we would start by searching for participants in Batho, and if we were not successful there, then we would move to the other (further) sections of the townships. She then suggested that we go back to get ourselves and ourinformation sheets and consent forms, ready and then send her an email with a proposed date of when she could take us to meet our participants.

Dr Young-Hauser drove us to the NGO offices to fetch the chief social worker to go with us to the Batho location to recruit participants for our respective research projects. The social worker first took us to Lusaka Square (in Batho location) where we met a community leader and mother to many foster children. She invited us into her home and we explained to her the particular women we were looking for. The community leader then showed the chief social worker the houses inhabited bywomen who do piece jobs, as well as women that my colleagues could interview. The chief social worker walked us (my colleagues and I) to these houses, where she introduced us and we were then left to explain our projects to the prospective participants and to obtain informed consent.

The first woman I approached was a hairdresser (Nobantu) and her salon is a shack which she is renting from her partner's mother. I started our conversation by giving her my name and details of my project and she was enthusiastic to participate. She started telling me her life story and how she ended up in an unstable and unpredictable life. She was suitable for this project as she was talkative and willing to share her experiences. The second lady (Khanyisile) lives next door to Nobantu and she is currently unemployed, but she makes her living by selling fruit, vegetables, sweets and snacks from her home. Her husband is also unemployed so they depend heavily on child support grants and room rental payment. This lady was equally talkative and she expressed the hope that God would someday rescue her from the poverty in which she lives.

The third lady (Madimpho) is also unemployed and attends monthly municipal meetings where she leaves her details to be called up for employment in running projects.She is still waiting to be called. She lives with her daughter in her mother's

house and her mother moved back to her own home. The fathers of her two children do not assist her at all, so she depends on her own mother. The fourth participant (Zoleka) works for a cleaning company at the University of the Free State and she is a divorcee. She is taking her former husband to court as he does not pay maintenance anymore. Four participants were secured in Lusaka Square.At the end of that day, all of these women were given an information sheet translated into their own language, which had my cell phone number and my supervisors' office numbers on it. These women were encouraged to verify the project with the supervisors if they had any doubts. I told these women to expect a call from me to set up dates when I would come to conduct interviews to talk about their experiences.

The chief social worker suggested that we go to another section in the Batho area called Maphikela Square, where I met up with two women. One (Pinky) is currently unemployed and she has never been to school due to the apartheid laws as she is classified as 'coloured' but grew up in a predominantly"Black" African area. The father of her children relocated back to his home town and he does not play any role in their lives, so she has to provide for her children and grandchildren. Another lady (Lesedi) is married and pregnant. Lesedi was given guardianship of her younger sister and her child after the passing of their mother. Lesedi and her family live in a rented two-roomed house, where she has a close relationship with the owner of their house as they assist each other. Her husband is a security guard and she volunteers at several organisations. These women were also given information sheets and told that their participation in this research project would be greatly appreciated. I took their details and told them to expect a call from me to set up dates when I would come to their homes to conduct interviews with them. One of my colleagues provided me with the names of two more potential participants (Matshepo and Palesa) based in Lusaka Square, as she had decided that she had enough participants. Overall eight participants were recruited to take part in this research project and they were all based in the resource-poor area of the Batho Location.

My colleagues and I had a meeting with Dr Young-Hauser in preparation for our fieldwork and we all agreed that we would have our interviews on the same day, and preferably at the same time. We agreed to wait for each other, if our time slots were different. We compiled a check list comprising the things we were going to use

during fieldwork. The check list included the following objects: audio recorder, rechargeable batteries, non-rechargeable batteries as back-up, interview schedule and demographic sheets, translated consent forms, stationery, cell phones loaded with airtime, vouchers (which were given to research participants at the conclusion of the interviews, as a token of appreciation for the time and trouble given to the research) and the proof of vouchers where the participants would sign to indicate that they had received the vouchers. My colleagues and I decided on the days to conduct our interviews and called the women to see if they were available on those days and at what time. Most of the women were available as they are either unemployed or do piece jobs. Dr Young-Hauser drove us to both Lusaka and Mapikela Square and picked us up when we were finished.

3.4.3. Ethics and participation protection

Given the nature of our projects, we were required to obtain ethical clearance from the Faculty of Humanities' Ethics Committee (see Appendix A). Research ethics aim primarily to protect the interests of the participants so that they are not treated as a "means to the researcher's ends" (Wassenaar 2006: 61). This research project was granted ethical clearance as it followed the University's ethics guidelines. We were therefore encouraged to continue. The participants in this project are very important because their stories (lived experiences) enable the continuation of this research project. Consent forms were drawn up (see Appendix B) and translated into Sotho, asking for permission from the participants to conduct the interviews in their homes, as well as to record the interview.

They were also given the assurance that no one except me and my supervisors would listen to these audio recordings and have access to the transcriptions. These consent forms (attached to the back of this project, Appendix B) show that the researcher explained the study to the participant in detail and also allowed forquestions by the participants. The participants took part in this study on a voluntary basis and they were informed about what this entailed: that they could withdraw their participation at any time and that there would not be negative consequences for doing so. They were also told that they were free to end the interview at any time and that they did not have to answer any questions that made them feel uncomfortable.

Respecting the privacy of the participants is a priority and so they would be referred to using pseudonyms, with the researcher being the only person to know their real names. The audio recordings and the transcriptions from the interview would be kept safely on the computers of the resource centre, which only students of the programme,'The narrative study of lives' have access to. The supervisors and the chief social worker (gatekeeper) would have been notified if any problems were experienced in the field. This research project addresses poverty and unemployment, as these are everyday realities for these participants. We anticipated emotional reactions from some participants, given this sensitive topic under discussion.

In this research project, open-ended interviews were used as an everyday activity of story-telling (conversation) to obtain data (narratives) in order to understand the lives of the participants (Lillejord and Soreide 2003: 92; Kelly 2006: 297). I interviewed two women a day and they preferred that I visit them in the afternoon. Before each interview I introduced myself again and explained the purpose of my visit again. I told the women to feel free to share as much as they could about their stories and experiences. The women were told that there were no right or wrong answers and that their life stories were desired. I asked for permission to switch the recorder on and to put it in a place where it would not disturb our conversation- usually under my books. Each participant was given copies of the consent forms.They signed both copies and I did the same. I took my copy and the women kept their copies.

The woman who did not go to school did not know how to write so I asked her to put an "x" as her signature. The women were addressed as "Mme" (translated as 'mother') which in the Sotho culture is a sign of respect. This made the women comfortable as they discussed their life stories. The biggest challenge faced during this fieldwork was when some of the women cried as they were overwhelmed by their emotions. I asked the women if we should stop the interview and arrange another day but they wanted to continue. At the end of the interview, the women where thanked for their time and stories and given vouchers as a token of appreciation. I explained to the women how the vouchers worked and which shops accepted these vouchers. They all walked me to the gate as we parted ways and I thanked them again and told them I would keep in touch.

3.4.4. Research setting

The research setting refers to the place where the data was collected and includes participants' naturalistic settings (Pilot and Deck 2004: 248; Pilot and Hungler 1995: 142). The research setting influences participants' behaviour, feelings and how they respond to the questions,which is important because qualitative research is interested in studying the "full context within which participants live and work" (Pilot and Hungler 1995: 142). The data for this research project was collected in two sections of the Batho location, namely Lusaka Square and Mapikela Square. Six of the women reside in Lusaka Square and the other two women were from Mapikela Square. The women (participants) were interviewed in their natural setting, namely the space (their homes) where they live out their actions and activities. Nobantu asked to be interviewed in her salon because she shares her shack with her partner and he was not comfortable with people entering their personal space. The rest of the women were interviewed in their own homes, although Pinky was ashamed and felt embarrassed as her house has old, dilapidated furnishings and she did not want to be seen as poor.

3.4.5. Data collection techniques and process

The process of data collection refers to the "systematic gathering of information relevant to the research question and specific objectives of a study" (Burn and Grove 2001: 49). Thus, data is the basic material (information) that the researcher obtains during the course of an investigation - in this case, through fieldwork (Burn and Grove 2001: 50; Durrheim 2006: 51). Data determines the outcome of the research project as the researcher can only make valid conclusions if she has "sound" data that captures the meaning the participants attach to their everyday world. The researcher has collected "sound" data if she is able to interpret and analyse it (Durrheim 2006: 51). Data is collected in several ways, using different techniques and instruments applicable to the research question (Burn and Grove 2001: 50; Durrheim 2006: 51). This research project used in-depth open-ended interviews and observation as tools to collect data from the field. The researcher also serves as a means of collecting data (the experiences and journey of conducting fieldwork) as Iwas present and involved in the fieldwork and was "recording the routine daily

activities" of the participants myself (and not using fieldworkers) (Schensul*et al*. 1999: 91).

3.4.5.1. In-depth open ended interviews

According to LeCompte and Schensul (1999: 121) in-depth open-ended interviews are defined as an "exploration of any and all facets of a topic in detail" which permits the interviewers to "explore the topic in detail to deepen their knowledge of the topic" (LeCompte and Schensul 1999: 121). The open-ended nature of these interviews "leaves the responses open to the discretion of the interviewee and is not constrained on the length of the responses" (LeCompte and Schensul 1999: 121). Thus, the process allows the interviewer to be open to any type of response. The interviewees (participants) are not expected to choose from a "series of alternative choices" but to speak their minds, as there are no wrong and right answers - just the participant's view concerning the discussion.

In-depth interviews aim to discover and investigate important areas (field/domain) of the research questions and to uncover the subjective perspectives of the participant regarding these areas. In-depth interviews also aim to break these areas down into "component factors and sub-factors" and to "obtain orientating information about the context and history of the study and the study site" (LeCompte and Schensul 1999: 121). These in-depth interviews encourage positive, understanding relationships between the interviewer (researcher) and the interviewee (participants). Therefore, in-depth interviews encourage the interviewee to give explanatory responses, allowing interviewers "maximum flexibility in exploring any topic in-depth and in covering new topics as they arise" (LeCompte and Schensul 1999: 121).

In-depth, open-ended interviews are semi-structured and consist of predetermined questions based in the identified areas of the research project (LeCompte and Schensul 1999: 149; Kvale 1996: 124). These sets of questions guide the conversation between the researcher and the participants, as opposed to dictating the direction of the conversation. The core questions of the study allow the researcher to keep focused, and at the same time,to be flexiblein clarifying issues raised by the participants. This flexibility sees the researcher making decisions regarding the nature and content of the interview process. Thus, the researcher is

able to make some interpretations and begin her analysis during the interview. The flexible nature of in-depth open-ended interviews encourages the participants to give detail-rich descriptions of their stories, thus obtaining narrative data (Bold 2012: 95; LeCompte and Schensul 1999: 149). Therefore, to maintain a high quality interview, the researcher needs to "maintain the flow of the participants' story and avoid interviewer bias" (LeCompte and Schensul 1999: 149).

The research technique of in-depth open-ended interviews is a natural form of interaction that aims to obtain in-depth knowledge about the participant's life-world (Lillejord and Soreide 2003: 89; Kvale 1996: 124; Kelly 2006: 297) by focusing on the "generation of detailed stories of experience and not generalised descriptions" (Riessman 2006:190). Thus, interviews are a means of collecting information "about the context of stories by situating individual stories within participants' personal experiences (homes and jobs), their culture (racial or ethnic) and their historical contexts -time and place" (Creswell 2013: 56). In-depth open-ended interviews are conducted to get to know the participants intimately, allowing the researcher to have a better understanding of how participants act, think and feel (Kelly 2006: 297).

The interaction between the interview partners (researcher and participants) during the interview serves as the main source of information that gives the researcher clues about participants' actions and everyday activities. Therefore, the process of interviewing allows the researcher to understand the multi-layered and constantly changing reality of the participants. The researcher has an opportunity to understand the subjective perceptions which enable the participants to understand their everyday lives through the data (Miller and Brewer 2003: 209). These in-depth interviews generate data in a story format, as participants tell their stories of struggle and survival. The data are then represented in story format: through participants' narratives (Schwandt 1997: 98).

The interviewing process is a "language-dependent activity" (Lillejord and Soreide 2003: 89) as it is based on the model of question and answer. Thus, interviewing can be understood as a "discursive accomplishment" (Riessman 2006: 189) as it is a conversation between speakers (researcher and participant). Conversing (talking to one another) is a basic human activity whereby individuals express their thoughts and reveal their acquired knowledge about their everyday world (Lillejord and

Soreide 2003: 90; Kvale 1996: 125).The rules of everyday conversation also apply during an interview, such as taking turns to speak and “entrance and exit talk to transition into, and return from, a story world” (Riessman 2006: 189-190). The flow of the conversation sees the participant’s stories evolving and leading to other stories, as both the participant and the researcher produce, negotiate and make meaning fromthese stories, events and experiences (Riessman 2006: 189-190; Lillejord and Soreide 2003: 90).

The reactions, agreements and accommodation between these two parties provide a holistic view of reality or the participant’s life-world (Miller and Brewer 2003: 208). Collectively, the researcher and participants compose, collaborate and construct the participant’s stories by shaping them and giving them meaning (Riessman 2006: 190; Miller and Brewer 2003: 208; Lillejord and Soreide 2003: 92). Thus, both the researcher and the participants are involved in the “meaning constructing activity” (Lillejord and Soreide 2003: 92). This collaboration results in interpretation of the stories told taking place during the interview (Lillejord and Soreide 2003: 89).

Narrative accounts tend to be different from other natural and ordinary conversations as they focus on detailed, specific incidents of participants’ experiences and not on general experiences (Riessman 2006: 190). The open-ended nature of these conversations sees the researcher giving up some control of the conversation by allowing the participants to express themselves for as long as they see fit (Miller and Brewer 2003: 208; Riessman 2006: 190). Thus, in-depth interviews are interested in following the participants down their own trails. This freedom sees the power being shared between the researcher and the participants, which results in genuine discoveries about the studied phenomena (Riessman 2006: 190). The dialogue between the researcher and participant is a professional conversation about daily life and this process sees knowledge about the world being constructed by both parties. This dialogue “facilitates mutual understanding” which makes it possible to not only construct knowledge but also to share it (Lillejord and Soreide 2003: 92).

3.4.5.2. Observation

Observation is a research method that refers to “what can be seen through the eyes of the researcher” (LeCompte and Schensul 1999: 95). The process of observation

requires the researcher to concentrate (pay attention), watch and listen carefully (Neuman 2007: 287). The researcher is thus totally involved in the fieldwork process as her “perceptions, reactions, interactions, reflections, recording and attaching meaning” contribute to the collection of data (Burns and Grove 2001: 594). Researchers need to use all their senses to “notice what is seen, heard, smelled and touched” (Neuman 2007: 287). Thus the researcher serves as an instrument that “absorbs all sources of information” in the field (Neuman 2007: 287). The first thing that researchers observe during fieldwork is the physical setting, which is the location where participants’ activities and actions take place. The physical setting is observed to capture the atmosphere of the place (LeCompte and Schensul 1999: 97; Neuman 2007: 287). The physical setting (Lusaka and Mapikela Square) of this research project is characterised by match box-sized houses, shacks (backrooms for extra sleeping space and rental), dusty streets and worn out fences. Lots of people – of all ages – walk around between the cars and minibus taxis that drive in the often non-existing streets. The houses have old furnishingsinside and the floors are often covered with vinyl. This setting shows the limited resources to which the participants have access. Some of the women were ashamed of their houses and others were grateful for what they had as they had more than other people had.

Secondly, researchers observe the actions of participants and those around them because individuals “interact differentlysocially” with one another (Neuman 2007: 287). Nobantu’s partner walked into her salon during the interview and his facial expression was one of confusion as to what we were doing. Nobantu kept quiet when he walked in and after a moment of silence, he asked Nobantu what time lunch would be served,she responded by asking him to go to buy bread. When he came back, Nobantu kept quiet again and he offered to buy her airtime. Nobantu’s child walked in later on during the interview and waited silently for her mother to finish. Nobantu continued with her story until she was finished and only then gave attention to her child. Nobantu did not have a problem talking about her family and life challenges in front of her child, but clearly did not want her partner to hear what we were talking about. Pinky asked her children to give us space to talk freely and when the children walked in she kept quiet, especially when she was telling stories about her ill health and her inability to provide for them.

Thirdly, researchers pay attention to the physical appearance of the setting such as cleanliness, dirtiness, neatness and untidiness, as these aspects characterise how individuals present themselves. These aspects also affect how an individual interacts with other people. Pinky felt that her house was “ugly” as it did not have “beautiful” furniture and appliances. Her children do not have “nice” clothes and toys as she is unemployed, and thus cannot afford to buy them any. Her self-esteem was very low during the interview. Not only was she sick but the doctor did not want to give her a letter in order to receive the disability grant as her CD4[4] count was low. She preferred to be with her family and close friends as they are the only people who really understand her situation. Lastly, researchers observe non-verbal communication as it allows people to communicate “social information, their feelings and attitude” (Neuman 2007: 287). Non-verbal communication includes gestures, facial expressions and how participants sit and stand. Some participants were excited to share their hopes and dreams while others were sad in sharing about the things they wished they could have.

3.4.6. Data analysis

According to Terre Blanche *et al.* (2006: 322) the process of data analysis “involves reading through your data repeatedly, and engaging in activities of breaking the data down (thematising and categorising) and building it up again in novel ways (elaborating and interpreting)”. Data analysis means to “organise, provide structure, compose field notes, extract meaning and select sections from the interview transcripts for close inspection’’ (Riessman 2006: 186).Thus, data analysis is the “systematic examination of something to determine its parts, the relationship among parts and their relationship to the whole” (Spradley 1980: 85) in search of patterns (Spradley 1980: 85). Analysis initially begins during the interview stage when the researcher is constructing and interpreting the participants’ stories. The researcher focuses on understanding the situations of the participants and not just the nature of their stories (Bold 2012: 123; Terre Blanche *et al*. 2006: 321-322). This sees the researcher already having a “preliminary understanding of the meaning of the data” (Terre Blanche *et al*. 2006: 323).

[4]A CD-4 count is the result of a laboratory test that measures the number of CD-4 cells in a sample of blood. This result indicates how well the patient’s immune system is working and is especially done on people in South Africa who are HIV positive.

In this process of data analysis, the researcher is no longer working with the lived reality (fieldwork) but instead with text (interview transcripts and field notes) which needs to be read until the researcher is familiar with the text. The researcher needs to make notes and brainstorm as she starts to interpret the text (Terre Blanche *et al*. 2006: 321-322; Kawulich and Holland 2012: 232). According to Gilbert (2002: 233) the procedure of data analysis is "labour-intensive and requires listening and re-listening, reading and re-reading as a picture is drawn from the participant's stories" (Gilbert 2002: 233). The purpose of data analysis is to provide detailed descriptions of the studied phenomenon by describing and unfolding the "context, processes and characteristics" of the phenomenon. Thus, data analysis is concerned with situating "real life" events and incidents into perspective and context (Terre Blanche *et al*. 2006: 321-323).

This research project used the "qualitative analytic tradition",known as thematic analysis, as a tool to analyse and present the data. Thematic analysis refers to the instrument that the researcher uses as a means of identifying, analysing and reporting on themes or patterns that emerged from the data/narratives (Braun and Clark 2006: 77; Bold 2012: 129; Kawulich and Holland 2012:231). Thematic analysis thus unearths and extracts prominent themes and patterns in the text (data), allowing the researcher to find common elements between the participants and their events (Riessman 2006: 187; Attride-Stirling 2006: 387). Thematic analysis allows the researcher to unpack and analyse how different individuals experience a phenomenon (Kawulich and Holland 2012: 231). Therefore, thematic analysis aims to categorise and describe data in detail, making use of detailed descriptions (Braun and Clark 2006: 78).

A theme can be defined as "capturing something important about the data in relation to the research question and represents some level of patterned response or meaning within the data set" (Braun and Clark 2006: 82). Thus, themes are naturally extracted from the data where they are used by the researcher as means to answer the objectives of the research project (Terre Blanche *et al*. 2006: 324; Braun and Clark 2006: 82). Firstly, the researcher must avoid using abstract theoretical language when labelling the themes (categories). Secondly, the researcher should go beyond summarising the content, and focus on functions,

processes,contradictions and differences. Thirdly, the researcher should have enough main themes (more than three) with several sub themes under each main theme to give the project depth. The researcher should also try to use different types of themes. Finally, the researcher should not lose focus on the research question when extracting these themes, and should make sure each theme provides "thick description" (Terre Blanche *et al*. 2006: 324).

This research project identified four main themes with a range of sub-themes from the verbatim interview transcriptions. These themes were also guided by the interview schedule which was used to collect the raw data from the field. These themes also have bearing on the research question of this project. The first identified theme is "family" which focuses on the participants' understanding and experiences of family. The second theme is "the dynamics of the household" concentrating on the everyday activities and survival strategies within households. Third theme is "Ubuntu/Botho:Ethos of sharing and communal support" which focuses on the importance of support networks as a means of survival for the poor. The last theme is "Keeping hope alive in the midst of adversity" where the participants tell stories of their hopes and dreams regardless of their impoverished circumstances.

3.5. The quality and trustworthiness (validity) of the research data

Research that is well grounded and founded requires a "systematic and rigorous approach to the design and the implementation of the study, collection and analysis of data and the interpretation and reporting of findings" (Fossey *et al*. 2002: 720). There are dire consequences for research projects that fail to evaluate the worth, methods, accuracy of findings and the truthfulness of assumptions and conclusions. Meaningless or ambiguous findings may result in wasted time and effort, while wrong findings may result in dangerous, unethical and harmful practices (Long and Johnson 2000: 30). The concept "rigour" in qualitative research design refers to ways of establishing trust and confidence in the research findings or results (Thomas and Magilvy 2011: 151). Rigour is a tool that establishes "consistency of the study methods over time and provides an accurate representation of the population study" (Thomas and Magilvy 2011: 151). Thus, "rigour" is the researcher's way of showing accuracy and of maintaining the worth and utility of the research project (Thomas and Magilvy 2011: 151; Morse *et al*. 2002: 14). The term "rigour" is derived from a

Latin word “rigere” which means “stiffness, rigidity, strict precision and inflexibility” (Thomas and Magilvy 2011: 151). Therefore, qualitative “rigour” can be considered an oxymoron, as qualitative research is concerned with discovering and understanding participants’ meanings and experiences beyond rigid boundaries (Thomas and Magilvy 2011: 151; Fossey *et al*. 2002: 718).

Narrative researchers need to ask themselves the following basic question of qualitative rigour, “How can an inquirer persuade his or her audiences (including herself) that the findings of an inquiry are worth paying attention to, worth taking account of?” (Lincoln and Guba 1985 in Thomas and Magilvy 2011: 152). Theoretically, it is impossible for human beings to have a “single, generalised and external truth” because individuals have their own “perspectives, seen through the lenses of cultural, experiential, environmental and other contextual influences” (Thomas and Magilvy 2011: 152). Thus reality (for qualitative researchers) is interpreted in various ways whereby understanding is based on subjective interpretations (Graneheim and Lundman 2003: 106). Therefore, the validity of the research project will be enhanced by the presentation of data that givesrise to alternative interpretations (Graneheim and Lundman 2003: 110).

Narrative inquiry is concerned with understanding human interactions and worldviews and not with identifying events that are repeated and generalised. Thus, a personal narrative is not supposed to be perceived as “an exact record of what happened, nor is it a mirror of the world out there” (Webster and Mertova 2007: 89). The data collected from narratives (in-depth open-ended interviews) and observations requires co-operation and mutual understanding between the researcher and participants, as text involves multiple meanings and different interpretations. This is important when addressing the issue of the validity of findings within the framework of qualitative design and the interpretivist paradigm (Graneheim and Lundman 2003: 106). This narrative stance might trouble researchers who conform to the traditional qualitative and quantitative research methods (Webster and Mertova 2007: 89). Therefore, researchers need to trust and have confidence in their research findings by basing their practice on the best evidence available (Thomas and Magilvy 2011: 152). There are different models within the qualitative research design that address the issue of trustworthiness or validity of the research

project. This study has adopted the model proposed by Lincoln and Guba (1981) that addresses four intertwined and interrelated components as a means of establishing trustworthiness of the research project: truth-value (credibility), transferability (applicability), dependability (consistency) and conformability (neutrality) (Thomas and Magilvy 2011: 152; Fossey *et al*. 2002: 723; Graneheim and Lundman 2003: 109; Krefting 1990: 215; Morse *et al*.2002: 14).

3.5.1. Truth-value (credibility)

The notion of truth-value establishes the researcher's confidence in the truth of the findings based on the research design, participants and process of analysis (Krefting 1990: 215; Graneheim and Lundman 2003: 109). Researchers cannot define truth-value prior to their research projects, as it is determined by the participants' life experiences and is therefore subject-orientated (Krefting 1990: 215). Thus, truth-value is the most important criterion for the assessment of qualitative research (Krefting 1990: 216). According to Krefting (1990: 215) Lincoln and Guba named this idea *credibility.* Thomas and Magilvy (2011: 152) define credibility as "elements that allow others to recognise the experiences contained within the study through the interpretation of participants' experiences". Credibility is achieved by checking for the "representativeness of the data as a whole" (Thomas and Magilvy 2011: 152) and "how well categories and themes cover data" (Graneheim and Lundman 2003: 109). Therefore, credibility is concerned with research being well grounded and supportable by the datacollected. It does not provide "generalisable truths, prescribing how things ought to be" (Webster and Mertova 2007: 90).

Researchers have to review participants' interview transcripts to search for similarities within and differences between the participants to establish credibility (Thomas and Magilvy 2011: 153; Graneheim and Lundman 2003: 109). Thus, a qualitative research project is considered credible when the analysed data presents accurate interpretations and descriptions of the participants, and the participants recognise what is written about them (Thomas and Magilvy 2011: 152-153). Strategies of reflexivity and debriefing (supervisors and colleagues evaluated the analysis process to see whether they agreed with the way the data was labelled and sorted) were employed to ensure credibility in this project. The credibility of this project was also strengthened by the time spent with the participants, interview

techniques (in-depth open-ended interviews), interview transcripts and by using the original words of the participants (Thomas and Magilvy 2011: 152-153; Krefting 1990: 216; Graneheim and Lundman 2003: 109).

3.5.2. Transferability (applicability)

Transferability refers to the extent to which research findings and methods can be transferred from one population group or setting to another (Thomas and Magilvy 2011: 153; Graneheim and Lundman 2003: 110; Krefting 1990: 216; Webster and Mertova 2007: 101). Thus, the research findings must "fit into context outside the study situation that is determined by the degree of similarity or goodness of fit between the two contexts" (Krefting 1990: 216). Transferability is achieved by the researcher providing detailed and dense descriptions of "demographic and geographical boundaries" in their research project (Thomas and Magilvy 2011: 153). The researcher must provide descriptions that are clear about "culture, context, selection and characteristics of participants, data collection procedures and the process of analysis" (Graneheim and Lundman 2003: 110). Transferability will also be enhanced by appropriate quotations of the participants' narratives from the interview transcripts (Graneheim and Lundman 2003: 110). Thus, the detailed and dense descriptions of the data will allow comparison, thus addressing the problem of applicability (Krefting 1990: 216). Therefore, it is the researcher's responsibility not only to suggest and provide guidance about transferability but also to determine whether the findings are transferable and whether or not they can be used in another context (Graneheim and Lundman 2003: 110; Thomas and Magilvy 2011: 153; Krefting 1990: 216; Webster and Mertova 2007: 101).

3.5.3. Dependability (consistency)

The notion of dependability in narrative research refers to the consistency of the research project data and the trustworthiness of the interview transcripts and field notes (Webster and Mertova 2007: 93; Krefting 1990: 216). Dependability focuses on whether the data findings would be consistent if applied to the same participants in a similar context by another researcher (Krefting 1990: 216; Thomas and Magilvy 2011: 153). Dependability is established when the researcher provides a clear description of the purpose of the study, the importance and procedure of participant

recruitment, the data collection procedure and techniques, the reduction of data analysis and the interpretation (presentation) of the research findings (Thomas and Magilvy 2011: 153). Thus, researchers learn from the participants and do not control them, and this partnership (between researchers and participants) enables the assessment of consistency within the qualitative research which underlines the "uniqueness of the human situation" to emphasise the variety of human experiences (Krefting 1990: 216). In this research project, dependability was established by employing the strategies of discussing the analysis process with colleagues and supervisors (which enhanced the original findings), and by describing the research methods in detail (Thomas and Magilvy 2011: 153).

3.5.4 Conformability (neutrality)

Conformability occurs when the other components (truth-value, transferability and dependability) have been established by the researcher (Thomas and Magilvy 2011: 154; Krefting 1990: 216). The research project must be "reflective, unbiased, maintain a sense of awareness and openness to the study and unfolding results" (Thomas and Magilvy 2011: 154). The concept of reflexivity requires the researcher to adopt a self-critical attitude by acknowledging her own preconceptions and how these could affect the project and findings (Thomas and Magilvy 2011: 154). Thus, conformability is when findings "function solely on the informants and conditions of the research and not of other biases, motivation and perspectives" (Krefting 1990: 216). The researcher needs to write down her feelings, biases and insights after each interview or when she transcribes the interviews (Thomas and Magilvy 2011: 154; Krefting 1991: 216). The researcher should consciously make an effort to follow, instead of leading the interview by asking the participants to clarify words that the researcher did not understand. Reflective research projects give space to a variety of interpretations which will generate new insights. These interpretations result in the development of conformability of the project, giving the reader a "sense of trust in the conduct, credibility of findings and applicability of the study" (Thomas and Magilvy 2011: 154).

Therefore, the quality of data collected in this research project can be regarded as valid and reliable. Validity refers to the "correctness or credibility" of the data interpretation and descriptions (Maxwell 2013: 126: Silverman 2013:285). Rich, thick

descriptions (data) were collected using in-depth open-ended interviews which resulted in a detailed explanation of each theme (analysis). The verbatim interview transcriptions allowed the researcher to quote participants, adding value to the project by using the participants' own words. The credibility of data was further confirmed by a strategy known as 'peer review', or debriefing, as the data was discussed with colleagues and supervisors, which served as a checklist for blind spots for the researcher (things which might have been ignored or misinterpreted) (Maxwell 2013: 125-127: Creswell 2013: 251-252; Flick 2009: 287-388: Silverman 2013: 285). Reliability is based on the degree of consistency/dependability of data. The reliability of the data collected in this project was enhanced by the researcher taking detailed field notes, recording the interviews and transcribing those interviews.The researcher took note of the overlaps, inconsistencies, contradictions and similarities from the transcriptions – for the purpose of analysis. Colleagues and supervisors played an important rolein the process of analysis, giving their contributions and input (Creswell 2013: 252-253; Flick 2009: 385: Silverman 2013: 285).

3.6. Chapter overview

This chapter discusses the methodological account by describing the strategies (work plan) that the researcher used in conducting this research project. Firstly, this research project is based on a qualitative research design which is also suitable in fitting into the theoretical lenses chosen (phenomenology, existential sociology and feminist theories). Secondly, this study used the narrative approach as its methodology because this project is based on understanding people's everyday life experiences and stories. Thirdly, the methodological account was provided, whereby the process of collecting narratives from the field was discussed. Lastly, this research project discusses the measures taken by the researcher to ensure the validity of the study.

CHAPTER 4: ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION I -FAMILY LIFE AND THE DYNAMICS OF SURVIVAL IN RESOURCE POOR AREAS

4.1. Introduction

Chapter 4 and Chapter 5 will discuss the research findings which the researcher madefrom the collectionof data. The collected data was divided thematically into four themes, with sub-themes within each theme. The first theme is “family”,which concentrates on the participants’ understanding of family and their experiences within the institution of the family. This theme will also address the importance of family as well as conflicts experienced within the family. The second theme is “the dynamics of the household” where the participants tell stories about their day to day activities, including their survival mechanisms in the midst of precarious living conditions regarding income and expenditure. The third theme is “Ubuntu/Botho: Ethos of sharing and communal support”, focusing on the importance of the role played by the philosophy of Ubuntu/Botho in the survival of poor households. The last theme is “Keeping hope alive in the midst of adversity” where the participants narrate their struggles, aspirations, fears and moments of happiness –sharing how they manage to survive daily with the little that they have.

4.2. Family

The concept of family is complex and complicated and has numerous definitions (see Chapter 3: Literature Review for a discussion on the concept of the family). The participants in this research project were asked to name the people whom they regard as their family. All of them identified people who contribute to their lives by providing various forms of support. The participants benefit either materially, emotionally, spiritually or instrumentally from having these people in their lives, and this relationship is often reciprocal. Family is therefore often understood on the basis of reciprocity, where family members benefit from each other (materially and emotionally). Family is determined by the roles filled and contributions made by each member towards the participants.

Pinky is 53 years old.She was born to a Xhosa father and “Coloured” mother in a small town called Petrusburg. She has five sisters and two brothers but is only close

to four of her sisters who give her financial and emotional support when they can. Pinky had three children and lost both her first and second born children to AIDS, with each of these children leaving behind a child of their own. She is also infected with HIV and is currently on treatment, but her CD4 count is very low so she is unable to find or keep employment. Pinky's family is made up of her sisters, children and grandchildren as they are the people she turns to in challenging times:

> *The people I consider my family are my sisters and children because I do not have friends. I leave my house to go to visit my sisters and enjoy their company. Other than that I am with my children in the house. That is my life.*

The participants also identified people to whom they are not related to as part of their family. Family membership is not bound by relatedness but instead goes beyond genealogical links (Newman and Grauerholz 2002: 7; Newman 2006: 217; Amoateng *et al.* 2004:3; Amoateng and Richter 2007: 14). For example, one participant (Lesedi) regards her landlord as part of her family. Pahl and Spencer (2004: 200) suggest that people have "families of fate" which are those that they are born into, and "families of choice" where people choose the individuals they consider to be part of their family. People, including the participants in this research project, determine and define significant relationships themselves and also choose the people who are important in their lives.

The participants in this research project regard family as the people who provide them with support and contribute positively to their lives. Khanyisile is a 33 year old married mother of two daughters and a son. She lives with her daughters and her unemployed husband.Her son lives alone in a rented room in another section of the Mangaung township. She dropped out of school in standard eight (grade ten) in the 1980s but is now back at school attending ABET school at level 4[5]. Her life circumstances forced her to abandon her dreams of studying to become a medical doctor and to settle instead for "piece jobs" of domestic work and factory work for an income. Today, she makes her living by selling goods like vegetables, fruits, sweets and snacks from her home. Khanyisile is a religious woman and she is part of a

[5]Adult Basic Education and Training which enables adult learners to reach an educational level which is equivalent to nine years of schooling. ABET consists of five levels with level 4 being the highest and equivalent to grade 9.

prayer group who pray especially for young people addicted to the Nyaope[6] drug.She regards two of the women with whom she prays with as part of her family. Khanyisile sees these women as her sisters because of the kind of relationship they have. She counts on them for moral support and when she is sick, they look after her and her family. They also pray and read the Bible to her to aid in a speedy recovery and to help her overcome daily struggles:

> *I also consider the two women that I pray with as my family because let's just say (that when) I am hungry and I am far from home, then I can go to their homes to eat.*

4.2.1. Families as sites for both stability and conflict

The participants value their family members because they are important people in their lives. The chosen handful of individuals considered to be family play a significant role in the lives of the participants as they are available through hard times as well as happy times. The participants turn to their family members when faced with challenges and problems and this gives the participants a sense of belonging. The family members help the participants when their obligations and responsibilities become too much by lending a helping hand to ensure that the participants cope with everyday life. The family members serve as shoulders for the participants not only to cry on, but also to lean on during trying times. These significant family members visit as often as possible so that they know what is happening in the lives of the various participants.

Also, they tend not to give the participants additional problems, but instead promote a peaceful and harmonic lifestyle. Matshepo is 58 years old and she was widowed in 2006 when her husband passed away due to heart failure. She also lost her only son in 1988 when he fell in sewage pipes when he was 9 years old. Matshepo had nine siblings, eight of whom have passed away. Matshepo and her only remaining sister share a good relationship. Matshepo and her husband raised her sister's daughter (Ester) who still lives with her and her (Ester's) two children. She sees Ester as her own child and Ester's children as her grandchildren. Family is very important to Matshepo as she finds her strength in them:

[6]Popular drug in townships which consists of a mixture of either heroin or dagga to which other harmful substances can be added.

My family is very important to me because we help each other. The home that I was born into - we were nine children and I am the last born. My sister and I are the only two surviving, I come after Ester's mother and I am the one who raised Ester. When I got married my husband and his family accepted her as their own as well. Most people thought that she was my biological child whereas she is my sister's child. There was a time where she went to stay with her mother but she still regarded me and my husband as her parents. You see, we are that type of family and they are important because we help each other. We also help each other financially; my sister has always assisted me.

Respect is an important factor among family members and it encourages the members to be considerate and value one another. Respect is also reciprocal,as family members show respect towards one another. The notion of respect sees individuals being entitled to their own privacy, where they are free to share secrets. This makes it easier for participants to trust and share their secrets with their family members. There is a high level of trust that their families will protect and not hurt them.

Madimpho is a 37 year old mother of two children.She is currently unemployed. Her mother took in her oldest child and Madimpho lives with her youngest child. Her family (mother and siblings) is important to her because they are supportive, both financially and emotionally, and she can count on them. Her family showed her support after she was raped and infected with HIV. They kept her status a secret and did not abandon or stigmatise her due to her condition:

Family is very important because I share a lot of my problems with them. Like when I told them, I am HIV positive. It's like, I am not just telling any person from the streets. The person from the streets would go around spreading what I have told them. So the one from home will accept my condition and not judge me. Even when I go home and tell them I am short of something, they give me without complaining.

Two participants (Madimpho and Pinky) are currently unemployed and they despise their circumstances of being caught in this unpredictable and unstable situation. These women feel like they are burdening their families because they depend

heavily on them for assistance. The participants are unemployed for various reasons related to ill health as well as being unable to find a job. Madimpho dropped out of school in standard nine (grade eleven) and she did a year-long learnership in construction, catering and plumbing. Madimpho said:

> *I am not just sitting and doing nothing. I am a person who is looking for a job at places (where there are) projects*.

The projects that Madimpho refers to are sponsored by Mangaung Municipality officials, where they involve the community in infrastructural projects (Expanded Public Works programmes) by hiring community members on a contract basis.

Pinky did not evergo to school because the apartheid system categorised her as being “Coloured” and she grew up in an area that was designated for the “Black” African population. She was therefore not allowed to attend the local schools (designated for “Black” African learnersonly) and her mother subsequently did not take her to school. Her education status sees her being fitonlyto do “piece jobs” of domestic work in people’s homes and factories. Her low CD4 count sees Pinky being physically unfit to make a sustainable living out of domestic chores. This inability to work and earn an income makes Pinky feel like a burden to her sisters. Pinky finds her dependence on her siblings painful because her sisters are also struggling to care for their own families and sometimes they are unable to assist her:

> *They are important to me, my family is very important to me but sometimes you know, I feel pain, you understand. They love me and they do show me that they love me. I don’t know how to say this to you because my sisters feel my pain when I do not have things in my house. They are able to do things for me but sometimes when I ask things from them, they will promise to bring them and they never do. And then I sleep without eating with my children in this house.*

Despite this harmonious view of family and family life, Khanyisile feels that the notion of family has lost its essence and meaning, as family ties and kin support have weakened over time (Sarkisian and Gerstel 2004: 812). Family is not perceived in the same way as in the past where everybody was treated equally and respectfully and those tied to the family were considered to be one entity. In today’s times people

seemingly choose with whom they associate themselves with and decide who will make it into the circle of family (Seekings 2008: 3-4). According to Khanyisile, people who find themselves in the situation where they are poor tend to be excluded and isolated by the well-off members of the family. The wealthier members could be ashamed to have poor family members so they often dissociate themselves from them. Khanyisile feels that families of today have lost the values, morals and respect that previous generations instilled, as today's families make up their own rules, choices and decisions. She expressed that since people can choose who they regard as part of their family, those who have money do not want to be associated with people like her as she does not have money and other means:

> *Family is very important but it has lost its value in these times because people control themselves and they isolate themselves. When you are poor most family members do not want to be associated with you but when you are rich they all want to be close to you. Most family members do not care about you if you are poor, but if you are doing well then they will regard you as their family.*

Not only does family serve as a source of support and security but it is simultaneously a potential site of conflict. Different families experience different issues that cause fights and conflicts between family members. These conflicts have the potential to tear the family apart, resulting in family members having a fragile or conflicting (or even anon-existent) relationship with some other members of the same family. In these circumstances, family members tend to have ill feelings towards one another when reciprocity (sharing) does not take place. The conduct of disrespect also brings forth conflict because it shows disregard. Conflict usually seems to arise when family members, especially siblings, do not assist one another in fulfilling their family-orientated responsibilities.

Nobantu was born in Lesotho and later moved to Bloemfontein in search of better employment, which she did not find. She has three children with her late husband, but she does not live with her children because she does not have a house. She is currently in a relationship and she lives with her partner in his home, where she rents one of the shacks for R400.00 per month as a place to run her salon. Nobantu has two brothers who have turned their backs on her as they do not assist her or her children in any way. Both these brothers are employed but they only provide for their

own partners and children, even though Nobantu has provided them with help in the past. Nobantu is frustrated with her brothers, especially her younger brother, as she took him to school and looked after him when her late husband's estate money was released. Nobantu feels like she does not have brothers as they have neglected and ignored her:

> *You know I have two brothers and I am the only girl at home but they don't do anything for me. They don't help me out in any way yet they are both working. The one who comes after me, I supported him when he was looking for a job. I gave him money and I made sure that he was well fed during the period when he was looking for a job. But once he found the job then he forgot that his sister has problems. He and his wife just look at me and ignore the fact that I was supportive when he was still unemployed. I took him to school after my husband passed away, he attended Cemtech* [College in Lesotho] *and after he completed his studies, then he turned his back on me. He has literally disregarded everything that I have done for him. My other brother doesn't help me out either; actually to him I am just a "thing". Sometimes I even forget about them, I seriously forget about them and that is why I say that my family is made up of my grandmother and aunt and the rest are just there by name.*

Zoleka shares the same story as Nobantu because she also has two brothers with whom she does not have a relationship, as they do not lend her any support at all. Zoleka was born in the Eastern Cape in a small town called Lady Frere and she moved to Bloemfontein to live with her mother after her divorce. Zoleka has four children and one grandchild and her oldest child relocated to Cape Town, leaving her child behind for Zoleka to raise alone. Zoleka is faced with the burden of raising her children alone as her husband has stopped paying child maintenance. Zoleka finds her brothers "useless" as they do not play any role in her life and they left her with the important responsibility of burying their mother alone:

> *I have brothers but they are just useless, I buried my mother alone. I buried her all alone and they just came empty handed. The first born brother gave me R150.00 and what was I going to do with that money?The other one contributed R900.00. They contributed this ridiculous amount of money to their own mother's funeral so I gave them back their money. People around*

me also advised me to give them their money back so I buried my mother alone. I had to pay for transport to take my mother's body from Bloemfontein to Lady Frere [Eastern Cape], *I did that all by myself without any help from my brothers. My brothers are based in Cape Town and they are both unemployed and sitting around doing nothing. I am alone; I might just as well be my mother's only child because I am not getting their help at all.*

4.2.2. Women are the backbone of the family

Mothers in "Black" African families occupy a strong position as they are most likely to be the main agents responsible for the survival of the family. Mothers possess the unique ability of being able to organise family activities and the everyday lives of all their family members. Mothers are thus considered the backbone of their families, as they tend to be in charge of educating their children about moral, ethical and social values that determine appropriate behaviours in various contexts (Mosoetsa 2011: 44; Taiwo 2010: 230). The participants in this project acknowledge the importance of their other family members, but their mothers hold a special place in their hearts. The participants who still have their mothers present in their lives somehow still depend on their assistance in looking after their children and in providing financially for their needs. The participants' mothers play a significant role in relieving them from their daily struggles and challenges. Most participants looked up to their mothers (and regard them as role models) as these women were able to raise their children and grandchildren (most often single-handedly) by teaching them about the operation of the household and values of life. Death has robbed some of the participants of the warmth and support of their mothers, but some were fortunate to have grandmothers who stepped into that motherly role.

Nobantu lost her mother when she was young and her maternal grandmother took over the role of mother. Even today Nobantu still cries on her grandmother's shoulder. Nobantu's life changed for the worse when her South African-born husband passed away before she could get a South African identity document. The refusal of the Department of Home Affairs to give Nobantu a South African identity document left her in despair as she cannot apply for any social grants or a government funded house for her South African children, which would provide some security for them as a family. Nobantu had no choice but to ask her maternal

grandmother and her in-laws' family to take her children in, as she is incapable of providing a home for them. Nobantu is grateful for her family who look after her children, but she is worried about the well-being of her first born son (13 years old) who lives with his paternal aunt. She feels that her son is being mistreated and is apparently constantly being reminded about his mother's ineptitude, which she worries may have lasting psychological effects on him. Nobantu thinks her life situation could have been different if her mother was still alive, as her own mother would have stayed with her children while she worked to provide for them:

> *Family is very important but nothing beats having a mother. A mother is very important and if mine was still alive, I think my life would be easier because she would be staying with my children as opposed to them being spread out. My mother would have made sure that she looked after my children and they lived under the same roof and then I would have given her the little that I make from my job. I think things would have been much easier that way because right now I find it difficult to see how they are living and how satisfied they are with the people they live with. I always ask myself whether they have eaten and if they get enough sleep, especially the one who lives with my in-laws. Every time I speak to him on the phone* [her son]*, after that I know that he is not going to sleep. He was diagnosed with a heart problem by a doctor and that just shows that this child is always told about how bad and irresponsible his mother is. Telling a child those things causes the child to have stress.That is why I wish that he could stay with me. My wish is that he could come and live with me because if he continues this way then he will end up being naughty and find himself involved in criminal activities in search of money. He might end up living on the streets as a street kid. That is why I want a house and if only the government could help me get my ID*(identity document) *because Home Affairs is really giving me problems. Then I could buy myself a house and stay with my child. I do not worry about the other two because you can see that they are happy. When I visit them they are happy and free children. My family really looks after them well and they support me by doing that. I am very grateful to them because they have accepted my children in their homes and they understand when I don't have money. Their*

support and love is important to me but they won't do as much as a mother would have done.

4.2.3. Absent fathers

The majority of the participants in this study were raised in female-headed households where their fathers were absent for various reasons: migrant employment, death, separation, divorce, abandonment, alcoholism and unemployment. The maternal families were left with the responsibility of raising and taking care of these women from childhood (Budlender and Lund 2011: 926; Holborn and Eddy 2011: 3; Ratele *et al*. 2012: 554; Ocholla-Ayayo 2000: 94). The majority of these participants know their fathers and their paternal families but they are not involved in their lives. Madimpho said:

Those are not people I think about, because they also don't think about me but they are still around.

Lesedi was born in a town called Excelsior (on the outskirts of Thaba Nchu) and has a similar story to Madimpho:

My father is no more, my father's family is still around but since our childhood we are not used to visiting them and those we used to visit are also no more

Lesedi's mother (after the death of her husband) was left to raise her three children with the help of her mother and she owned a small business which helped to sustain them. Nobantu does not have a relationship with her father and his family as they are also not involved in her life.

I don't know when the last time I met up with my father's side of the family was but I met up with my family which is my mother's side of the family not so long ago. Have you noticed how I differentiate: there is the family that I was born into and that is of the Molapo's[paternal] *and then there is my mother's family which is the family I regard as my family. I am not sure when last I saw the Molapo's family but I think it was three years ago. I am not sure when the last time I saw my uncles and aunts from my father's side of the familywas. I was with my mother's side of the family not so long ago; we were invited to the birthday party of one of our family members.*

Palesa is 39 years old and she was born in a rural village called Rouxville. She mothered two children by two different fathers. Palesa and her three siblings grew up without their father and they endured a hard childhood, with only the support of their mother. Palesa's father returned to his family a few years back when she was 28 years old. Palesa forgave her father for his absence during her childhood and accepted his return and encouraged him to return to the family house to live with their mother:

> *My father left when I was young but I was able to accept him when he came back into our lives. He is currently living with my mother back at home in the family house. He left for 27 years and he only came back when I was turning 28 years and I accepted him. I never cursed nor disrespected him; I didn't say anything but just accepted him. I went to speak to him and told him to come live with my mother again. Indeed he stays with my mother and my mother took him back for the sake of the children. I just organised for my parents to get back together and the questions that I have, God will answer them. Even though some family members were not happy with my actions of bringing my parents together, I will die happy knowing that my parents are back together. They are staying together now.*

Zoleka is the only participant who has a better relationship with her paternal family than with her maternal family. Zoleka seemingly has a relationship with her father's family and not with her father himself, as she does not mention him. Her paternal family gives her support and assists her more than her maternal family. The maternal family treats her as if she is old enough and capable of looking after her children without their assistance:

> *My parents passed away and the house that I live in was my mother's house. My father's brothers take care of me and my children, I don't want to lie. They assist wherever and however they can. The people who don't care about me are from my mother's side of the family. They always tell me things like "You are old now so you must be able to take care of your own children". They refuse to help me out even if I am struggling and in need of certain things, so I prefer to ignore them. My mother's side of the family is not important to me because they don't play any role in my life, even when I run to them if I am*

short of something, they will say "no" to me, "I don't have money, I don't have this, I don't have that".

The notion of absent fathers haunts some women in the study as their own children are suffering a similar fate. The majority of these women raised their children with the help of their own families as their children's fathers have abandoned them. Nobantu's family-in-law neglected her children after the death of their father and the husband's aunt took in one of the children. She provides limited assistance (housing and feeding) and Nobantu is left to clothe and pay for school fees for this child.

The father of Pinky's children relocated to his hometown in De Aar in the Northern Cape without giving any reason. Pinky had to and is still struggling to raise her children without his help. Zoleka's former husband neglected his children after their divorce and stopped paying the R1200.00 monthly maintenance. The children, in return, refuse to visit their father and his family as he does not support them financially anymore:

The father of my children sometimes puts in money for them. Sometimes he doesn't. Like now he has not put in money for them for over a year now. He stopped last year (2012) and I wanted to take him to a court in Jo'burg but I could not go as my mother passed away right about the same time. I am planning to go now to the court in Jo'burg to hear what is going on. He is quiet and when I asked him he told me that he is sick and he doesn't go to work anymore. These phones are troubles as they can lie. I am quiet for now and I know the type of person he is. I've had enough of his excuses so I am planning to go to the court in Jo'burg to see what is really happening.

Madimpho has two children and these children have different fathers. The older child's father is not involved in his child's upbringing and he does not provide any form of support. Madimpho's mother took the older childin while Madimpho lives with her second child. Madimpho has an unstable relationship with the father of her second child because he refuses to contribute financially to the raising of their child:

My partner only visits. The father of this child [pointing at her second born child] *comes and goes as he pleases, he only comes to visit us. We are in the process of mending and fixing things. There is a problem that we are busy*

trying to resolve; you see he does not want to support this child. He refuses to give me money and I have asked his sister if he has a job or not. His sister told me that he works at National[a local government hospital]*; he works with electricity for the company called Centlec. The father of this child is not involved in our lives and he does not want to take responsibility, you see. And he knows that the rainy season (spring) is approaching and he does not bring Pampers* [nappies]*, you understand. So when he comes at night, he finds me using a nappy* [cloth] *on the child, so how can I call someone like that a father and boyfriend, although he works and has a serious job? So that's why I am saying he comes here just to come see his child but I am still going to take a straight decision, of taking him to court for child support. I just want his house address, that's the only thing I am struggling with, and he does not live far, he lives here, the next street.*

Not all the participants were abandoned by the fathers of their children and the fathers' families. Matshepo was widowed in 2006 but her husband's family still sees her and Ester as part of their family and involves them in the family activities and ceremonies. Lesedi is pregnant with her first child and her husband and mother in-law are part of her support structure. Khanyisile's husband is supportive of his wife and children, despite the fact that he is currently unemployed. He makes sure that he helps out in the house and assists with the children. His unemployment status sees him unable to provide financially for his family, but he gives his family his time and attention.

4.2.4. Family ceremonies

Family ceremonies bring family members and their friends together tocelebrate achievements and special occasions like ancestral thanksgiving, weddings, graduations, birthdays and holidays like Christmas and New Year's Day. They also gather when their various familiesare experiencing problems such as illness and death, to mourn together and overcome these crises. Family members also come together to address certain problems, like when a member of the family is misbehaving, a family meeting will be called where the elders come to discipline the particular individual. Ceremonies promote temporary solidarity among families, as members who are not in regular contact get to spend time together and work

together in conducting these ceremonies. Khanyisile's family regard the festive season as a family holiday and they celebrate this period at their mother's home (which is regarded as the main house) with their extended family members:

> *We meet during the Christmas festive season at my mother's house because it is spacious so it can accommodate everybody. We gather there with our children and celebrate the season together. It is usually me and my family, my mother's grandchild from Gauteng with her own family (husband and children) and another grandchild from Gauteng also joins us with her own family (husband and children). We arrive at my mother's house on the 15th of December and leave on the 1st of January. We all contribute money to buy groceries and whatever we are going to need during this period. We do this every year so that our family can hide the cracks (fractures). "Re kwala kayona bohlaswa" (We try to hide the embarrassment) and enjoy the festive season together.*

Matshepo's family share the same sentiments as Khanyisile's family of spending the festive season together as a family. The festive season is seen as a period that the family must celebrate together as they commemorate the birth of Jesus Christ. They do this by sharing meals and spending time together. It is important for Matshepo's family, just like Khanyisile's, to spend this period at the home of the elderly family members who are still alive:

> *We meet on the 24th and 25th of December and then we also meet on the 31st of December when we enter the New Year. We spend these days together and either we meet here in my house, or at my sister's place or my uncle's place. My uncle's wife passed away a few months ago.We liked spending the festive days at my uncle's place as his deceased wife was the oldest surviving family member. We would call each other and organise to go meet at my uncle's place because we felt like she* [his wife] *was our mother but now unfortunately she passed away but we still continue with this tradition as they have already phoned and told me that this Christmas they will be coming here. We have not yet organised where we are spending our New Year's Day but my family likes going to my sister's place and to my uncles. My husband's family also likes spending the festive season with me so they have already*

approached me about that and then I told my family that my husband's family wants to meet and have a braai[barbeque]*.*

According to the participants, funerals bring them together more than any other ceremony as they pay their last respects to the departed member. Family members are ultimately "obligated" to attend one another's funerals, as this signifies respect andhumility for the departed as they join their ancestors. Madimpho said:

We are mostly brought together by funerals.

Pinky said the same thing:

My family meet when there is a funeral in the house or ceremonies like the ancestral thanksgiving but we mostly come together during funerals.

4.2.5. Ancestors

The majority of the participants consider ancestors (departed family members) important in their everyday lives as they guide and protect them from harm. Ancestors thus play a vital role in their everyday interactions and actions, as they are believed to serve as mediators between the living and God. They are seen as guides, protectors and providers, as they are able to grant good fortune as well as being able to cause bad luck when family members are not behaving correctly or neglect their responsibilities. Families appease their ancestors as a means of communicating with and passing messages on to them. Family members perform rituals (ceremonies) in an attempt to restore order in their daily lives and to plead for peace, fewer conflicts and less confusion. These rituals are also conducted as a way of showing appreciation for opportunities and well-being, such as employment, health and children passing at school (Togni 1996: 34; McCall 1995: 256-257; Mosoetsa 2011:29).

The ancestral thanksgiving translates in South Sotho as "*mphoyabadimo*" and is conducted for various reasons. These rituals are done as means to communicate with the ancestors when requesting gifts (jobs, graduation, healing, health and the birth of a child), gratitude for giftsgranted, requestingprotection from harm, guidance and for alerting the ancestors of changes made. The ancestral thanksgiving requires resources, as an animal (goat or sheep) is bought to be slaughtered, traditional beer

must be brewed, and food must be prepared for the family and guests. The participants in this study might face poverty and precarity on a daily basis, but for many, these rituals are prioritised as they need to be performed.

> *We also perform rituals like the ancestral thanksgiving which are aimed at thanking the ancestors and also when asking for something from them. For example let's say you have been struggling to get a job, so you will slaughter (an animal) and brew traditional beer for them, asking them to open your ways to be able to find a job. My maiden family had a ceremony this year informing the ancestors that there is nobody staying at our parents' house anymore as we are all in different places. The ancestors were informed that the house will be rented out so the people living in that house are not family but tenants. We also do rituals after a child is born, usually when they reach three months. A goat is slaughtered where the child and the mother are made to eat specific pieces of meat from the goat and the child's hair gets cut off on that day. The purpose of this ritual is to introduce the child to the ancestors and to welcome them to the family.*

For Madimpho, appeasing the ancestors is also a family tradition that she still adheres to:

> *Yes at home they believe in ancestors because they usually go to the graveyard when they perform the ancestral thanksgiving. Before they do the ancestral thanksgiving ceremony they first go to our grandmothers' graves. When they get there, our uncles speak to them. We would get into a car and go to the graveyard and then that coming weekend we perform the ancestral thanksgiving. They would make traditional beer, and snuff. We also perform the ancestral thanksgiving ritual if ever there is lots of fighting at home and these fights are constant. We had one last year as there were people who were threatening to hurt my siblings, then my ancestors stopped these threats. So there were no more fights after the ceremony. We also do ancestral thanksgiving after the birth of the child to thank the ancestors and ask them to give good health and protect the child from harm.*

Some "Black" African families also perform cleansing rituals to purify themselves after certain events (death, miscarriage and abortion) have occurred in their lives.

They believe that these events leave them polluted, and if the individuals do not get cleansed then bad luck will follow them. Individuals that are getting cleansed are not supposed to engage in sexual intercourse during the cleansing period because of the belief that ancestors will cause negative consequencesto affect those individuals if they do not adhere to this abstinence. For the participants, the common cleansing ceremony occurs after the death of family members. It is believed that the mourning family has been polluted as a 'dark cloud' has invaded their family, so they perform cleansing rituals to remove and purify themselves from these misfortunes, as stated by Lesedi:

> *We practice death rituals a lot, after someone passes away, we have to get washed (cleansed) and cut our hair as a sign of mourning the person's death. Let's just say I have a boyfriend/lover, that person needs to understand that I am going through the mourning period and respect that I need to abstain until I get washed (cleansed). They need to understand that there is no sexual intercourse during that period until I have been cleansed.*

Nobantu reiterates this practice:

> *My family perform rituals like the cleansing ceremony after someone has passed on, especially when a wife loses her husband. The wife will be washed and cleansed after the husband has been buried.*

Not all participants are from families that believe in ancestors as some families were brought up with a notion that ancestors do not exist. As a result, these participants do not take part in the practices and beliefs that are associated with the ancestors. They are rather influenced by the doctrine of the Christian religion, where Jesus Christ serves as the mediator between God and the living. Palesa comes from a family that believes in ancestors and practice traditional procedures, but she has chosen her own path of not practising these traditions anymore. She is now a Christian woman who sees Jesus Christ as a mediator:

> *Yes, there are some family members who believe in traditional beliefs and practices. Let me say that within my family, 50% believe in traditional beliefs and practices and 50% believe in the name of Jesus. I belong to the group that believes in the name of Jesus, my dear, because I believe that culture*

does not exist in the face of God. Culture is something that we as human beings of the world have created for ourselves as means to entertain ourselves. I sincerely believe that culture does not exist and I got convinced more when I was attending the church classes and started to read more. There is no such thing as culture; people have created culture to fulfil their lust, it's just lust. Yes, people lust for traditional things, my dear; it's just people fulfilling their lust. Traditional things are very attractive and beautiful but I do not practice them. I do not practice traditional practices, I do not do the ancestral thanksgiving, I do not slaughter for rituals and ceremonies and I do not part take in traditional dances like "mekgibo"and "ditilobodi"[7]. Other members of the family practice and believe in traditional things, including my own mother. They seriously practice and believe in traditional stuff - 50% do these things and the other 50% do not do them. The last time I attended these things was when I was 28 years old. I did not know anything at that stage, but things changed when I started attending the classes at church, so I stopped after attending those classes.

4.2.6. Conclusion

This theme is about how participants in this research project perceive and view the institution of family and also the people they regard as part of their families. All the participants identified people that contribute either materially, emotionally, spiritually or instrumentally in their lives as their family. Family creates a space that allows individuals to have a sense of belonging, but where their privacy is also respected. Family also grants individuals with the support and resources to survive daily hardships – this is a collective effort in enduring precarious conditions. Mothers and grandmothers are regarded as the backbone of African families, as they hold the power to organise the operation of their families. This is mostly so because many children (including the research participants and their children) within "Black" African families grew up without knowing their fathers. Family gatherings promote temporary solidarity and cohesion amongst family members. For some, ancestors are perceived as granting good fortune in life so individuals appease them to make sure that they live their lives in harmony.

[7]"mekgibo" and "ditilobodi" are Indigenous Southern Sotho traditional dances

4.3. The dynamics of the households

4.3.1. A life dominated by mundane tasks

The participants in this project spend most of their time on social reproduction (tasks that are not monetarily rewarded), maintaining their households and ensuring that the needs of household members are met - especially those of their children and grandchildren (Davis and Greenstein 2009:90; Milkie and Peltola 1999: 477-478; Gronlund 2007: 481; Lachance-Grzela and Bouchard 2010: 769; Mosoetsa 2011: 20). These participants are faced with the reality that second wave feminism expresses: having to conduct routine household chores – as expected in the community at large - on behalf of their dependents without any payment or even recognition given that these duties are considered "feminised" (Burn 2005: 101; Hamilton 2007: 46; Inglis 2012: 241-242). These participants narrated that they fulfil these duties to make sure that their children are comfortable and satisfied with the little that they receive. They also provide for their children to give them a "better" life and not to experience the wrath of poverty as harshlyas they did during their own childhoods. Some women even revert to praying for their families to have good health, stay out of trouble and treat other people with respect. Nobantu takes care of her partner as a means of expressing her love:

*I do these things [*chores] *so that he* [partner] *can see how much I love him*.

The participants were asked to describe their typical week-day. The first thing that the majority do is to boil water in preparation for bathing their children and grandchildren to prepare them for school. They then continue to prepare breakfast for their families as well as lunch boxes for the children who attend school. Some participants walk with their children to school. The participants (especially those who are unemployed) start cleaning their houses, do laundry (on selected days) and sweep the yard to ensure that their homes are clean. After completing their daily tasks, the participants spend their time (during the afternoon) relaxing, sleeping, reading, visiting, listening to the radio and watching television. Pinky lives with her children and grandchildren and after the children have left for school, she goes back to bed to take a nap and wakes up in the late morning to prepare lunch for them:

After that [walking children to school] *I make tea for myself and then start cleaning the house. When I am done then I go back to my bed and sleep. I take naps and then later I will wake up and prepare food for the children forwhen they come back from school. They will find me having cooked them pap*[porridge]. *That is my job: that is what I do every day.*

Matshepo spends her time after completing her chores watching television and when bored, she visits her neighbours and family members. Some days she spends her time reading novels and newspapers so as to be up-to-date on current affairs. Matshepo was introduced to reading by her deceased husband, as he enjoyed reading:

I would clean and then watch TV, from there then I visit around [in her street] *if I feel like it. Sometimes I go visit my husband's family in Cape Stands. I don't visit every day but that's my routine. From there I am a person who likes and enjoys reading, so I would then read Shakespeare [*books]. *I enjoy them a lot. I also enjoy reading magazines or newspapers because my husband used to buy newspapers every day before he passed on. He also enjoyed reading and I don't buy newspapers often since his death, but I buy at least once a week because one must always be up-to-date on current affairs.*

In the late afternoon, most of the participants start preparing supper and make sure that the children's school clothes are clean to be worn the following day. The participants and their families spend their time at night watching television and conversing with each other. Lesedi lives with her husband and her younger sister with the younger sister's child in a rented two-roomed house. Lesedi got custody of her younger sister and her child after the death of their mother. Lesedi's family spends their nights together watching television and also use the time to address family matters:

At night, we watch TV. We sit with my husband and if there is something that we need to discuss then we talk about it with the children. We discuss my younger sister's behaviour and how we can reprimand her. We sit them down and plan if a specific date is fine for the family to do a certain thing. We see if we will be able to do those things on that date. This is how we spend most evenings.

Despite living in precarious circumstances, these women's lives also take on very mundane, routinised rhythms. A sense of normality and control is manifest in these routines and creates order and provides some form of security for the participants and their dependents.

4.3.2. Gender and the performance of mundane tasks

Women, including the participants in this project, are primarily associated with the operation of the household and the well-being of family members, as indicated in the sub-theme above. The majority of the participants feel that gender (social role expectations of being male or female) should not play any role when it comes to performing domestic chores. They acknowledge, however, that in reality, gender does play a major role in the performance of unpaid tasks. These participants are of the opinion that women can do household chores (gardening, cleaning the yard, cutting trees and fixing appliances) that are associated with men, and vice versa. Khanyisile expressed that women and men should help each other with household chores:

We need to help each other out, there is no such thing as women's or men's jobs.

Madimpho agrees with Khanyisile that women and men should be able to help each other, especially when they are faced with the reality of hardships such as sickness:

> *A man should clean because there will come a time when I will lie flat in bed. He should know that this woman is not feeling well and I have to help her with cleaning, make her soft porridge and wash the dishes for her.*

Matshepo on the other hand, got used to the idea of doing chores that are associated with both women and men when her husband was still alive. She enjoys working in her garden where she plants and prunes trees. Matshepo expresses that individuals need to be able to help out with all the duties at home as long as they are physically capable of doing so:

> *I believe that we must all do household chores for ourselves, because when my husband was still alive we used to do them together. I would help him out with the garden; we used to have a beautiful lawn. That's why I think*

everybody should do everything and not reserve chores for others unless your body can't handle it.

Nobantu also believes that household chores should not be gender-specific and that family members should be able to help each other with their duties as they share the household. She narrated that some families did not transmit this knowledge to their young, leaving their members associating certain household duties to a particular gender. Nobantu's partner believes in gender-specific (female) chores as he expects her to do all the household chores including sweeping the yard:

I think household chores must be done by everyone but it depends on one's upbringing. If he was raised and told that a woman is not a slave then he would know that he is supposed to help me with the cooking, washing of the dishes, making the bed and sweeping the room when he can see that I am busy. He would offer to wash the clothes but you can see that in his upbringing he was taught that these chores are only supposed to be done by women. But he is not the only one with this problem as the male tenants wake up in the morning and smoke. The yard will be dirty at that time but none of them will think of cleaning, instead we have to clean it. I am the one who usually does it because I hate a dirty place. You can tell that he is relieved by me doing these chores and he can see that I am used to doing them, as I was also doing them back home in Lesotho. At home in Lesotho, the yard is cleaned by children and my brother is not lazy to help me with the cooking. He is not lazy to clean the house and he can do his own washing but here [referring to her partner and the male tenants] *you can see that there is a huge problem.*

Palesa however, is the only participant who agrees that household duties should be gender-specific. Palesa was brought up with the belief that some chores are only meant to be done by women (like being in the kitchen) and others are meant to be done by men (fixing appliances, for example). She explained how unhappy she would be if her partner was to tell her how to handle the daily operation of their household, as she believes that those are her duties to fulfil:

Some chores are only meant to be done by women in the house, only women. It is a must for a woman to fulfil certain chores within the household and men

> *to fulfil other chores as well. Chores that should be done by men are things like fixing things that are leaking, screwing things that have loosened up and fixing the television. I call him to assist me with things like that but when it comes to cooking and cleaning, I don't expect him to do those types of chores and I don't usually ask for his help either. I am used to doing these chores for myself even though he can do them but I prefer to do them myself. Let me say men's work within the household among others is to paint, plaster and to fix anything that is broken in the house, not in the kitchen. I am the one who has to oversee that things run accordingly there and not be told by him that things are not running accordingly.*

The women in this project depend on their children, especially their daughters, more than their partners and sons for assistance with household chores. These children (daughters) together with their mothers are the most important source of domestic labour within households, as they are involved in everyday meal preparation as well as taking care of their younger siblings (Henn 2005: 6; Ocholla-Ayayo 2000: 99). Palesa lives with her children in a rented shack, where a lace curtain is used to divide the bedroom from the kitchen. Palesa's daughter is 22 years old and she helps her mother with the household chores:

My daughter Lerato helps me clean and cook. She is the only person who helps me with the household chores.

Pinky lives with her children and grandchildren and her 18 year old daughter helps around the house. Pinky's daughter assists her mother with cleaning and cooking:

> *My daughter helps me with the cleaning: when I am cleaning the bedrooms then she will clean the front part of the house* [kitchen and dining room]. *Sometimes she will tell me that she will cook today and all I have to do is to babysit her child.*

It is evident in this research project that the notion of gender roles is instilled in children from a young age and becomes consolidated in their adult lives. Female children are socialised to perform chores that society often associates with women - cleaning, cooking, doing the laundry, bathing their younger siblings and making sure that they oversee the operation of the household.

Zoleka's oldest son is 22 years old and currently unemployed but trying to make ends meet by helping out at a local gym. Zoleka's son helps out in the house (when his mother is at work) even though his mother does not expect him to do so, as she feels that those duties are not appropriate for him as he is a male child:

> *My son helps when he is around. You will find that maybe he will do the dishes and I will apply the polish on the floor. My son is a boy child so I can't force him, especially on weekends, as he tends not to be home when he knows that I am home.*

It is therefore not expected of boy children (of all ages, but especially older ones) to perform "feminine" duties, and if they do, it is seen as an exception – not an act that can be expected as in the case with girl children of all ages.

4.3.3. An insecure living

The participants are characterised by limited skills, as the majority have not completed Matric (grade 12) and one participant (Pinky) never attended school. Matshepo and Nobantu completed grade 12 but they are still struggling to get secure employment. This sees them unable to compete for employment in the formal employment sector as they do not meet the minimum requirements. Uneducated "Black" African women, including these participants, dominate the informal economy where they are eligible for "piece jobs" where remuneration consists of low wages (Posel and Muller 2008: 467; Oosthuizen 2012: 180; Lund 2002: 180). Common "piece jobs" for the women in this project are to perform domestic chores where they mostly clean "White" middle-class people's homes in the suburbs of Bloemfontein. Some have worked as cleaners in guesthouses, restaurants, factories, hospitals, at the university and at tuck shops within the Mangaung township. Others (Khanyisile) have settled for selling vegetables, fruit, sweets and snacks from home as a means of securing an income. These "piece jobs" provide an unpredictable income for the participants,and they lack security because they do not provide any benefits (medical aid, pension fund) or, in many cases, consistency.The temporary nature of these jobs also means that the participants are not protected by labour legislation, which makes their jobs unreliable and unpredictable. But somehow, these women are able

to survive and take care of their children despite the minimum wages that they earn (Lund 2002: 180; McKeever 1998: 1211; Valodia *et al*. 2006: 91).

Zoleka dropped out of school in standard seven (grade nine) in the 1980s. She worked at a sewing factory in Johannesburg for 12 years (where she had no pension fund) while she was still married. She moved to Bloemfontein with her children after she got divorced, where she helped out at feeding schemes for different schools in the Mangaung township. Zoleka spent months unemployed and she depended on her mother to support both her and her children. Zoleka is currently working for a cleaning company at the local university. She has been working for the cleaning company since 2009 and she got the job through a friend after she started working as a casual worker for three weeks. Zoleka was grateful for the job opportunity even though she was paid very little.

> *The wages are little but it's better than nothing, and there are no deductions when you are casually employed*.

She was promoted to a permanent post after three weeks where she now earns R1 480.00 per month, and the company deducts money from her wages for the unemployment insurance fund and the provident fund. Zoleka might be permanently employed with deductions as a means of security, but this job is still precarious because of its unpredictability (she could lose the job at anytime because of retrenchment or problems at work, such as suspicion of theft).

Matshepo completed standard ten (grade twelve) in 1977 and her dream of becoming a nurse was shattered when she was not accepted at a nursing college. She applied at other places but she was not able to find any employment, so she settled forworking for her sister in-law, who owned tuck-shops in different sections of the township. Matshepo had to resign from the tuck-shop after her mother in-law fell ill, and she decided to give up her source of income in order to take up the responsibility of looking after her:

> *I used to work at a shop - a township shop (supermarket). It was owned by my husband's sister and I worked there for many years. The shop was in Rockland. I also worked at Hodisa Technical School; my husband's sister also owned that tuck shop there. It was then when the school only had boys. We*

used to bake vetkoeks and other things for the boys to eat during breaks. Then I moved with the tuck-shop to Motheo College Hillside campus, and then I stopped working when my mother in-law fell ill. My husband and I both worked there so I told him that one of us must quit to look after the old lady, so I decided to quit.

Lesedi failed grade twelve (Matric) in 2004 so she was forced to make ends meet by doing “piece jobs”. Her first job was in 2006 where she worked as a cleaner at National Hospital for three years, but her contract was not renewed. Lesedi moved on to work as a volunteer for an NGO (non-governmental organisation) called *Windows Care* where she worked as a home-based care worker. This cadre of workers, earning a pittance or nothing at all, sprang up all over South Africa in response to the HIV/AIDS and TB pandemics that afflict so many people who cannot be looked after at public health care facilities. These home-based care workers cared for sick people in their homes by cleaning for them, feeding them and making sure that the patients took their medication. Lesedi was not paid some months,as this job was on a voluntary basis and remuneration was of a very fluctuating nature (often dependent on external or government funding of the particular NGO). Lesedi also does stock taking for retail shops such as Pick n Pay, Shoprite and Pep Store, especially during the festive season:

I also do stock taking for shops like Pick n Pay, Shoprite and Pep Store. We are called to come and assist those shops during school holidays like the Christmas season. We assist these shops with stock taking where we count the stock.

Lesedi is waiting to start a job at the Department of Social Development where they will be expected to go to schools and teach the pupils about the dangers of substance abuse. This project is expected to start in 6 months’ time (November 2013) where they will be paid an undisclosed amount. Lesedi and her colleagues expect to visit at least 20 schools to teach learners about the dangers of substance abuse. Lesedi’s team was chosen to work with children in the Foundation Phase (children from ages 5 to 8).They will host puppets shows as a means of getting the message across to the children not to smoke and drink, as these habits are dangerous to their health and to their futures. This job is also an insecure source of

income (like the home-based care) as they have not signed a contract stipulating the duration, deductions and remuneration involved:

> *Now it is that thing of substance abuse that starts in November (2013). It should have started already. Social development tells us that maybe in a year we should go to at least 20 schools. No, we do puppet shows for them. Maybe at crèches we do puppets shows; you teach them about cigarettes, you teach them not to smoke and not to drink as they are not good for them.*

The participants do not only depend on the precarious income that they earn from various "piece jobs", but also on remittances received from family members. Some participants receive money from their partners even though it this is not a fixed amount received regularly. Other participants have built extra rooms (shacks) at the back of their dwellings to rent out in order toget rental incomeon a monthly basis. Madimpho is unemployed and she depends on remittances from her mother and sister. Madimpho also depends on the rent money from tenants:

I live on the tenants' money; they pay me only R200.00 per month.

Palesa receives money from the father of her second born, but some months the child's father does not bring money but clothes and groceries instead:

> *My son's father also gives me money but let us not count that money because he does not give me money every month, sometimes he gives me money and (at) other times he buys our son clothes and food.*

Khanyisile's oldest child (son) whom she had before getting married contributes to Khanyisile's household income by giving them remittances. These remittances enable Khanyisile to purchase the goods necessary for the household's survival as she receives this money monthly. Khanyisile's son works at a retail shop but he makes sure that his mother and sisters are taken care of by including them in his budget:

> *My son has included us in his budget; there is no fixed amount that he gives us so he gives us according to his own monthly expenses. He has included me in his monthly budget even though I might be heavy on him.*

The household income for these participants fluctuates and is unstable, but it is somehow able to sustain the participants and their families. The participants narrated how they spend their income, and food (mealie meal, flour, sugar, soups, cooking oil, eggs, and meat), toiletries and electricity were mentioned as the primary items on which money is spent (Mosoetsa 2011: 34). The employed participants and those with greater financial means have the luxury of affording clothing accounts, insurance policies, formal (bank) and informal (stokvel) savings. Matshepo is currently unemployed and depends on her sister's and niece's wages. The niece trusts her to the point of disclosing her salary to Matshepo, and she allows Matshepo to make an input on how the money should be spent. Matshepo's sister also contributes to the household income even though she does not stay with them. Matshepo keeps her sister's bank card and uses it to withdraw money (with her permission) when the household experiences shortages. Her sister assists Matshepo not only because they are siblings, but also because Matshepo has helped raise her daughter and grandchildren. This is Matshepo's story:

> *The first thing that my niece does is to pay her Jet*[a clothing store] *account and then the insurance* [policy] *deducts money. She was just offered another account but she will discuss it with me first before she makes any decisions as we are a family that discusses everything. Let us just say if her salary is R3000.00 then we will spend R1000.00 to buy groceries that are (in) short (supply). We buy mealie meal and it lasts for two months as we are not a big family. So we always make sure that we refill mealie meal, flour, sugar, cooking oil, eggs and baking ingredients like baking powder as I am the type of person who enjoys baking. And then we buy meat and R200.00 worth of electricity. The reason why we buy R200.00 electricity is because it lasts the whole month as we used to buy R100.00 and it will finish around about the 15th of the month. If it happens that we ran out of electricity or anything then I will call my sister and tell her that we are short and then she will tell me to take her bank card and withdraw money. She really does look after us and does keep in mind that the children that I stay with are hers.*

4.3.4. Social security grants

The introduction of the extended social security grant system in 1998 (a system which no longer focused solely on pensions as during apartheid) saw the dynamics of "Black" African households, including those of these participants, changing. The financial burden experienced in the participants' households was alleviated as both younger and older members started contributing to the household income –thus sharing the household's financial burden (Moller 2010: 148; Kaseke 2010: 160). The majority of the participants receive child support grants (which currently amounts to R290.00/$26.71 per month per child) on behalf of their biological children and foster care grants (R 800.00/$73.68 per month per child) for taking care (having custody) of their family members' children (their grandchildren and their sisters' children). Nobantu is the only participant who does not receive a child support grant for her children because, as explained earlier, she does not have a South African identity document. Nobantu's life took a turn for the worse as she could no longer afford to look after her three children,so she arranged with a South African woman to be the beneficiary of her children's grant. This woman in turn used the money for her own purposes instead of passing it on to Nobantu. This woman has since passed away, and Nobantu is struggling to get another South African-born woman to apply for the grants on behalf of her children:

> *My children used to receive grants and the person who got it for them passed away. Well, I might just as well say that they didn't receive the grant money because the person who received grants on their behalf did nothing for them. She spent the money on herself; that lady treated herself with my children's money. It's very difficult now for me to find someone who will apply for a grant for my children because I don't have a South African ID.*

Pinky receives a child support grant for her youngest son and a foster care grant for her two grandchildren. One of her grandchildren is giving her a hard time as he does not want to share his money with the rest of the household. Pinky gives him the money every month (for the sake of peace) and he only treats himself with this money. Pinky feels that the grandchild is being selfish by not wanting to share the money with the rest of the household, as she sees the money as a means of getting

an income for the whole household – regardless of the money being assigned to the grandchild:

> *The 15 year old does not want his money to be used to buy things in the house* [sigh]. *So I give him the money in his hands straight after I take it out and then he buys things* [clothes and sweets] *for himself.*

Pinky also used to receive a disability grant (R1260.00/$116.05 per person per month) as her CD4 count was very low, but the money was stopped after a year when her health improved. She is currently unemployed as her health has deteriorated again because she does not eat healthy food, so she is waiting for the doctor to sign the forms so that she can receive a disability grant again:

> *I am not sure when the first time I received the money was but I know that I only received it for a year and then they cut it off. I started getting sick again now in June (2013) because they told me that my CD4 count has dropped. The doctor said that I don't eat healthy food.*

Social security grants serve as an important means of contributing to some of the participants' household income. In Pinky and Madimpho's case, child support grants are their main sources of income since they are not employed. These cash grants allow both these participants to decide how to use the money, depending on the availability of items (groceries) in their households (Moller 2010: 148). Mealie meal serves as a staple food, thus taking preference over rice and samp[8], because mealie meal can be prepared for use indifferent meals and eaten as breakfast (soft porridge), lunch and supper (pap). Mealie meal also tends to be cheaper and the quantity goes further than is the case with rice or samp. These women cannot afford their children's school fees, but they make sure that their children have school uniforms, shoes and lunch at school. Pinky narrated as follows:

> *Let me tell you: I buy 12.5 kg mealie meal and if I have little more money I buy two 12.5 kg mealie meal bags, then it's the things to eat the "papa" (pap) with vegetables, tinned food, meat, beans. I also check if my children and grandchildren have things for theirlunchboxes.*

[8]Mealie meal is cheaper in price and each bag contains large quantities as compared to rice and samp.

Madimpho, on the other hand, also buys essential household items with the grant money, and her mother and sisters help her out with the things that she still requires after these purchases:

> *When I come from receiving these grants, I can buy 10 kg of mealie meal, 2 kg of chicken pieces, meat* [red meat], *beef stock, soap and Vaseline. Yes, so that we can wash and eat. I also buy R100 worth of electricity. With the money that's left I can buy my son school shoes and school pants because he is doing grade R* [the first year of the Foundation Phase]*).*

Social grants are also important and helpful to the participants with "piece jobs" as they contribute to households which already depend on an unstable income. Palesa is a domestic worker and she earns R1 900.00 ($170.96) per month. The additional amount she gets from the social grants plays an important role in her household. Palesa used to get social grants for both her children, but her daughter's grant was terminated in 2012 when she turned 18 years old. Palesa uses her son's grant money to pay his day care fees and toiletries required by the day care. She does not withdraw all the money at once but leaves some in the SASSA (South African Social Security Agency) card for emergencies:

> *I use the grant money for school purposes, I pay R160.00 for crèche fees and sometimes we receive letters requesting us to buy things that have run out, like toilet paper and Vaseline* [petroleum jelly]. *So I buy these things with the grant money and then take them to the crèche. My son also enjoys eating yoghurt and apples so I use the grant money to buy them. I do not withdraw the whole amount and I make sure that there is always something left in the card. Let's say I withdraw R200.00, this means that I have left something in the account like R40.00 or R50.00. This balance I then use during the month when my son has things that he is short of, things like milk, so I use that money to buy them.*

Matshepo is waiting to turn 60 years old in 2016 because she will be eligible to receive a pension grant (currently at R1260.00/$116.05 per person per month). In the meantime, her household survives on her niece's salary of R3000.00/$270.38 per month and child support grants for her two grandchildren. Matshepo and her niece try to utilise the household income wisely as they survive on the niece's

monthly salary. The money received from thechild support grant is invested in a bank account for the grandchildren's education, especially tertiary education. Matshepo worries about how her niece will cope with these children, especially because she is not married, so saving the grant money will help in future:

> *The grant money is saved* [invested] *for the children for when they are older to go to school. She* [Ester] *opened a bank account for each one and every month she deposits money into those accounts. She is not married so her saving this money will allow her children to accesstertiary education and lessen the burden when the time comes.*

The social grants serve as safety nets for many poor "Black" African households, regardless of whether or not these participants are employed. These grants are important to the participants as they contribute to their day-to-day survival. The participants were asked how their households would be affected if the government stopped giving them social grants. Khanyisile and Pinky had a moment of silence (with sad faces) before responding. Khanyisile said in a few words:

> *Things will be really bad.*

Pinky also responded by stating:

> *Things will be tough hey, seriously tough.*

Zoleka had the same reaction as Khanyisile and Pinky as she narrated that:

> *God, I will die, I will get sick. I will get sick because my wages are not money* [meaning they are really low]*, the money that Prestige*[her employer] *pays me is really peanuts. I would die; I won't be able to survive without the grant money.*

These government grants then often serve as a very important physical survival tool for the participants and the narratives around social grants reflect dependence and gratitude for this additional source of income (or at times even the sole source of income).

4.3.5. Balancing the responsibilities between home and work

The women in this study have to deal with the struggles of being both the providers and managers of their households. As stated before,these women depend on “piece jobs” inorder to support their children financially, and at the same time they are the backbones of their families and households. They are constantly faced with the challenges of balancing both the work and home dimensions of their lives. There is a constant and inevitable intermingling between their public and private lives.The majority of these participants narrated that they are able to cope with these multiple roles by depending on others, especially close family members, both for assistance and also in managing their time. Lesedi depends on her landlord and her younger sister, asher landlord looks after the younger sister’s child when she is at work. The younger sister assists in the household by preparing meals when she returns from school. Lesedi’s husband also helps around the house by doing some chores while she is at work. Lesedi expresses that it takes determination and acceptance of your life circumstances in order to balance the multiple roles that an individual occupies:

> *You know what; determination makes it all possible,if you tell yourself that these are all your responsibilities. Sometimes when I am at work and my husband is off, I get home I will find that he has cooked supper and cleaned the house. The lady* [landlord] *stays with the child when I am at work and sometimes when I know I will get home late, I phone my sister and ask her to cook pap*[porridge] *and I will make a plan as to what we eat that pap with when I get home.*

Zoleka is not as fortunate as Lesedi as she lives with her three sons (aged between 10 and 22 years old) and her seven year old granddaughter. The 22 year old son usually looks after his younger siblings after school but when he is not around the children go and play, and sometimes they visit their oldest brother who works at a local gym, wait for him to finish work, and then walk home with him. The granddaughter usually plays with the neighbour’s children. Zoleka cooks and cleans upon her return from work on those days when her oldest son does not perform these tasks:

> *I manage, sometimes when I get back from work I sweep the yard and take out the hosepipe. I do all those things and I get satisfaction from doing them ifI*

tell myself that I am going to do something, then I do it. When my oldest son is not around, my other children just go to play, they play or they go to gym, every day. They go to the gym and they come back at 6 o'clock. My granddaughter plays with the children from next door.

Nobantu finds it difficult to balance the work and home dimensions of her life, especially because they are in the same yard. Nobantu is a hairdresser and she rents one of the shacks in her partner's home as her salon. Nobantu's job is strenuous as it usually requires her to stand all day (depending on the number of customers). Balancing her roles at home and work is difficult for her:

It's very difficult for me but what makes me bear it all is because of my struggles. On the one hand, I am someone's girlfriend and on the other, I work and I am very tired when I close the salon and when I go into the house I will find that nobody cooked. I will then start cooking and after that I just want to go to bed and then when I get there my boyfriend will want to have sex. Things are very difficult for me and sometimes I tell him that I will go to Lesotho for the whole month [giggles], *but that will not happen because what brought me here in the first place was money. So I tell myself to hang in there because of my children.*

All these chores and expectations can, at times, be relentless on these women. Support (or the lack thereof), control (or the lack thereof) and motivation (or the lack thereof) dictate to a large degree the experiences of these women, as was shown it the various narratives.

4.3.6. Conclusion

Another dimension of the fieldwork focused specifically on the dynamics of "Black" African households in the Mangaung township. Women tend to be responsible for the operation of the household, making sure that family members (especially their children) are fed, bathed and clothed. These mundane tasks can be referred to as social reproduction, they are gender-specific, and women tend to be associated with household work. These households are characterised by unstable sources of income because the women are either earning their living through "piece jobs" or they are unemployed. The household income then depends on remittances and social grants,

especially child support and foster care grants. These forms of income allow the participants to buy essential items (food, toiletries, electricity and school things). Some participants do not have access to these grants, as they either do not have a South African identity document or the grants they received in the past were discontinued. The women in this project are able to cope with the challenges between work and home because they rely on their family members to assist, especially at home. According to these women it takes determination to find the right balance (if that is in any way possible),and that it is a difficult and strenuous process under the best of circumstances.

CHAPTER 5: ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION II - SURVIVAL STRATEGIES IN PRECARIOUS CONDITIONS

5.1. Ubuntu/Botho: "Ethos of sharing and communal support"

5.1.1. Understanding of Ubuntu/Botho

According to the literature (Broodryk 2002: 19; Matolino and Kwindingwi 2013: 200; Togni 1996: 111-112) the philosophy of Ubuntu/Botho is "an African worldview that is based on 'values of intense humanness, caring, sharing, respect, compassion and associated values' promoting social cohesion (peaceful living) within the family and community". The research participants in this project have the same ideal understanding as the above authors regarding the notion of Ubuntu/Botho. The majority of the participants explained that Ubuntu/Botho is when human beings are able to help one another by sharing both material and non-material resources. Ubuntu/Botho goes beyond family ties as people are social beings living within a society and everybody needs other people in order to be able to adapt and survive in their environment. Pinky expressed it as follows:

> *I can't live without other people because help comes from other people. When I need help, I consult other people and ask for help.*

Khanyisile agrees that Ubuntu/Botho is about showing other people compassion, as that will enable others to offer their help. Ubuntu/Botho is also about being able to listen to others people's problems and difficulties without judgement, and trying toprovide solutions (if at all possible):

> *There are times when people find themselves in a situation where they are alone and (have) nobody, (not) even family members to turn to, so what can you and I do but to make sure that there is compassion among mankind. You can find yourself* [researcher] *being my younger sister and I am your older sister and we are there for each other and when people see us they think we are real siblings from one family. You will find that I will carry your burden without even judging you and you know and carry my strong and weak points in return.*

Zoleka agrees with the above statement and emphasises that the help should be reciprocal. She explained that in order for an individual to get assistance from other people when experiencing trouble, they need to be willing to help others as well:

> *People should help one another, meaning people help each other by lending each other a hand. Tomorrow I will be able to help people if they are in trouble and the very same people will be able to help me when I am in trouble.*

Some participants narrated their understanding of Ubuntu/Botho as the "inner being" of a person, as in their "humanity". Ubuntu/Botho is seen (by these participants) as a lifestyle that is informed and guided by values that encourage harmony and contentment in a community. Individuals are supposed to care about each other's well-being as means of strengthening the community's spirit (Broodryk 2002: 19; Matolino and Kwindingwi 2013: 200; Togni 1996: 111-112). Madimpho defined Ubuntu/Botho as:

> *The way you are. The way you live your life, it's being yourself.*

Nobantu narrated that Ubuntu/Botho is found in people's hearts, and is the ability of people to feel and show compassion and sympathy towards one another. Nobantu explained that Ubuntu/Botho is a type of spiritual guidance where people do good things for others, knowing that God will reward their deeds in return. Ubuntu/Botho also guides people not to wrong and hurt each other, because God will punish the guilty:

> *I think Botho is in your heart: if your heart is able to feel pain on behalf of someone and is able to think of others. Botho can also be your spirit; when you do well towards others then you know that the Almighty God is watching you. And you are scared to do bad things towards others because God can see you and He will deal with you. I think Botho is in a person as in their spirit.*

Matshepo also defines Ubuntu/Botho as a lifestyle characterised by forgiveness (forgiving others and asking for forgiveness), sharing, giving to the less fortunate (not throwing away food and clothes) and protecting each other, especially vulnerable community members. Matshepo also emphasises the importance of individuals voicing their problems, because talking to others will give them a variety of solutions

which they can use as a means of solving their problems. Matshepo narrates Ubuntu as:

> *My understanding of the word Ubuntu is the lifestyle that we must live. When someone has wronged you then you must go to them and ask for forgiveness: that is showing Ubuntu. When I have extra pap left, instead of throwing it away I must give to someone who doesn't have mealie meal, that is showing Ubuntu and we co-exist. When I see that something is happening in that house and I know that the old lady is staying by herself, I must go in to check on her as maybe her children went to work and the old lady is alone. That is what Ubuntu is. When I have troubles in my household and my child is not listening to me, I must discuss that with my neighbour and tell her that my child is giving me problems. We should not hide such things because the child might end up beating me up and I will be keeping that a secret. If I do that then I am not showing Ubuntu. I will be showing Ubuntu when I share this problem with my neighbour, she will be able to help me by giving me some advice and listening to other people's advice is showing Ubuntu. You must not tell yourself that you know everything; there is nobody who knows everything. There is a Sotho proverb that says "noka etlaseletswa kemelatswana," meaning "a river is filled by streams". So as an individual your ideas increase as you get them from other people. So Ubuntu says you must share with other people.*

This communal experience of life is thus reiterated by the participants when they think of Ubuntu/Botho. This is probably one of the most important aspects that gives these women hope in a situation of precarity and generalised misery and poverty. Social cohesion and a sense of belonging are part and parcel of this age-old philosophy.

5.1.2. Experiencing and practising Ubuntu/Botho

In reality, the philosophy of Ubuntu/Botho might rescue some people from poverty and precarious living conditions, but others find themselves in situations where they are left to fend for themselves. Pinky is one of the participants who has experienced and continues to experience the benefits of this ethos. Pinky does not have

tremendous means to secure an income because of her illness. She is unable to afford clothes for her children as food is the primary priority bought with the money from social grants. Pinky experiences Ubuntu/Botho from one of her neighbours, who gives her school uniforms and other clothes for the children. The neighbour also helps her with other things of that which is in need:

> *Remember when I was telling you about the lady who lives opposite that big house; she is the one person who has shown me Botho because she helps me out sometimes. She gives me old school uniforms and clothes to wear for my children. She never throws things away and she is a woman that doesn't have a family* [children] *but she has time for me and when she has things for me, she gives them to me because she understands that I have trouble. I go to her and tell her my problems and she understands.*

Nobantu as a Lesotho-born woman in South Africa experiences countless challenges as she struggles to survive. Her life took a turn for the better when she married a South African man who worked on the mines. However, this fortune soon changed after her husband passed away. Fortunately, Nobantu also has many narratives of instances where she experienced Ubuntu/Botho.The one that stands out most in her life, took place when she was going through one of the darkest moments of her life: the time when her husband died. Nobantu was able to get through the burial process with the help and support of her husband's aunt. This aunt was a pillar of strength for Nobantu during this period by assisting with the funeral arrangements:

> *Very many people have shown me Botho but if I have to single out one,then I will mention my husband's aunt who lives in Soweto. This woman showed me Botho when my husband passed away and I was going through a rough patch. She gave me food, shelter and gave me transport money to prepare things in Lesotho and come back. I really don't know how or what I can do to show her my gratitude. I don't know why she cared for me so much as she never turned her back on me when my husband passed away even though we hardly knew each other. You know, usually most families will wash their hands and ask you to leave, but not with her. She really showed me Botho and also her sister's child who drove me around with her own petrol,helped*

me every day. She helped with literally everything, mostly money when things were very difficult. My husband had policies and I was depending on those policies to give me money so that I can bury him. But they disappointed me and they gave me problems when it came to them paying me. She [the aunt] *told me to leave them because they were only hurting me more. She told me that she will take out money and bury my husband.*

However, this philosophy of Ubuntu does not speak to some individuals because they prefer to focus on their own needs and choose those that they help (Togni 1996: 112). Not all participants have stories to tell on instances where they experienced this ethos of sharing and support. Zoleka has assisted other people and shown Ubuntu/Botho, but her good deeds have not been returned. She finds herself in a predicament, where the people she assisted are unable to help her when she is experiencing challenges. This inability to reciprocate has forced Zoleka to limit the number of people she is willing to help:

There are many of them,I don't want to lie. I have helped very many people but I have bad luck when it comes to them returning my help. I really have bad luck so I just keep quietand tell myself that someday they will find themselves in trouble and they will want my help but it won't be there. I won't have their help because they didn't help me when I needed them. They don't want to help me but they expect me to help them all the time.

Palesa is equally unfortunate when it comes to receiving the same help that she offers to others. Palesa, unlike Nobantu, did not have someone to help her financially and emotionally when her twin sisters and their children died from HIV-related illnesses. Palesa had to bury her siblings and nieces alone and the family members who have financial means turned their backs on her. Nobody bothered to offer comforting words to Palesa as she was going through the mourning process. She was the financial backbone as both her parents and her brother are unemployed. Palesa is a religious woman and she says that she prays to God to not 'make her heart like her family members', where they do not feel compassion when an individual is suffering and experiencing difficulty. Palesa chooses to forgive those who have and still continue to abandon her. She also chooses not to dwell on past

happenings as she has realised that situations get more difficult and help gets even more scarce the older one gets:

> *I was telling my landlord the other day about the challenges I faced as I was growing up. I had a very tough life but I took a decision not to dwell on the past. Nobody bothered to come to me after the funerals* [twin sisters and their children*] to comfort me and tell me things like: 'My child, now that you have buried your siblings, please find closure and be comforted'. Things like that. I had to comfort myself and tell myself that it is very tough in the world, especially the older one gets. Some teacher at school once said to me that: "The older you get, the more problems you will experience so just accept that wholeheartedly". So I always think of those words and remember that my teacher warned me. That teacher taught me isiXhosa and he told me that the older one gets the more problems life throws at him so I always remind myself not to be angry and feel pressurised, (but) instead just (to) accept. My acceptance will see me plant, and after planting, I will reap what I have planted.*

The participants were asked to tell stories about where they had shown others compassion and put Ubuntu/Botho into practice. The philosophy of Ubuntu/Botho is important for the survival of the participants, their families and community at large, because it encourages each individual to help those who are in need, with the belief that the help will be reciprocated. Thus, people (including the participants) living in conditions that are unpredictable and unstable are able to survive because of the networks they form by helping each other in very concrete ways.

Khanyisile is a religious woman who believes in helping people who are less fortunate. She acknowledges that she does not have much in terms of money and assets but she is grateful that she goes to bed every day with a full stomach. Khanyisile is passionate about helping others as she knows that one day she might need help from others:

> *When someone comes to my house and they do not have a bed, I am not scared to give them a bed to go sleep on. I gave away the small bed that the children used and a cupboard to my tenant in the shack. I also lent the tenant a set from the room divider and told her to use it for as long as she needs it,*

until she gets on her feet. My husband once said that someday he is going to find people living in our house. I told him that I am building myself a network of friends. I told him that someday I will find myself lost in Lesotho and someone will help me because they will remember what I have done for them. I am building myself a network and now I have families in Malawi and Zimbabwe and it all started by us assisting each other.Now I have just made myself family at the University of the Free State![referring to the researcher]

Lesedi shows compassion and sympathy to the woman from whom she rents her two-roomed house. This woman gave in to alcohol as a means of coping with the death of her children, after having spent six months in the local public psychiatric institution. Lesedi took it upon herself to provide this woman with food even though Lesedi gives her monthly rental money. Lesedi and her landlord have a reciprocal relationship as the landlord looks after her younger sister's child while Lesedi cooks and looks after her:

There are many like this woman, even though I pay her rent she is dependent on us, especially for food. She drinks her money away, I can give her my rent money of the fifteenth and I know that she will go and drink with the money. She cannot buy herself groceries and other things. She is able to help me with the children so it is really easy for me to help her in return as well.

From these narratives it is clear that the philosophy of Ubuntu/Botho plays a fundamental part in people's lives in a very concrete manner. This way of life is also squarely vested in reciprocity – an expectation that good deeds will be rewarded by a higher entity or by other people.

5.1.3. Support networks: "Those you count on"

The philosophy of Ubuntu/Botho is engrained in African society as knowledge of communal support and networks has become the "norm" in everyday life, and is thus often taken for granted. There is a Sesotho proverb which states, "Motho ga ae phete, o phetwa ke batho" which translates into "human beings need other people to travel the journey of life", as one can only get through challenges and hardships by relying on those who have experienced similar problems. The participants in this project, just like other human beings, need more than just material resources to

survive, and so social capital (non-material resources/social support) plays an important role in the everyday survival of human beings (Kovalainen 2004: 160; Maclean 2010: 495; Mallaccio *et al*. 2000: 55; Pronyk *et al*. 2008: 1560). Participants depend on selected individuals for social support which equips them with the strength to cope with the burdens, demands and stresses of everyday life. These individuals who provide assistance bring order in the lives of the participants (Ciabattari 2005: 2).

The participants have built network spaces with negotiated ties, bonds and relationships where they find comfort, relief and strength to continue with their everyday activities and overcome their difficult circumstances. The participants narrated that they depend on religion (God), as well as some family members and friends for moral support, and they trust that their troubles will remain confidential with these people. This social network usually provides care to the participants when they are sick and also makes sure that their households continue to function by helping out with chores. Nobantu felt that death robbed her of one person, her mother, who could have given her moral support, especially after she was widowed. Nobantu then turned to religion where she prays and tells God about her pain, miseries and troubles. She finds comfort in voicing her pain, and most of the time she finds herself sharing some of her problems with her customers at her hair salon. Nobantu feels better if someone hears what is bothering her and she does not necessarily expect these people to say anything in return:

> *If only my mother was still around, I think she would have been the one person to give me moral support. I needed her support after my husband passed away, that's when I saw that besides God, there is no one who can give me moral support. I am always praying, even now after you leave I can pray and say 'God you are my friend, you are the one person who knows all my troubles, you know my miseries and you let me go through some of these challenges so that I can remember you'. I am the type of person who needs to vent so if something is bothering me, in most cases I just tell the people who walk in here. If something hurts me and then you walk in, I will tell you about it and that will make me feel better because it's off my chest. Getting it off my chest makes me happy as bottling it up will hurt me even deeper so it's better*

to let it all out. I don't expect the people to say anything but you listening to me, is more than enough.

Pinky understands Nobantu's frustrations and the pain of losing a mother because the death of her mother left a void in her life. Pinky is fortunate to have sisters, as she tells them when she is hurting and going through difficult times. Her sisters make an effort of going to Pinky's house to hear what is troubling her as they understand that Pinky was close to their mother. In their mother's absence, the sisters have stepped in to ensure that Pinky has a shoulder to cry on:

I tell my sisters, when something or someone has hurt my feelings. I tell them that this has hurt my feelings and I am hurt. They will come and sit down with me and ask me what has hurt my feelings. They tell me that they don't like it when I feel pain and they want to know what has caused my pain and then ask me to calm down. They do that because they know that I was very close to my late mother, we were so close that we were always together: where she went, I was there and she was with me everywhere I went. So now I have my sisters whom I go to with my problems. When my children hurt my feelings then I consult with them and tell them that these children are doing this and that to me and I don't like what they are doing. I ask them to talk to my children because my heart gets hurt easily. They will come and sit both me and my children down to talk things over.

Lesedi also feels comfortable talking to her family members (who are her husband, her mother-in-law and her older sister) about issues that trouble and disturb her life. Lesedi believes that these people, whom she relies on for moral support, will not only listen to her but they will also respect her by keeping her pain confidential. Lesedi also considers these individuals her friends as she has had bad experiences with friends in the past as they nearly ruined her marriage by not respecting her role as a wife and guardian:

I often speak to my husband, his mother and my sister. Those are the people I speak to in most cases as I also consider them as my friends. I tell them everything, regardless of the situation; I can be how sick they are the first ones to know. I am a person who likes to keep my business confidential, if I have discussed something with someone I would like that thing to stay

between us. My husband's family is my family and they also know that I want to keep things confidential so after discussing certain things with his mother, she knows that it stays in the room.

Khanyisile on the other hand, relies on her friends, two from church and one from Lusaka Square and they are close to the point that she sees them as part of her family. Khanyisile describes friends as:

individuals who are supposed to know everything about you even when there is shortage of food in the house, they are supposed to say, 'My friend, I can see that the children are hungry so here is something.Please go buy food and hide the embarrassment'.

Khanyisile's friends are her support networkand theyassist her financially, emotionally and physically (when she is not feeling well):

Those women are my friends and we share everything: I know their secrets and they know mine. When they are carrying too much baggage, they come and cry by me and when I am carrying too much, I also go to them. We are all married but my friend [from Lusaka Square] *and I are married to husbands who already had children so when things get difficult in my marriage then I will run to her. I also went to her house to get medication from the fridge when my children were sick. We are always there for each other. My friends will look after my family when I am sick and they take care of me as well. If the situation needs them to clean and cook then they take off their smart clothes and do the job. They will cook for my children, bath them and do everything that I am supposed to do. They do look after me until I get back on my feet. When I need medication then they will go buy it and give it to me. They also pray with me and read me the Word of the Lord.*

Some participants (Madimpho, Palesa and Zoleka) have had bad experiences when it comes to being involved in friendships. As a result, they do not have specific people who they regard as friends. They were involved in toxic friendships defined by alcohol, smoking and partying. Palesa's friends spiked her drink because they were jealous of her boyfriend and she was admitted to hospital. Madimpho used to

go drinking almost every day with her friends. Her drinking habits resulted in her neglecting her motherly duties and her other responsibilities at home:

> *I used to have friends and we were always drunk and it happened that I had my first born child but still this didn't stop me. I had forgotten that I have a child because my mother was there. On Monday I would be drunk, on Tuesday I would be drunk because I had told myself that my mother was there. One day it hit me that my drinking habit is going to ruin my relationship with my child. I decided to stop drinking and stop contact with my friends after the birth of my second child. That's why I told myself that when it comes to friends, I am not getting involved, because right now I could have been with my friends drinking, so now we just greet each other.*

The women in this project join different *stokvels* as a means of financial security (investing and saving their money) and social well-being (relationships based on trust, reciprocity and a sense of belonging). A stokvel is a form of support network, as the relationship between members goes beyond finances, but also involves a support structure (Irving 2005: 1). These women are involved in different types of stokvels where they contribute money throughout the year.In December they buy and share equal quantities of groceries and meat, and then divide the remaining money between them. Some women contribute money monthly to buy food stamps from retail supermarkets such as Shoprite and Checkers. These informal savings techniques ensure that these women have enough money and groceries for the festive season and that their families can also enjoy the celebration. The stokvel members can also increase their money by loaning it out,after which it comes back with interest.

Nobantu is a business woman (hairdresser) and her income is dependent on the number of customers that she sees every month. She joined different stokvels to increase her investment and to make sure that she has enough groceries and money when she returns to Lesotho for the festive season. Nobantu also invests her money in a bank. Nobantu trusts the women with whom she operates with as they always communicate and are up to date with one another's household challenges:

> *I am part of different stokvels: the first one we contribute R500.00 a month each, another one we contribute R300.00 a month each. For another one we*

contribute R400.00 for groceries and for the last one we contribute R200.00 that we buy meat with. From there on I just invest the rest of my money in a bank. The women are really trustworthy and I do trust them. When they have serious problems like a child being admitted to hospital and they can't pay, they make sure that they tell us.

Khanyisile participates in two different types of stokvels where the first one, each member (six members) contributes R1000.00 monthly and this money rotates between the women. The second one involves buying a booklet of food stamps from a retail grocery store and each member fills her book with stamps. Khanyisile explains the importance of these food stamps in winter when she is inclined to buy hearty food that needs cooking more so than during summer where one can get by with bread and cheaper beverages:

The first one is where we contribute R 1000.00 a month and there are six of us. Each month each member takes out R1000.00 and we rotate on who gets the total amount of money from the five women each month. The second one is where we buy a book of stamps from Shoprite and each month you buy stamps worth R1200.00 and paste them in the book. These stamps are useful in winter as the months are longer than the summer months. Summer is much better because you can eat bread with either Cool Aid [cheap cordial mixed with water] *or Coca Cola. We use those stamps to buy groceries.*

Stokvels are constructive means of both saving money and socialisation for the majority of the participants, but there are women who are unable to be part of this kind of network. The womenwho are unemployed, and depend on social grants and hand-outs for survival, find it difficult (if not impossible) to be part of stokvels. Madimpho expressed that:

Stokvels require money, when you know your budget is okay.

Pinky agrees that stokvels require one to have a regular source of income, as she used to be part of a stokvel when she still received her monthly disability grant. She was forced to stop the stokvel, when she stopped receiving the money. Pinky narrates her experiences of being part of the stokvel and why she had to stop participating:

> *I used to be part of a stokvel with my sister when I still had my sick pay* [disability grant] *but now I can't anymore because I don't have money to contribute. It was a stokvel of groceries but now I can't take part anymore. This is how it worked: every month we contributed R200.00 each and then in December we would buy groceries in bulk such as canned food, sugar, and mealie meal and then share them equally.*

5.1.4. "Eating from the same pot"

This research project draws from Mosoetsa's book (2011) entitled "Eating From One Pot: The dynamics of survival in poor South African households". This book is relevant to this project because of the similarities in the research, from where the title of this sub-theme was adopted.

The reality of the participants of this project is defined by precarious living conditions but these participants experience these conditions (poverty) differently from one another. Some participants have enough means and support networks to sustain their families, while others barely manage to survive. The participants told their different stories on how they managed to overcome periods where they did not have basic necessities in their households. Madimpho experiences episodes where she does not have food and toiletries in her house on a monthly basis, as she does not have a job. She depends fully on her mother who lives in another area and her sister who works at a restaurant in town. Madimpho consults them when she runs out of things and they understand that she only survives on grant money:

> *I go home to my mother at Spots* [section of Batho Location] *when I do not have food and bathing stuff. My mother will share her washing and bathing soap with me and she will give me Vaselineso that I can be able to bath. If I do not have maize meal then she will give me some and she also gives me vegetables like potatoes and tomatoes to cook for my child. My sister also shares her things with us when we are in need.*

Pinky's reality is similar to Madimpho because she also depends on her family members and a social grant for survival. Pinky's family members have their own families to tend to, so sometimes they do not have enough to share. Pinky and her children sometimes go to bed on an empty stomach and have to still get up the

following day to do their daily activities just like other people. Pinky is of the opinion that one should not let other people see the challenges and struggles of one's household, and that it is better to suffer in private. Pinky is hesitant to constantly ask for food and toiletries from her family members as she does not want to burden them all the time:

> *There are some people who find me irritating when I go to their homes and tell them about my problems and there are some people who actually are willing to help out. Sometimes I feel like not telling anyone that I don't have things in my house because they get irritated with me. I don't want to go to people all the time with my problems.*

Participants like Zoleka and Matshepo hardly ever experience episodes where they do not have food and toiletries in their households because they have "piece jobs" with fixed wages, other means of an income and better support structures. Zoleka is a cleaner and she also rents out back rooms in her yard, but she does not have anybody who sends her remittances as her former husband has stopped paying his maintenance allowance. Zoleka uses her income constructively to avoid food shortages in her household. Matshepo's household always has food because there is always someone responsible for bringing in some form of income. By the time Matshepo's husband retired due to illness, her niece was already working and she subsequently took care of them. So Matshepo's household has always managed to have sufficient resources to sustain the family:

> *I have never experienced having no food at all in the house, I really don't want to lie because when my husband was sick and unemployed, my niece was already working. My niece has always been supportive even before my husband passed away. She used to be a domestic worker so she would bring us food like milk, meat and she gave us money to buy mealie meal,* morogo [African leafy edible (plants) vegetables]*, cabbage, spinach and potatoes. So, I have never really gone without any food in the house.*

Part-time employment is also an everyday reality for these participants and the temporary and unstable nature of these jobs sees the participants constantly searching for opportunities to earn money. The participants have either previously, or are currently still faced with the challenges of unemployment and they all employ

different strategies (which depend on help from other people) to overcome these periods. The participants narrated the following when they were asked to tell stories of how they have overcome unemployment.

Lesedi is one of the lucky participants as she has good connections, in a sense that the people who she works for intermittently recommend her to their families and friends for job opportunities:

> *You know what I am a person who likes to speak so in most cases I have never experienced the feeling of struggling to get a job but I have struggled to get a permanent job. I always get phone calls offering me "piece jobs" and they will tell me that they got my number from the people I used to work for.*

Nobantu struggled for employment on her arrival in Bloemfontein as she had hoped to get an administrative job since she has "qualifications". However, the saga of her not having a South African identity document complicates things for her. These circumstances forced her to settle for domestic work which she heard of through other people. Nobantu learnt to accept her situation of surviving through "piece jobs" and earning minimum wages. She finds it too difficult to work for someone else and decided to rather venture into opening her own hair salon as she has a talent for doing hair. She opened her own salon in a shack where she is her own boss and she controls her own finances:

> *When I first arrived here* [Bloemfontein]*, I wanted a job that I have qualifications for. I wanted to work in offices or at schools' offices but I could not because I don't have an ID. What is important in life is to accept your situation: I leant to accept that I don't have an ID so I had to figure out what I am going to do. So I resorted to being a domestic worker where I cleaned people's homes and washed their clothes. From then on I told myself that I can't work for another woman, it will be better if I start something for myself as I can use my hands to plait people's hair.*

Khanyisile and her husband both survive on "piece jobs" and their family experiences difficulty when they are both unemployed. Khanyisile narrates a period where both of them were unemployed and she wanted to give up on life as she didn't have any means of supporting her children. She explains that she was able to hold on and get

through this situation by the grace and mercy of the Lord. Khanyisile and her husband decided to rent out a shack which guarantees them rental income each month, but it is not sufficient to sustain the family. Community members sympathise with her but they could not give her money or share the little that they have, but they made plans to help her find a job. Khanyisile is grateful to those who took steps in helping her find a job, as now she is able to feed her family every day:

> *I overcame the period of unemployment by the grace of the Lord and do you know how difficult it is to raise children without employment? To make things worse my husband didn't have a job either: we both didn't have piece jobs and nothing was coming up. We had to come up with a plan of renting out the shack and that was not enough. I was under so much pressure and constantly tired. Things were so bad that I wanted to quit life but God's mercy carried us until today. Sometimes in life you pass through some stages with great difficulty. Some people saw my struggles and told me about domestic work where I would have to work three days a week. I made money even though it was not that much but with that money I was able to put bread on the table.*

5.1.5. Conclusion

This theme concentrates on how the philosophy of Ubuntu/Botho influences African society, especially those of the lower class who often suffer severe financial precarity. This philosophy plays a major role in the survival of poor communities by assisting and sharing resources. The participants are aware of this philosophy as each narrates her own understanding of the concept. Some participants have been the recipients of help from their family and community members in bringing order into their lives, while others show compassion but are not necessarily reciprocated for these actions. This non-reciprocity makes many of these women believe that in reality, Ubuntu/Botho is not as strong as it was previous generations. The participants create their own support networks consisting of people who they trust and who trust them in return. Ubuntu/Botho underlines the operation of these networks as the people involved care for each other and they do not want to see their "own" people suffering. The participants were and are able to overcome adversities such as poverty and unemployment because they depend on these support networks for survival.

5. 2. Keeping hope alive in the midst of adversity

5.2.1. Challenges of stable employment

For the majority of the participants, permanent, well-remunerated employment is a dream that will never be realised because of their background circumstances. The participants are of the belief that their lives would have turned out differently, if they hadthe opportunity to complete high school and to obtain further qualifications.

Palesa is a domestic worker and she feels that she is stuck with this job as she dropped out of school in standard nine (grade eleven) due to illness, which now leaves her without the skills required for employment in the formal sector. Palesa values education as she perceives it as the border line between “being poor” and “well-off”, so she went back to school and enrolled for ABET (Adult Basic Education and Training) Level Four. She found the courage to go back to school to encourage her younger brother and daughters not to make the same mistake and neglect the opportunities provided by education. Regardless of her situation and responsibilities, Palesa is grateful to God for giving her the domestic worker job as she is able to provide for and feed her children and family which gives her fulfilment:

> *You know I have been thinking about this thing and you understand that my current job as a domestic worker is not a permanent job. It’s like God gave me this job to be able to put food on the table and also to enjoy everything that I do. It’s God’s mercy that got me this job. When I think of the reasons why I am unable to find a permanent job, I came to different answers like maybe there are too many people in the world, but when I look at this realistically I realise that I cannot find a permanent job because I did not go to school. I don’t have a permanent job because I did not go to school and people get hired by the certificates they have. Employers look at your CV concentrating on the qualifications one has and if you do not have certificates then they do not bother to look at your CV. That is my downfall in not being able to get a permanent job.*

Zoleka is the only participant who occupies a permanent position as a professional cleaner but she earns wages that are not sufficient for her to sustain her family to her satisfaction. Zoleka’s ideal salary is R8000.00 per month as she feels that this

amount will sustain her family and will also cover all their monthly expenses, including debts:

> *If I could earn R8000.00 per month, this money would at least help me sort out some of my problems* [referring to debts and expenses]. *Let me just say that I would be very happy because I would be able to solve my problems, well, the majority of them. Unlike with my current wages as they run out quickly because they are peanuts. But what can we say, it's how life is.*

The inability to get permanent employment puts the participants under tremendous pressure, as in most households they are the main providers. This situation leaves the women to depend on "piece jobs" which makes it difficult for them to provide for their children given the fluctuating nature of this income. The participants would like to give their children opportunities that they did not have such as better education opportunities and living conditions, but their precarious status makes it difficult (if not impossible) to fulfil this wish. Pinky is saddened by her situation of not having money and she is reminded of this pain every month end when other parents buy their children things and she does not have the means to do so:

> *Not having permanent employment makes me feel bad. Seriously, that thing hurts me so much, like at the end of every month, people buy things. They buy things for their children and I can't afford to, I also want to buy things for my children but I can't because I do not have money.*

Khanyisile shares Pinky's pain of not having stable employment with remuneration that allows them to provide for their children to satisfy their children's basic needs and also to spoil them a little. Khanyisile is frustrated that she is not able to find employment and that her husband is also struggling to get employment. This situation leaves her wondering and questioning if there is something wrong with them in comparison to other people who are able to find stable employment. Khanyisile fears that one day their children will ask them what they were doing while other parents were making sure that their children were well provided for:

> *Not having a good job makes me feel bad, it's like something is wrong with me because I can't find a job like everybody else. You ask yourself questions when you are alone and someday I also asked the Lord: 'My husband and I*

are not sick, we are healthy people and we both hard workers because when my husband finds a job then he does his work very well and same with me so why can't we get jobs?' We need to work for our children's sake because tomorrow they are going to ask us what we were doing while other parents were working for their children. "Were we just sitting in this two-roomed house?" they are going to ask us.

5.2.2. Dreams and desires

The precarious living conditions might frustrate the everyday lives of the participants but it does not stop them from having dreams and aspirations. They are able to overcome daily challenges because they hope that their fate will change in future. The participants relate their different stories of what they would do for their families if they could get their dream jobs. The majority of the participants say that they would spend their money on their family members and improve their living conditions. The first thing that Lesedi would do with the money is to buy a house, a place which she can call her own and which would be a home for her children (younger sister and her child). The second thing would be to enrol her children in "proper" schools with quality education, as she believes that the best tool and legacy with which she can provide her children, is education. This way, they would be equipped to avoid poverty. Zoleka shares a similar dream of improving her family's living conditions, but she would like to renovate (use face brick, roofing, new doors and windows) the house she is currently occupying as she inherited it from her mother.

Pinky's story is sad and it hurts her that she cannot give her children the things (clothes, shoes and toys) that other children in the neighbourhood get from their parents. Pinky's state of poverty has made her feel inferior to other members of her family. Therefore, her dream if she had money would be to host a family dinner in her home and invite all her family members. This family dinner would give her recognition in her family as for a change she would be doing something for them and not the other way around. The second thing that Pinky dreams about is making her children happy and buying them the things they keep asking her for:

I will make my family happy and show them the love I have for them. I will show them my love for them. I will invite them over for dinner and prepare a

big Sunday meal where we can all come together. That is my way of showing them how much I love them. As for my children, I want to give them all the things that they keep asking from me, I want to provide those things. They would ask me that: 'Mom, did you see that this person's parents bought them this and we don't have shoes and other stuff?' Do you understand how painful that is because I know that my children do not have those things and they want them but I can't provide. It hurts my feelings very much and I would take a walk to calm myself down. When I get back, I would sit my children down and ask them to accept the fact that I do not work so I do not have money.

Nobantu wishes that her business (salon) would grow and generate sufficient income so that she can achieve her dreams. One of Nobantu's biggest dreams is to fulfil her maternal grandmother's dream of owning a vehicle. Nobantu would therefore buy a car and make sure that her grandmother is the first passenger, and take her to all the places she wants to go to - to the grandmother's satisfaction:

My grandmother who gave birth to my mother, when she looks at her own side of the family, they all have cars. She asks me all the time: 'My grandchild, when are you buying a car?' The first thing I would buy if my business could turn out the way I want it to, is a car for my grandmother. After buying the car I would go to driving school and get my licence and after that I would go fetch her, she would be my first passenger. I would take her to all the places she wants until she is satisfied. I would make her proud to have a grandchild. That is my wish and she is the reason why I am pressurising myself to get a car. My wish is for her, before she passes on, to thank the Lord for a grandchild like me, I want to make her proud. I want to be the first one to do this for her and my children and aunts' and uncles' children will follow.

Khanyisile's dream is to improve the lives of not only her family members but also her neighbours and community at large. Khanyisile is saddened by the conditions (infrastructure and resources) on which her family and community are expected to survive on a daily basis. She recognises that she does not have much but what she has she considers to be more than what other people. She finds her passion in helping other people, especially those with no means at all, like orphaned children. If

Khanyisile could have money, she would share it with others as she knows the challenges that come with fighting for survival:

> *I want to do things for my neighbours and community, not only for my children. There are children who are really poor; sometimes I tell my children that they are struggling but they are still better off than some children. There are children who are really poor and hungry and they will appreciate anything that you give them. Sometimes one thinks things are bad for them and then they see people who are in a situation that is worse than theirs. I will even help those who are in a better position than me because I know what struggling is like. If you have experienced difficulty and you make it as president, you will do everything in your power to make sure that people don't suffer while you are in this position.*

5.2.3. Fears about the future

Human beings' feelings and emotions shape and guide how they live their lives, the decisions they make, how they interpret the meaning of events and experiences, and also how they perceive their reality and the world at large. The participants expressed that emotions such as fear bring uneasiness and worry into their lives because it leaves them in a state of being uncertain and constantly having to face the unknown (Adler *et al.* 1987: 223; Fontana 1980: 156). The majority of the participants state that death is one of their greatest fears they have in their lives. The thought of death scares the participants because they do not know how their loved ones, in particular their children, will cope in their absence. Nobantu is worried about how her children will cope the day she passes on as she won't be there to protect and guide them. She is concerned about the type of lifestyle that young people are exposed to and expresses it as very harsh – as they are exposed to too many things like the Nyaope drug and sexual activities. Nobantu worries about her children and she wishes they could stay their current age and not grow older. Nobantu wonders what the future holds for her children: would her son give in to the pressure of smoking drugs and would her daughters be like other girls and choose to be a mother at a young age? Nobantu narrates her fears as follows:

> *My greatest fear is the thought of God calling me – death. You know I ask myself how life will be for our children. Today, teenagers are experiencing the harshness of life so how will life be for them when we are not here. How will things be since we won't be around to protect, guide and show them their wrongdoings and how are they going to live. I always ask myself that question about the kinds of life these children will live. Things keep getting worse; right now there is Nyaope among many things. I wonder what will happen when my son is between the ages of 16 and 18, would he smoke the Nyaope drug and what will I say or do if he smokes it? That's what I fear, that's my fear and I wish they didn't have to grow old but it's God's will for children to grow older. When it comes to my daughters, their challenges are better because the worst she can do is to bring a child home and I can raise the child. But how will I handle it if she brings more children home, those are my fears. I really wish my children didn't have to grow older.*

Lesedi is also haunted by death and just like Nobantu she wonders and worries about the well-being and survival of her children in her absence. She is worried about the future of her younger sister and the younger sister's daughter because her husband might not feel obligated to take care of them after her death. The husband could move on with his life and find another wife, but what would happen to the children?

> *You know I am always asking myself that if I had to be no more* [die] *then what would happen to these ones* [younger sister and daughter]. *I cannot guarantee that my husband will take responsibility for them because he is a man. Maybe someday he would want to move on with his life. One thing I know for sure is that these children as I live with them now will have to go back home* [her parents' home in Excelsior] *if there is no adult to look after them there.*

Matshepo is concerned about her sister's health because she was diagnosed with diabetes but continues to consume large quantities of alcohol. Matshepo is worried that her sister is shortening her life and she wonders what life would be like without her sister. Matshepo is unemployed and she survives on remittances from her sister. If her sister passes away then she would lose her most important source of

livelihood. Matshepo acknowledges that death is inevitable and she lives in faith that God will preserve her loved ones and take them when the time is right for Him:

> *Death is something that gives each and every person a worry but I prefer not to think about it as it gives me stress. I ask myself questions like: my sister is my great help so if she can die tomorrow what would I be? I like living in faith and hope that God will spare her life. My sister has diabetes and she injects herself with insulin but she has a drinking problem. I use to get worried that she drinks so much and yet she has this disease. I know that diabetes doesn't want people to drink so she is robbing herself with her days on earth so I used to talk to her about that and now I can see that she is listening to me. These are the things that scare me in life but I am a type of person who believes that if God has done His will then He has done it. I always tell my sister that God says: 'Ask and you shall be given'. So, I have asked God to give me life until 100 years. I know that God is trustworthy so if you ask, He shall answer.*

Khanyisile has similar fears to Nobantu about the type of lifestyles her children will lead, especially during the teenage years. Khanyisile is more worried about her two daughters compared to her son. Her son is an adult now and according to her, he is a respectful young man,who was able to get through his teenage years without smoking (drugs), drinking and having children. Khanyisile is scared of the challenges her daughters will face in a society where young children (especially girls) are raped on a daily basis. She is concerned about what will become of her daughters when their bodies start to develop and mature (puberty and adolescence). She is worried about the type of influences they are they going to come across and the type of friends they will surround themselves with. Khanyisile's only hope is prayer and she relies on God to protect and guide her children to avoid being victims of the "bad things" that are happening in society:

> *As a parent, you tend to worry about your daughters and fear for them. I always wonder what will happen when my daughters turn 15 years old: what is going to happen to them, what is going to frustrate them and the types of people they are going to meet? At that age their bodies will be developing and I can't help but worry about the people that they are going to come across. I ask God to protect them when they walk on the streets especially when they*

are walking alone because you will never know what can happen: what if they are kidnapped? These things are very scary when you have daughters but when you have sons one tends to be more relaxed. I did not have the same concerns with my son because he was a very respectful child. He used to get scared when I was praying, he doesn't even know how he managed to escape and not use drugs in his teenage years.

Participants like Zoleka, Madimpho and Palesa have different approaches to the role the emotion of fear plays in their lives. Zoleka explains that she does not have any fears and concerns in her life but rather pain, especially after losing a mother:

There is nothing that I have fear about but what really broke my heart was that time when my mother passed away.

Madimpho and Palesa on the other hand, have accepted that fear is part of every individual's life and that it is "normal" to have fear and anxiety. Palesa has learned to pray when she has an uneasy feeling as she has realised that prayer conquers adversity. Madimpho does not have a particular scenario which evokes the emotions of fear and nervousness in her life. She narrates that she cannot live in fear in this world because she lives in faith, so when things happen in her life then they are God's will. She has also learned to accept her situation in life (being diagnosed with HIV and being unemployed) and this is why she is able to carry on with her life regardless of her challenges:

Why should I fear because I have accepted? I have accepted that this life is from God. Yes, the will of God will be done and I will not live with fear in this world. You see, my only weapon is to pray, no matter what happens. It's true that everyone in the world has fears because you can't live without fear. Even when you're walking at night and then you call on God and ask him to get you past that place. Yes that is your fear but it will help you get past. If you have faith that you will get past then you will get past. If you have faith that you can achieve anything in life, then you will achieve anything, but only if you pray. I have lived a long life being HIV-positive and I did not lose hope when I fell pregnant with my second born that she will be okay. I told myself that she is going to be born and I am going to live. I've already lived for 16 years being HIV-positive.

5.2.4. Experiences of happiness

Happiness is a feeling that all individuals, including the participants, experience in their lives. These feelings of happiness give individuals hope as they put smiles on their faces and people tend to forget – if only for that moment –about the harshness of life. The participants might live under precarious conditions, which in most cases are emotionally and physically draining, but they still experience episodes of feeling happy. The participants were asked to tell stories about moments that made them happy. Some participants are happy when they have money (ability to provide), others are happy because they belong to a good family, while others are happy when making a difference within the community. Some express being happy as a moment when life is without stress. Zoleka is not satisfied with the wages that she earns, but she is grateful for them because she is able to provide for her children. Zoleka finds comfort and happiness in knowing that every morning she has a reason to wake up:

> *What makes me happy in my life is waking up and coming to work here at Prestige* [cleaning company*]. My job makes me happy, I don't want to lie. Even though I earn peanuts. But I am able to pay my debts at the end of the month and that makes me happy.*

Nobantu finds her happiness in having money. When she has money then she is at her happiest. Money gives her the power to be financially independent and the ability to provide for her family members, in particular, her children. Money also gives her respect as she will be recognised within her community:

> *My goodness, I love money, when I have money then I am happy. Nothing makes me happier than money. I would have this pride that I am rich. When my children are around and I have money then I will be happy. You know when children are around they always want snacks like Simba chips and it hurts me when I don't have money to buy for them. That is why I say when they are around and I have money then I am very happy.*

Madimpho and Pinky are grateful for their children as they bring happiness to their lives. Madimpho had always wanted a daughter, and when she gave birth to one, she was excited. Madimpho enjoys spending time with her daughter even though at

times she is naughty. Madimpho also finds her happiness in her first born child (son) attending and enjoying being at school:

> *My girl child, I have always wanted a daughter. You see, I liked to plait dolls' hair when I was growing up, I sometimes asked my sister to lend me her daughter, she would give me problems but I then told myself that God will give me a little girl and He has given me her, even though she makes me mad sometimes. I am also happy that my child* [son] *is in school. I ask my mother every time when she comes here if he went to school because I love people who go to school, I love people who attend school because I attended school even though I did not reach Matric. But I would have loved to reach the last year of school.*

Pinky does not have much in terms of material resources but she is able go on with her life because of her children. Pinky is aware of and hurt by the reality that she cannot provide for her children financially to their satisfaction but she finds strength in spending time with them and loving them:

> *The only thing that makes me happy is the fact that I live with my children and have my family around me. I always have the things that I need and my children have food in the house. That is what I want in my life; I want many things in my life but that is one of the most important things in my life. I want to show my children the love that I have for them. I also want to show my grandchildren love as I love them equally, I do not discriminate against them as they are also my children and they also call me 'mom'.*

Khanyisile is happy when there are no stresses and troubles in her life. She is happy when her plans succeed. According to Khanyisile, her life is in order when she does not need to worry about what she is going to feed her family and how to get that food. Khanyisile is of the opinion that each person is responsible for her own happiness, especially when it comes to the influences one is exposed to. She went on to say that people need to keep themselves busy to avoid thinking about their problems constantly, and so as not to dwell on their everyday household problems. Khanyisile narrates the stresses that come with being married so she avoids being in constant conflict with her husband by giving him space to think things through. Khanyisile also believes God to be responsible for her happiness:

When things are going according to plan, one is very happy when things go according to plan even if one does not have money. (I am happy) when I don't have stress of what I am going to cook for supper and where am I going to get those things from. When things go according to my plans then I am very happy and even if things come my way as long as I don't have stress then I am happy. My happiness also comes from the Lord and most of the time I make my own happiness. If you don't make yourself happy then your heart will kill you because marriage has too much stress. You have children, things are not going the way you want them to and it gets so hard that you can consider leaving your marriage. Marriage is so difficult, that is why some women divorce their husbands. These women don't have peace, joy and love anymore and when you don't have those things, then my dear, you must know that your battery is flat [no happiness and peace]*. It's so flat that if you don't find someone to charge it then you are in trouble. These people* [husbands] *sometimes want to be left alone. You get tired when you are experiencing these hardships and you find it very difficult to raise your children. When you raise your children under stress then you die. I don't want to lie to you.*

Lesedi's passion for helping other people is evident in her volunteering to work at local NGOs. Lesedi was raised by a single mother and grandmother and through her upbringing she has learnt to put the needs of others first, which is why she agreed to take custody of her younger sister and her child. Her passion goes beyond family members as she finds her happiness in assisting other people within the community. Lesedi gets her fulfilment from helping others by making a difference in their lives. Seeing impoverished people eating and clothed gives her peace. Lesedi feels that learning to assist one another can empower any community, regardless of their socio-economic status:

What makes me even happier is when I can see that I am making a difference in other people's lives. This occurs when I am helping other people and seeing them being able to eat and be clothed. I feel that if you help other people, those people will turn your life around. If you hold yourself high and you don't help others, then when you encounter problems nobody will be available to help you. Let us just say you are not at home and then something happens to one of your children, nobody will assist you and your child

because they will think that you hold yourself too high and too good to greet them. As a result your neighbours will not be able to help you, as you also don't help them out.

5.2.5. Conclusion

This theme is concerned with the fears and aspirations of the research participants, regardless of their precarious living conditions. The participants might struggle to get stable,well-paying jobs, but they are able to survive on the minimal wages that they earn. Struggling for job opportunities is an everyday reality and they have adapted to this struggle by settling for "piece jobs" for survival. The lives of these participants might be characterised by the constant battle of unstable and insecure situations but they are kept strong by their hopes, desires and dreams. Some would like recognition from their family members, as being poor has made them feel inferior and a burden. The participants also have fears regarding their families. The majority of the participants are scared of how their family members would survive in their absence – when they pass away. The participants are scared that their children will grow up without proper guidance and protection from worldly influences. Other participants acknowledge fear as being part of life but they refuse to let it overshadow their lives. They defeat their fears by praying and accepting the things that happen in their lives. The participants experience moments of happiness in their lives despitetheir hardships. These moments of happiness range from the ability to provide financially, having good family relations, impacting other people's lives, and leading a life that is without stress.

CONCLUSION

Far-reaching, entrenched and pervasive socio-political factors have left more visible scars within “Black” African families than is necessarily the case with other families in South Africa. The “Black” African family setup was strained and weakened by the racially-based disruptions and concomitant inequalities that saw their rights being infringed upon and where they were restricted from owning and occupying land in certain areas. During the heyday of apartheid,“Black” African people were forced to live in separate areas. The spatial development of townships (where low wages and poverty are everyday realities of life) brought about a situation whereby“Black” African people were often located far away from the “White”, privileged residential areas. Racial segregation persists today and poverty often coincides with race.

Over the decades of apartheid rule, the “Black” African family was further fragmented by the deleterious effects of the migrant labour system which left families with little choice but to live apart - breadwinners (usually male members of the family) were obliged to move to the cities where they earned poor wages. This practice not only perpetuated the trend of families livingin constant poverty, but also encouraged male family members to be absent for long periods of time.This in turn then gave rise to the notion of absent fathers which is still prevalent today and which leads to a host of challenges faced by nuclear as well as extended family structures. The systematic weakening of the “Black” African family made them vulnerable and exposed them to a variety of problems and the manifestation of social ills such as poverty, unemployment, illiteracy, inequalities and the unequal distribution of resources (economically, socially and politically).

The suffering and anguish experienced by the “Black” African family is echoed in this research project. The “Black” African family has become more isolated over time despite the extended family structure still being a predominant feature within this population group. The “Black” African family has become unstable and struggles to fulfil critical roles and functions (nurturing, caring and protecting) towards its members. The participants in this research project share the sentiments expressed in available literature, namely that the “Black” African family does not function as it did in past generations because family ties and kin support have weakened.Family members tend to strive for self-fulfilment, and lending a helping hand extends only as

far as towards those that they have close relationships with – those individuals they consider to be part of their immediate families. According to the participants, family membership is a subjective experience as members have a “choice” with regards to the people who form part of their families. These people are not necessarily related (by blood, adoption or marriage) but they provide the support that is expected from family members – they are known as “fictive kin” as they become part of these individuals’ kin systems.

However, family is still the most important social institution (especially for the poor and vulnerable population) regardless of these challengesexperienced, as the family is known to provide support and care to its members more than any other institution. The participants regard individuals who provide them with material, emotional and spiritual support as part of their families. These various forms of support are usually reciprocal and these individuals who are considered “family” usually have a positive influence on the participants. Family members are a support structure which is available during both the good and the bad times. Thus, family is important to these women because it also creates a space and an atmosphere which allows them to have a sense of belonging and a place where they can turn to when faced with challenges and difficulties during their everyday precarious living conditions. Family then serves as a haven where individuals retreat to when facing a host of adversities. Therefore family serves as a site of stability for the participants, and for the unemployed, it serves as a major means of survival. But simultaneously, the family is a space where potential conflict and tension occur, especially when members are unable to contribute to the operation of the household,as the situation is already potentially strained because of the dire circumstances within which people live.

Older women (mostly participants’ mothers and grandmothers) evidently occupy central roles in relation to the lives and activities within their families, households and community. Participants tend to rely on their mothers and grandmothers for assistance in alleviating their everyday struggles – be it financially, related to accommodation or in obtaining food. Older women also play a major role in their grandchildren’s upbringing by assisting the participants (especially single mothers) in teaching and instilling life values and in seeing to the operations of the household. Fathers are seldom involved as the majority of the participants were raised by their

mothers and maternal families. The children of the participants continue to suffer a similar fate as most of their fathers and paternal families are not involved in their lives even though they are aware of their existence. The majority of fathers neglect their responsibilities seemingly because they are incapable of contributing financiallytowards their upbringing. At times, other male relatives step in as father figures especially to discipline and to resolve conflicts within the household. Participants are ultimately left to fulfil both roles traditionally and conventionally ascribed to the two sexes, both that of the mother (care-giver) and that of the father (financial provider) to their children.

This frustration sees participants forced to enter the employment sector where they are not equipped with sufficient skills to find well-paying and stable jobs. These women are forced to settle for “piece jobs”, which mostly entail domestic work at people’s homes, factories, restaurants and at existing institutions in their wider context. The participants are usually the main income earners in their households and at the same time they also fulfil the role of running their households as they take care of their family members and their children, filling the void left by absent partners. These multiple roles are strenuous to the participants, and balancing both the home and work dimensions tends to be challenging. But they are able to cope to a certain extent with these multiple roles with help from their family members, their social networks, by managing their time effectively or by simply hoping for the best given the limited options available to them.

The participants are only just able to survive on their limited and erratic sources of income because of the financial assistance (remittances) and hand-outs provided by their social networks, as well as the social grants received on behalf of their children (or other relatives). This money contributes to their household income, relieving the financial burden. The household income is often still not sufficient to sustain the family and household for an entire month. The participants are therefore forced to spend their money on essential household items like food, especially the staple food, mealie meal. But not all participants receive grants, so some households have to survive on their low wages and hand-outs. On the other hand, the unemployed participants rely heavily on government-funded social grants which serve as safety-nets given that they are often the main source of income for these families. Some employed participants do mention that they invest some of the grant money for

tertiary education purposes for their children one day, but this is a huge exception to the norm. Most of these people tend to survive on a day-to-day basis.

The philosophy of Ubuntu/Botho is important to the survival of the poor as its principles rescue many from poverty and their precarious living conditions. This philosophy - just like the institution of the family – has seemingly weakened in comparison to the past, but still occupies an important place in the community as it promotes sharing and assisting people who are in need. Ubuntu/Botho encourages people who receive help to also help others in return, and many poor people are saved by this cycle of reciprocity. Thus, this philosophy has given rise to the idea of communal support, not only in terms of material resources but also with regards to non-material resources. The participants' social networks (social capital) are responsible for bringing order into their lives by giving them strength to deal with their everyday burdens, demands and stresses. Therefore, the participants are able to cope and survive in the midst of their unpredictable and insecure reality through reciprocal help from the individuals who form part of their social support.

Living under poverty-stricken conditions does not prevent the participants from aspiring and dreaming of escaping their precarious reality, instead it has given them hope that their God will one day relieve them from their daily struggles and troubles. The participants acknowledge that their childhood circumstances robbed them, their children and their family as a whole of better living conditions and prospects, as they did not have the opportunities and money to complete and further their education to be eligible to obtain a proper, stable job. As a result, their biggest dream and reason to continue is to provide their children with quality education which they themselves did not have. For them, this legacy will offer their children better lives with better living conditions one day. As much as the participants hold on to their glimpse of hope, they also have doubts and fears about the uncertainty of the future. Death is the threat which leaves them in a state of the unknown, wondering how their children will cope in their absence – who will guide, protect and nurture their children when their sole provider is no longer?

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SUMMARY

Twenty years into South Africa's new dispensation, poverty and unemployment remain a reality. Perpetuated by poor service delivery, the limited economic opportunities continue to disproportionately affect and marginalise the lower socio-economic classes and those areas where they reside. "Black" African women, in particular those with minimal schooling (unskilled and semi-skilled), suffer most from these social illsand yet many are able to survive under precarious living conditions.

The majority of "Black" African women are characterised by oppression, discrimination and exploitation, especially those who are unskilled and semi-skilled and who also had limited educational opportunities. In addition, these women inherit the weakened family structures created and caused to a great extent by years of apartheid rule where the presence and contributions of male members were slowly eroded by the migrant labour system and the creation of artificial areas where "Black" Africans had to reside and where a variety of laws undermined the development of the "Black" African population. Up until today, most "Black" African women are completely unemployed and many are dependent on social grants and informal employment or hand-outs to secure a living. Most of these women find themselves fulfilling multiple roles of both the "breadwinner" and "managers" of their households given the absence of their children's fathers in their lives.

Using a narrative inquiry, this research report delves into the precarious life-worlds of African women from the Mangaung township in Bloemfontein. It explores how these womensurvive with their limited and erratic sources of income which is often not sufficient to sustain all the dependents. It further demonstrates how these women cope and manage the sometimes strenuous and challenging execution of multiple roles.

Through their narratives of everyday life experiences, the philosophy of Ubuntu/Botho, and its value and importance is brought to the fore. Their ability to cope and survive in their unpredictable and insecure reality is through the reciprocal help from individuals who form part of their social support. Hope and faith resonate in the lives of these women as they continue to aspire and dream of their escape and that of their children from this precarious reality. Similarly doubt and fear of the

unknown lingers on. Death and deprivation are constant realities of this precarious living.

OPSOMMING

TwintigjaarnaSuid-Afrika se nuwebedelingblyarmoedeenwerkloosheid ‘n werklikheid.Verergerdeurswakdienslewering, beperkteekonomiesegeleenthedeaffekteer nog steeds die laersosio-ekonomieseklasseen die areas waarhullewoonsodathullebuiteverhoudinggemarginaliseerenbenadeel word. “Swart” Suid-Afrikaansevroue, veraldié met minimaleopvoeding (ongeskooldeen semi-geskooldevroue) ly die meesteonderhierdiemaatskaplikeeuwels, maar tog blyhullevoortbestaantemidde van hierdiehaglikelewensomstandighede.

Die meerderheid van “swart” Suid-Afrikaansevroue se lewens word gekenmerkdeuronderdrukking, diskriminasieenuitbuiting, veraldiéwatongeskool of semi-geskool is, enwatookbeperkteopvoedkundigegeleenthedegehad het. Verder het hierdievroue die verswaktefamiliestrukture van vroeërgeslagtegeërf; strukturewatgrootliksgeskepenveroorsaak is deurjare se apartheids-bewind, waar die teenwoordigheidenbydraes van manlike familieledegeleidelikweggekalwe is deur die trekarbeid-sisteemen die kunsmatigeskepping van areas waarin “swart” burgers verplig is om tebly, enwaarverskeiewette die ontwikkeling van die “swart” bevolkingondermyn het. Baie “swart” vroueisnogsteedswerkloos, enbaie is afhanklik van maatskapliketoelaeseninformelewerksgeleenthede of “hand-outs” omhulledaaglikse brood teverdien. Die meeste van hierdievrouemoetverskeierollevul, veraldiévan "broodwinner" en "bestuurder " van hulhuishoudings, gegewe die afwesigheid van hulkinders se vaders in hullewens.

Deurmiddel van ‘n vertellings-benadering, het hierdienavorsingsverslag in die haglikelewenswêrelde van Afrikaan-vroue van die Mangaung-township in Bloemfontein ingedelf. Die verslagontdek hoe hierdievroue met hulbeperkteenonvoorspelbarebronne van inkomsteoorleef, ‘n inkomstewatdikwelsnievoldoende is om al hulafhanklikesteonderhounie. Verderdemonstreerdit hoe hierdievroueditregkryomdikwelsuitdagende, veelvuldigerolleuittevoerentehanteer.

Deurhulverhale van alledaagselewenservarings, word die filosofie van Ubuntu/Botho, ensywaardeenbelangrikheid, navoregebring

.Hulvermoëomaantegaanenteoorleeftemidde van hulonvoorspelbareenonsekerewerklikheid word bewerkstelligdeurwedersydsehulp van individuewatdeel van hulsosialeondersteuningsnetwerkvorm. Hoop engeloofresoneer in die lewens van hierdievroueterwylhullevoortgaanomtestreefentedroom van hulontsnappingendié van hulkindersuithierdiehaglikewerklikheid. So ookblytwyfelenvreesvir die onbekendetalm. Doodenontberingblyvoortdurendewerklikhede in hierdieonsekerelewensomstandighede .

KEY TERMS

Precarity

Precarious living conditions

“Piece jobs”

“Black” African women (unskilled/semi-skilled)

“Black” African family

Mangaung township (Bloemfontein)

Multiple roles

Social support (network)

Socio-political factors (colonialism and apartheid)

Philosophy of Ubuntu/Botho

APPENDIX A: ETHICAL APPROVAL

UNIVERSITY OF THE FREE STATE
UNIVERSITEIT VAN DIE VRYSTAAT
YUNIVESITHI YA FREISTATA
UFS·UV
HUMANITIES
GEESTESWETENSKAPPE

Ms V. Masenya26 July 2013
Department of Sociology
UFS

ETHICAL CLEARANCE APPLICATION: Women's narratives of everyday precarity in the Mangaung township (Bloemfontein, South Africa)

Dear Ms Masenya

With reference to your application for ethical clearance with the Faculty of the Humanities, I am pleased to inform you on behalf of the Ethics Board of the faculty that you have been granted ethical clearance for your research.

Your ethical clearance number, to be used in all correspondence, is:

UFS-HUM-2013-002

However, the committee noted that the informed consent form requires participants to consent to having the interviews digitally recorded and transcribed, yet no mention is made of this on the information sheet. It would be advisable to include this in the information in the information sheet as well.

This ethical clearance number is valid for research conducted for one year from issuance. Should you require more time to complete this research, please apply for an extension in writing.

We request that any changes that may take place during the course of your research project be submitted in writing to the ethics office to ensure we are kept up to date with your progress and any ethical implications that may arise.

Thank you for submitting this proposal for ethical clearance and we wish you every success with your research.

Yours sincerely,

Katinka de Wet

Ethics Committee (Faculty of the Humanities)

Copy: Ms C. van der Walt (Research Co-ordinator)

APPENDIX B: CONSENT FORMS (ENGLISH AND SOTHO TRANSLATED)

Participant's copy

I have been given the information sheet on the project entitled: Crises in contemporary African families:*Women's narratives of everyday precarity in the Mangaung township (Bloemfontein, South Africa).* I have read and understood the information sheet and the researcher has answered all my questions satisfactorily.

I agree to participate in this research project and I understand that I can terminate my participation at any time without negative consequences. I also understand that I do not have to answer any questions that I am uncomfortable with and that I can stop the interview at any time.

I grant the researcher permission to record the interview and I understand that she will ensure confidentiality and my name will not be used in the study and the comments I make will stay between myself and the researcher. I consent voluntarily to participate in the interview for this study. I have also been given telephone numbers that I may call if we have any questions and concerns regarding this study.

Participant's signature.....Date.....

Researchers' signature.....Date.....

Monkikarolo

Kefilwedipatlisisotsahonkakaroloprojekengenaebitswang: Crises in contemporary African families:*Women'snarratives of everyday precarity in the Mangaung township (Bloemfontein, South Africa).*Kebadilehapekeyautlwisisa di patlisiso le mophuputsi o arabile di potsokakgotsofatso.

Keyadumelahonkakarolomophuphutsongyaprojekeena.Keyautlwisisahorekekakgaotsakarolokanakoengwe le engwehapehaonasempe se setlaetsahalang.Keautlwisisahorehakeyatswanelaho araba potsoengwe le engwe e sang tulenghantlehapenkaemisanakoengwe le engweyapuwisano.

Kefamophuputsitumelloyahorekotapuwisanoyaronahapekeyautlwisisaotlaetsabonnetebahorepuwisanoyaronaebasephirihape le lebitsolakaleka se sebedisweharadituto.Puwisanoetlabaka hare honna le mophuputsifela. Keyadumelahonkakarolokaharehopuwisanotsathutoena.Kefilwe le dinomorotsamohalahorenkaletsahakenaledipotso le ditlitlibokathutoena.

Tshaenoyamonki karolo.....Letsatsi.....

Tshaenoya mophuputsi.....Letsatsi.....

APPENDIX C: INFORMATION SHEET (ENGLISH AND SOTHO TRANSLATED)

Information sheet to participate in the following study: Crises in contemporary African families:*Women's narratives of everyday precarity in the Mangaung township (Bloemfontein, South Africa).*

Dear Participant

My name is Veronica Masenya and I am from the University of the Free State, Department of Sociology. I am currently doing my Master's degree under the supervision of **Dr. K. De Wet** and **Prof. J.K. Coetzee**.

I am interested in hearing your story of how you experience your daily life. This study will pay attention to how you make ends meet and how you manage to support your family. I am interested to learn how you manage to balance your "piece job", household responsibilities and your other roles

This study has been approved by the Ethics Committee of the University of the Free State. Participation in this study is voluntary. Should you decide to participate you have the right to not answer questions and you can withdraw at any stage. You as the participant in this study. Your real name will be substituted with a pseudonym to protect your identity and I will be the only one who knows your real name. I will also blank out place names or names of other people (children's and friends' names) mentioned during the conversation.

During the interview I will ask open-ended questions and there are no right or wrong answers as I am interested in your personal experiences and thoughts. The interview will be digitally recorded and transcribed for analytic purposes. The interview session will take place in your place of choice, where you feel comfortable. Your participation will be highly appreciated. If you have any questions you can contact me on **(078 723 0567)**. You can also contact my supervisor **Dr De Wet (051 401 2918)**.

Dipatlisisotsahonkakaroloprojekeenaebitswang:
Tsietsitsehlahangkahareholeloko lama Afrika: *Basadibaqoqangkadinthotseetsahalangtsatsileletsatsitseelenghorehadiyatsitsahapeh adikhotsofatsemotsengwa Mangaung*

MonkiKarolo

Lebitsolakake Veronica Masenya hotswakoUnivesitingyaFreistata, LefaphenglaSociology.KentsekeetsaMasters Degree katlasehatsamisoyasupavisaraeleng***Dr.K. De Wet****le****Profesa J.K. Coetzee.***

Kekhatlehilekehootlwapaliyabophelobahaobatsatselelengleleng.Thutoenaetlankakar olohokopanyaqetellotsepedilehotshehetsaleloko.Kekhatlahilekahoithutahoreokgonaj oanghoetsa*misebetseeminyani*, *mosebetsewakantlungletsedingdintho**.***

ThutoenaedumelletswekebaKomitiyaEthnicsmoUnivesitingyaFreistata.Karoloyathuto enakehoyithaopa. Ha obatlahonkakaruloonaleqetoyahosaarabidipotsohapeokaikhulanakoengwe le engwe.Wenajoalokamothoonkangkarolokathutoena.Lebitsolahaolanneteletlaserellets wahapeetlabannafelayatsebangkalebitsolahaolannete.Ketlaetsabonnetebahorelebao obabitsitsengelengbalelokokhotsabakhotsekatlase ha powisanoenabatlaseletseha.

Katlasehadipuwisanoketlabotsadipotsotsetlobatlanghoreohlalosejoalokakekhatlehilek atseboleminahanoyahao.Puwisanoenaetlankakarolotulongengwe le engweyakhethoyahaomooyikutlwangmotlotloteng.Karoloyahaoekathabeloahaholo.H a onale di potsookaletsetsannaho**(*078 723 0567)***hapeokaletsetsaSupavisarayakaeleng***Dr. De Wet*** *ho* ***(051 401 2918).***

APPENDIX D: PARTICIPANTS' PROFILE

1. Participant's profile:

Pseudonym: Nobantu

Place of interview: Lusaka Square

Date of interview: 22 August 2013

Date of birth: 12 April 1982 (32 years old)

Place of birth: Lesotho

Raised in: Lesotho (village)

Relationship status: Widow, in new relationship and living with partner

Highest qualification: Passed grade 12 and IT certificate (Lesotho)

Number of children biological: 3 (2 boys and a girl)

Non-biological children that she assists: 3 (Aunts and uncles children- living in Lesotho and QwaQwa)

Current work: Hair dresser

Partner's work: Petrol attendant atTotal garage (permanent)

Household members: 4 (participant, partner, partner's mother, niece)

2. Participant's profile:

Pseudonym: Khanyisile

Place of interview: Lusaka Square

Date of interview: 22 August 2013

Date of birth: 18 March 1969 (45 years old)

Place of birth: Bloemfontein (Bochabela)

Raised in: Bloemfontein (Bochabela)

Relationship status: Married

Highest qualification: Dropped-out standard 8 but currently enrolled ABET (Adult Basic Education and Training) level 4

Number of children biological: 3 (son-outside marriage and 2 daughters-marriage)

Non-biological children that she assists: Husband's child 24 years old-living in Thaba-Nchu

Current work: Self employed (sells vegetables, cookies, sweets, chips)

Partner's work: Construction worker (contract)

Household members: 4 (participant, husband and their two children)

3. Participant's profile:

Pseudonym: Madimpho

Place of interview: Lusaka Square

Date of interview: 13 September 2013

Date of birth: 11 December 1977 (37 years old)

Place of birth: Bloemfontein

Raised in: Bloemfontein (Batho Location)

Relationship status: On and off boyfriend

Highest qualification: Dropped-out grade 11

Number of children biological: 2 (a son and a daughter, the first born- died few days after birth)

Non-biological children that she assists: None

Current work: Unemployed “house wife”

Partner’s work: Electrician (Centlec)

Household members: 3 (participant, daughter and sister)

4. Participant’s profile:

Pseudonym: Pinky

Place of interview: Mapikela Street

Date of interview: 16 September 2013

Date of birth: 03 August 1961 (52 years old)

Place of birth: Petrusbug

Raised in: Petrusbug but has been in Bloemfontein for a while now

Relationship status: Unmarried - father of the children left to De Aar (Northern Cape)

Highest qualification: Never attended school (apartheid system: mom coloured dad Xhosa)

Number of children biological: 5 (the first two deceased, remaining 2 boys and a girl)

Non-biological children that she assists: 2 grandchildren

Current work: Unemployed

Partner's work: N/A

Household members: 6 (participant, three children and two grandchildren)

5. <u>Participant's profile:</u>

Pseudonym: Lesedi

Place of interview: Mapikela Street

Date of interview: 17 September 2013

Date of birth: 30 June 2013 (27 years old)

Place of birth: Excelsior (after passing Thaba-Nchu)

Raised in: Excelsior

Relationship status: Married

Highest qualification: Failed Matric (grade 12)

Number of children biological: Currently pregnant

Non-biological children that she assists: Younger sister and her child

Current work: "Piece jobs" (everywhere-whoever calls she goes)

Partner's work: Security guard (Tiger)

Household members: 4 (participant, husband, sister, sister's child)

6. Participant's profile:

Pseudonym: Zoleka

Place of interview: Lusaka square

Date of interview: 18 September 2013

Date of birth: 14 December 1962

Place of birth: Lady Frere (Eastern Cape)

Raised in: Lady Frere (Eastern Cape)

Relationship status: Divorced

Highest qualification: Standard 7 (grade 9)

Number of children biological: 4 (1 daughter and 3 sons)

Non-biological children that she assists: 1 grandchild

Current work: Cleaner

Partner's work: Ex husband, electrician (Johannesburg)

Household members: 5 (participant, 3 children and a grandchild)

7. Participant's profile:

Pseudonym: Matshepo

Place of interview: Lusaka square

Date of interview: 23 October 2013

Date of birth: 05 May 1956

Place of birth: Bloemfontein

Raised in: Bloemfontein (Cape Stands)

Relationship status: Widow

Highest qualification: Passed Matric in 1977

Number of children biological: 1 son deceased

Non-biological children that she assists: Sister's daughter and her children

Current work: Unemployed-used to work at school tuck shop

Partner's work: Checkers (retired at the time of death)

Household members: 4 (participant, niece and her two children)

8. <u>Participant's profile:</u>

Pseudonym: Palesa

Place of interview: Lusaka square

Date of interview: 23 October 2013

Date of birth: 15 July 1975

Place of birth: Rouxville

Raised in: Rouxville

Relationship status: Partner

Highest qualification: Dropped out in Standard 9, but currently enrolled ABET (Adult Basic Education and Training) level 4

Number of children biological: 2 (daughter and a son)

Non-biological children that she assists: None

Current work: Domestic worker

Partner's work: Contract worker (Construction Company)

Household members: 3 (participant and her 2 children)

APPENDIX E: INITERVIEW SCHEDULE

Introducing my self to the participant

My name is Veronica Masenya and I am back as promised the first time we met. Let me remind you again about my purpose of being here. I am busy conducting my research project at the University of the Free State and I am interested in you, your family and everyday activities. I would like us to discuss your everyday life: what you do, with whom do you do the things, why do you do those things and what happens in your daily life. My project is about how women from the Mangaung Township who make a living from piece jobs survive: 1) I am interested in how you manage to support and look after your children and family with the "little" money you earn. 2) I also want to know how you negotiate the multiple and at times conflicting roles (mother, sister, daughter, friend, colleague) that you occupy and also how you balance your various activities and responsibilities. Mme (mom) I want to understand your struggles **{tshohleho},** challenges **{diteko}**, triumphs (happiness, pride) and your successes **{tswelopele}** that you have encountered and still encountering in your life. I want to understand things from your point of view. Which brings me to my next point; there are no right or wrong answers as this is your story that you will be telling in your own words. Can I also please record this conversation but as already promised in that piece of paper I gave you the last time, this conversation will only be heard by me and your real name will not be used in this research project. Before we start with our conversation can we please sign the following 2 copies of consent form and I will keep one and give you the other. Thank you again and now can we please fill in the demographic sheet.

- Filling of the demographic sheet

.

Family relations and perspectives

Now that we have finished with that sheet which gave me a little clue about Mme's family set up, we can now officially start our conversation:

1. Who do you regard as family?

2. How important is your family in your life?
- Type of people
- Relationship with them
- Roles each plays

3. What role does your extended family play in your life (aunts, grandparents, uncles, cousins etc)?

4. Could you describe events that bring your family members together?
- *Weddings, funerals, Christmas, New Years, thanksgiving* ***{mpa yababadimo: giving thanks to the ancestors}***
- *What happens in those events?*
- *When was the last time your family gathered?*

Mme the family coming together is very important even though at times is under sad circumstances but it's always good to catch up with each other especially those who live far and you only see once in a while.

5. Does your family believe in traditional **{Setso}** practices and beliefs?
- Types of ritual
- Ancestral appeasement
- Traditional medication

This project that I am busy doing with you is part of an umbrella topic where there are three of us so can I please ask you the following two questions on the behalf of my colleagues:

Zonke is the first colleague and her project is about mother-daughter communication on intimate relationship **{tsamaratano}** so she would like to know the following:

6. Do you think parents should discuss issues on boyfriends/girlfriends, sex, HIV,condoms, family planning **{hlabanale}** with their children (daughters)

- *If yes why*
- *If no, why not and whose job is it to provide?*
- *Do you talk to your daughter*

Naomi is the other colleagues and her study is about the women's decision making process when someone is sick in their household:

7. Tell me, when someone is sick within your household, what do you do?

- *Can you please give me an example of an incident when someone in your household was sick*
- *Would you have used the similar type of statement if someone else was sick within your household*
- *How does your cultural beliefs {amasiko} influence the type of treatment you decide on*

Thank you mama for that now we can continue with our conversation.

Everyday family life

We have just discussed your family and now I know more about your family. In this section I would like us to discuss your daily activities, actions and responsibilities. I just want us to discuss your everyday life in the family

8. Describe your typical/average day to me

- *What do you when you wake up?*
- *And the rest of the day: What are you daily chores?*
- ***Note to self**: Keep in mind their different roles **{karolo}***

9. Do you have other roles that you occupy outside your household?

- *Church leader/ church choir/ guardian*

10. Tell me, does anybody help you with the household chores?

- *How do they help you?*
- *Chores allocated according to gender (boys do the cleaning the yard and girls cook)*

11. Do you think there is something called a women's and men's job within the household?

- *If yes why is that so?*
- *If not why not?*

12. As a woman of the house, who do you look after?

- *Look after: people you are responsible for*

  People depending on you

13. Could you describe to me how you support / provide for each family member?

- *financially/ materially (clothes, food, school fees), physically (bath, feed)*

<u>Household Income</u>

Mme your family is very interesting and like all families there are always challenges but somehow we manage to overcome troubles and problems. Now I would like us to discuss household income **{cheleteyalelapa}** that your family survives on:

14. Are you the only person who earns an income **{osebetsangmolelapeng la hao}** in your household?

- *If not, then who is assisting you?*

15. What other income {**cheleteengwekantle le mogolo**} do you receive in the family?

- *Remittance {**chelete e romelwangke motho osengtengmotloung**}*
- *Selling of goods {**rekisa**}*
- *Rent **{hohohira di rumu}***

16. Who brings in these extra incomes?

- **{Bathobatlisangcheleteeomolelapeng}**

17. How do you spend the overall household income?

- *food, education, rent, clothing, health care*

Mme now that we have discussed the income that the family survives on monthly basis. Can we please discuss the contribution that the social grants have in your family? In the sheet that we filled in you told me about the people who receive social grant in your family so Mme:

18. How do these grants help out in the family?

19. How do you think your household will be affected when you stop receiving these grants?

- *Gaps that this money fills*

20. What difference do these incomes (earned income, extra income and social grants) make in the welfare of the household members?

21. Apart from the government grants, do you get any assistance from other organizations and if yes, which organizations and what type of assistance?

Social Capital

We have spoken about your family and the roles and responsibilities you occupy within your family. In this section we going to talk about you Mme and the people who help you in your in your life **{le bathoba bale bophelongbahaobabahothusanghaolethata}**

22. What is your understanding of the concept of ***Ubuntu*** **{motho ke motho ka batho}**

- *What does Ubuntu mean to you?*
- *In times of crises and emergency **{nakotseoene o hlokathuso},** did anyone help you and how did they help you?*
- *Have you shown anyone Ubuntu and how so **{thusa motho}**?*

23. Tell me about your friends?

- *How many are they and where do they stay?*
- *What is your friendship like (love, trust)?*
- *What do you do for each other*

24. Who do you turn to for moral support?

- *Someone/people you are able to share your burdens and troubles with*
- *What kind of support do they give you?*

25. Who provides care for you when you are sick?

- *Can you remember an incident when you were sick?*
- *When you gave birth*

26. When you think of the near future, what is it that you are most afraid **{valo/letswalo}** of?

- Something like losing your job ***{Ntoeo he o e nahanakorewatshohahotswana maybe le hofelelwakemosebetsi}***
- sense of no way out/ Lack of prospects {**hosebe le ponelopele}**

27. Do you belong to /have you ever belonged to any organization (community based organization, church, Stokvel)

- *How did you join- recruited (by who?)*
- *What is the purpose/objective of this organization?*
- *Do you have any roles you play besides being the members*
- *How does this organization assist you and vice versa*

28. A- In case of Stokvel: how does your Stokvel operate- what kind of Stokvel?

29. Do you trust the people in your organization?

- *If yes, why and how has that helped you?*
- *If no, why not?*
- *Leadership (treasure) who handles the money*
- *Do you trust the people enough to give in same effort to you?*

Work-home conflict and coping strategies

Mme we have spoken about you and your support structure as well as social networks that help you in your daily survival. Now I would like us to discuss your job/work

30. Tell me, how do you earn a living now and in the past
- Piece jobs

31. Tell me more about your job?
- *Where is your job allocated?*
- *How often do you do this job?*
- *Give me an example of what you do in your job?*
- *How did you find those jobs?*
- *When did you start working?*

32. How does your job affect you (physically and emotionally)?
- *Physical tiredness*
- *Are you enjoying your job /is it going well?*
- *The working environment*

33. Have you ever experienced a period where you could not find a job?
- *What happened*
- *Who did you depend on financially*

34. Have you ever experienced a period where you had no food and toiletries in the house?
- *What happened*
- *How did you manage to get through that phase*

35. How does it make you feel not being able to get a permanent job?
- *Having to rely on these piece*
- *Unpredictability, insecurity*
- *What is your dream job from your childhood?*

36. If you where to get a permanent job, what would you do for your family?
- *Do you think your life would change?*
- *Do you think you will still be staying here*
- *Benefits such as medical aid, model C schools*

37. Tell me, who looks after the children when you are working?

- *Your mother, siblings*

38. Describe to me what happens, when you get home after work?

- *Tired and still have to fulfill household duties?*

39. How do you balance your various obligations?

- *When there are problems at home, like your child being sick, how do you manage to go to work?*

We have come to the end of our conversation and your stories are very interesting. Thank you very much for your time and here is something from me to you as my token of appreciation. **{Kealeboga Mme}**

APPENDIX F: MAP (RESEARCH SETTING)