

**CHILD-HOOD EXPERIENCES OF FOSTER CARE IN THE OVERBERG REGION  
OF THE WESTERN CAPE PROVINCE. AN ADULT LIFE HISTORY  
PERSPECTIVE.**

**BY GODFREY WILTON MATINKA**



**UNIVERSITY *of the*  
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A full thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree

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**Department of Social Work**

Faculty of Community and Health

Supervisor: Dr M. L. Minnaar-Mcdonald

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**Declaration**

I declare that this dissertation, entitled: *Child-hood Experiences of Foster Care in the Overberg Region of the Western Cape Region - An Adult Life History Perspective* is my own work, that it has not been submitted for any degree or examination to any other university, and that all the sources that I have used have been indicated and acknowledged by complete references.

Full Name and Surname: Godfrey Wilton Matinka

Signed:

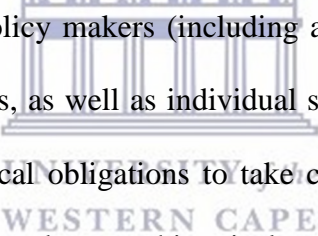


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## Abstract

The social welfare policy context changed dramatically from apartheid to post-apartheid in the South African transition to democracy. The new social developmental approach towards professional social work service delivery did not decrease the demand for foster care and thus the need for alternative child care placements continue to rise. Many children are still removed from their primary caregivers at a very young age and stay in foster care until they become adults. The goal of this research study was to explore, understand and describe the perceptions and experiences of adults regarding their lived experiences as foster children through the lens of Life Course Theory. Key objectives were to explore, understand and describe the foster care and childhood perceptions and experiences of participants through their journeys and transitions into adulthood; to explore, understand and describe how professional social work services are delivered in the field of foster care in the Overstrand Service Delivery Area and with these reflections, provide recommendations for improvements in foster care support services. In conducting this study, a qualitative single case design was implemented with the aim to contextualise the topic from a local, regional and social work perspective. A purposive sample of nine adult participants (four adult women and five adult men between the ages 25 and 35), across racial groups, i.e. young adults who entered alternative foster care as children, were used for the study. Data was collected in selected sub-areas of the Overstrand Municipal area, with a specific focus on the increasing foster care caseloads of registered non-profit child protection organisations (NPOs), particularly their satellite offices of Hermanus, Kleinmond, Gansbaai and the Stanford areas which form part of the Overberg region in the Western Cape. Data collection techniques consisted of document studies and semi-structured interviews, using a life-history approach for each individual participant. Data analysis was guided by the eight-step thematic analytical framework provided by Tesch.

Findings concluded that social workers with the necessary resources generally need to respond in more appropriate ways to adequately prepare youth for the period of ‘transitioning’ out of foster care into independence and adulthood. The study documented evidence of how clients view the foster-care supervision services that were rendered. The study should thus guide and allow practitioner social workers to seriously review current social policies and practices regarding foster care. During the life course of ‘identity seeking’ individuals the struggles and challenges as told by the adult participants in this contextual study became better known and understood. As a practitioner and social work researcher, the researcher was also able to identify with the current practice dilemmas faced by designated child protection NPO organisations working under many constraints rendering foster-care services at local community and family level on behalf of the state.



The research study should alert policy makers (including academic training institutions), at local state and organizational levels, as well as individual social work professionals, of their constitutional, citizenship and ethical obligations to take cognisance, and great care of the significance of case file records that become historical evidence of the work and services rendered by professionals.

The researcher is registered with the South African Council of Social Service Professions and is bound by the social work code of ethics which include research practice. Ethics considerations that were key to this study, e.g. obtaining informed consent, protecting the anonymity of the individual participants and participating organizations, and to ensure that both records and documents, and their identity and status are kept confidential.

**Keywords: Foster Care, Caregiver, Child in need of care, Kinship care, Family reunification services; Developmental approach; Child Protection Legislation; Emerging Adulthood**



## LIST OF ACRONYMS

ACVV- ‘Afrikaanse Christelike Vrouevereniging’

Badisa- ‘Barmhartigheidsdiens Saam’

CA- Children’s Act

CJA- Child Justice Act

CPA- Criminal Procedure Act

CPO- Child Protection Organisation

CWSA-Child Welfare South Africa

DSD- Department of Social Development

FC-Foster Care

ISDM-Integrated Service Delivery Model

NGO- Non-government Organisation

NPO- Non Profit Organisation

SACSSP-South African Council for Social Service Professions

SASSA- South African Social Assistance Security Act

UN-United Nations

UNCRC- United Nations Convention on the Right of The Child

WPF- White Paper on Families

WPSW- White Paper for Social Welfare



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I dedicate this thesis to all the participants who were once foster children, and who by sharing their life stories participated in the study helping us as social work professionals and practitioners to know more and thereby assist us to work and improve the future services that will be rendered and future research studies that may be done.

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## Chapter One

### 1. Introduction and Rationale

The United Nations, as cited in Delap and Fulford (2011:7), referred to foster care as the placement of children by a competent authority in the care of non-family (or another family member) that was selected, qualified, approved and supervised by the relevant authority to provide foster care. Crumbley and Little (in De Vos 1998:23) further defined foster care as a process through which a substitute family takes care of minor children, because the family of origin cannot or is unable to care for its own children.

In sub-Saharan Africa there was a perception that children do not just belong to their biological parents, but to the broader family and community, therefore most African orphans are raised among kin within the extended family (Kandiwa, 2010:7). Sanou et al. (2008) in Kandiwa (2010:18) further indicated that in Burkina Faso there are two forms of foster care: community family homes and collective foster care, which are particularly appealing forms of caregiving, because they kept children rooted in their parental homes; where parents are owners of their own homes. Kandiwa (2010:19) further suggested that the quality of foster care is in this case superior, because it is difficult to differentiate between orphans and biological children. Kandiwa reports on the use of ‘community monitors’ in sub-Saharan Africa whereby, the latter are immediately available when problems occur and are known to the extended family, while social welfare supervisors attended to foster children periodically and may arrive too late to observe problems (Kandiwa, 2010:20). Another West- African study (Kuyini, Alhassan, Tollerud, Weld & Haruna, 2009:440) described foster care in Ghana as “the transfer of responsibility of a child to person(s) other than the child’s biological parents”. Kuyini et al. (2009:440) further postulated that traditional foster care in Ghana involved the placement of children with family or kin with no formal authority, such as welfare organisations, participating in such placement.

It was clear from the literature review that foster care is understood and practised in different ways in different countries and is subject to the unique needs of the children, alternative systems, cultural contexts, and legislation of a country (Johnson, 2005:4). Several authors (Kuyini et al., 2009:440; Bostock, 2004:13; Dorsey, Burns, Southerland, Cox, Wagner & Farmer, 2012:817) distinguished between two forms of fostering that are relevant in terms of

similarities with the current South African cultural context, i.e. *kinship and non-kinship* foster care. *Kinship* foster care involves the placement of a child with a biologically related care-giving relative, and *non-kinship* fostering involves placement with non-biological caregivers. These ideas also concurred with a British study by Bostock (2004:13), who argued that *kinship* foster care is the placement of children with family or friends, and this kind of care is considered very beneficial, because families can build on existing relationships, and biological parents have easier access to their children.

### **1.1 Child Protection, South African Legislation and Policy as relevant to appraise 'Foster Care' Studies**

South African Professional social work services are extensively governed by social policies. The Children's Act (Act No. 38) of 2005 for example regulates all professional social work services in the field of child protection and of foster care. It defines a child as a person under the age of 18 years, while Section 180(1) describes foster care as "the placement of a child in need of care and protection in the care of a person who is not his or her parent or guardian". Szabo and Ritchken (2002:60) concurred that 'fostering' in South Africa implied the statutory (legal) placement of a child or children within a family setting. According to the Children's Amendment Act, Act No. 41, 2007 (181(c) the purpose of foster care is to respect the individual and family by demonstrating a respect for cultural, ethnic and community diversity so that within their own culture children will feel protected from the trauma of removal from their own community to foster carers who are unknown (Bostock, 2004:13).

Given that foster care in the South African context is increasingly associated with *alternative non-kinship* statutory placements, it requires the interventions of social workers that are duly registered, in terms of the Social Service Professions Act 110 of 1978 and operate in terms of the above-mentioned laws. Several masters' and doctoral studies in South Africa and the Western Cape have thus been perused for how they examined foster care over the last two decades. A range of varied topics have been identified, e.g. *the role of fostering: examining the host parents' experiences of accommodating children in need of care* (Amroodt, 2011); *factors contributing to the foster care backlog* (Ngwenya, 2011); *foster care of Aids orphans- exploring the causal factors of foster placement breakdown* (Booyesen, 2006); *the role of the social worker in the reunification of foster children with their biological parents* (De Villiers, 2008); *foster parents' needs for support and training* (Govender, 2003); *the exploration of life-experiences of Aids orphans in kinship foster care in South Africa* (Tissiman, 2008); and

*the experiences of adolescents preparing to leave foster care on the grounds of age* (Kadungure, 2014).

Following the dissertation search for the purpose of writing a project proposal for the study, a thorough Google Scholar search for additional studies on foster care in South Africa did not yield any further topics relevant to this inquiry.

Two years ago, the Overberg region of the Western Cape where the current study took place, attracted worldwide media attention with the brutal gang rape, mutilation and murder of a seventeen-year-old foster child and daughter, Anene Booysen of Bredasdorp (Munusami, 2013). This incident happened during January 2013 and triggered substantial social policy and professional interests, raising further hope for future policy actions, with serious questions about the status quo of growing and continuing gender-based domestic violence at family, community and societal levels. Amongst other cases in the country, this tragic incident placed this region in the policy spotlight and motivated the researcher's interest to undertake the current study to better understand the life-world of transitioning foster care adults or persons (Meyer 2013:1 & Gunne, 2014).

## **1.2 Emerging Adulthood**

According to Greeson (2013:42) the life stages from adolescence to young adulthood or 'emerging adulthood' is a transitional crisis period in any individual's life, more especially for those persons who were fostered as children by other caregivers; who could lead to persistent difficulties and hardships in their later lives as adults. Research findings by several authors (Blome, Shields, & Verdieck, 2009:258, 268; Bruskas, 2008:70; Havalchak, White, O' Brien, Pecora, & Sepulveda, 2009:4; Stott, 2011:61; White, O' Brien, White, Pecora, & Philips, 2007:420) further indicated that the child and/or youth maturing out of foster care often found it difficult to make the transition into adult life. Evidence showed that they remained at risk for negative consequences, such as higher risk for substance abuse, delinquency, involvement in criminal activities and violence, poor long-term adjustment, failure to complete school, limited tertiary qualifications, often facing high unemployment, risky sexual behaviour, and having children of their own at a very young age. The rationale for this current study was thus to explore emerging adults' experiences of foster care within the more semi-rural Overberg region in the Western Cape.

## **1.3 Literature Study**

### **1.3.1 Theoretical Framework: Life Course Theory**

Life Course Theory is an important perspective that has an appeal to explore the foster care and childhood experiences of adults. Greeson (2013:41) argued that Life Course Theory concerns relationship building, daily living, transitioning, chronological age, and how people are socially shaped and changed from birth for adjustments later in life. The period between adolescence and adulthood, which is also called the emerging adulthood stage, is considered a significant life-changing experience. This is the age or period when youth leave school, embark on higher education, enter the workforce, form relationships, and become independent. However, young people emancipating from the child welfare system and entering into emerging adulthood are assumed to be on their own earlier than other young people of their age, due to the overall extension of youth as a life-course phase over the last few decades according to Greeson (2013:41).

Greeson (2013:41) postulated that the well-being of most young people improved during emerging youth, but the well-being of those who transit out of foster care (reaching a certain age) deteriorates, because they take on adult roles and responsibilities at a very young age. An assumption is made that unlike children living with their parents or family, foster children are unlikely to receive the necessary assistance and support. Therefore, they are forced to assume adult roles and responsibilities at a very tender age. Life Course Theory considers the life-stage transitioning from adolescence to young adulthood to be a crisis period during an individual's life, especially for those who have been fostered. It argued that this could lead to persistent difficulties and hardships even later in the young adult's life (Greeson, 2013:42). Although the researcher reflected on Life-Course Theory and emerging adulthood in transitioning proposed by Greeson (2013), several other authors like Arnett (2007), Courtney, Dworsky, Cusick, Havlcek, Perez, and Keller (2007), Courtney, and Lyons, (2009), and McCoy, McMillen, and Spitznagel (2008) also wrote on the afore-mentioned theory, which are applicable to this study.

## **1.4 Contextualising Foster care -**

### **Legislation and Policy Documents regarding Foster Care and Children's Rights**

#### **1.4.1 The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)**

The United Nations Conventions on the Rights of the Child that came into being on 20 November 1989 formally excluded South Africa due to the apartheid system. State parties



from different countries expressed their faith in a human rights perspective that lay emphasis on the dignity and worth of the human person. All countries that were signatories to the convention committed themselves to implement measures to ensure that the rights of the child will be protected and that the best interests of the child will be paramount in adopting this perspective. Promoting the UNCRC formed part of the anti-apartheid struggle and was later endorsed by the South African Children's Act 38 of 2005.

For example, the latter legislation re-affirms that the best interests of the child are of paramount importance and like the UNCRC uphold that the child will not be separated from his/her parents against their will, except when legislative procedures are needed to protect the child. In terms of the Children's Act 38 of 2005, the child protection system is implemented to protect children in need of care and subscribes to the kind of protection protocols to which the UNCRC appropriately refers.

#### **1.4.2 African Customary Law and the African Charter**

Martin and Mbambo (2011:21) concurred that South Africa became a signatory to a number of international and regional legal instruments, including the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACRWC) (1990), which involved the interplay between custom and children's rights, as well as the protection of cultural rights. Furthermore, the various legal instruments referred to, such as the UNCRC and the ACRWC, adopted a similar definition of the child and guaranteed that all children under the age of 18 years will be protected from all forms of abuse and exploitation (Martin & Mbambo, 2011:23).

#### **1.4.3 The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa**

The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996 (Act 108 of 1996), is the supreme law of the country and therefore governs all policies and other laws of South Africa, including those that protect the rights of children. The Bill of Rights, chapter two of the Constitution of South Africa, section 28, is dedicated to the rights of the child and argues that every child has the right to family care, or appropriate alternative care when removed from the family environment. Therefore, appropriate alternative care could also include foster care placement. Furthermore, the child has the right to a name and nationality from birth to basic nutrition, shelter, basic healthcare services and social services, protection from maltreatment, neglect, abuse or degradation, protection from exploitative labour practices, and various other rights.

Section 28(2) and (3) from the same act state that the child's best interest is always of paramount importance.

#### **1.4.4 The White Paper on Families**

The White Paper on Families (2013) is one of the more recent policy documents that was developed based on the White Paper for Social Welfare (1997). The latter was the first welfare policy under the post-apartheid regime that reaffirmed South Africa's commitment to secure basic welfare services and human rights, focussing on the family and its life-cycle including children, the youth and the aged. Intervention strategies of The White Paper on Families (2013) were based on values such as the promotion of healthy family life, family strengthening, and family preservation and also focused on the prevention of abuse, neglect, and exploitation of children. Furthermore, the new policy strategies are built on supporting children living in socio-economic distress, by strengthening foster care mechanisms to ensure rapid family placement for children in need and to promote and provide support services to families affected by the removal of a family member.

#### **1.4.5 The Children's Act and the Child in Need of Care**

Through the discussion of foster care in general, a foundation was laid for a more detailed examination of foster care and protection of children in need of care. The new Children's Act, No. 38 of 2005, was enacted and was set to replace the Child Care Act, No. 74 of 1983, which gives effect to the child's constitutional rights. Furthermore, the New Children's Act 38 of 2005 proposed that children should be protected from maltreatment, neglect, abuse, or degradation and that the best interests of the child must be maintained in every situation. Since the Children's Act 38 of 2005 was implemented, the intention has been to direct and shape foster care in South Africa. The Children's Act, No. 38 of 2005 assigns certain exclusive powers to social workers that have to be registered in terms of the Social Service Professions Act 1978 (Act, No. 110 of 1978). Hence, children that are assessed "at risk" can be removed from their homes when they are found to be in need of care and protection in the light of section 150(1) of the Children's Act, No. 38 of 2005.

#### **1.4.6 The Child Justice Act 75 of 2008**

The Child Justice Act 75 of 2008 gives effect to the constitutional rights of children in conflict with the law and maintains that children should be protected against unfair treatment by the criminal justice system. The above-mentioned Act recognises that before 1994, South

Africa did not give many of its children, particularly ‘black’ children, the opportunity to live and act like children. This situation and the fact that some children, as a result of poor socio-economic and political circumstances in which they found themselves, came into conflict with the law played a major role in criminalising social behavioural problems of children in conflict with the law. Hence the Child Justice Act 75 of 2008 (Section 50) was formulated so that through assessment by a probation officer it could determine if a child should be viewed as ‘a child in need of care and protection’ rather than a child committing crime. Therefore, such a child could also be dealt with as a ‘child in need of care and protection’ by a social worker in terms of section 150 of the Children’s Act 38 of 2005, and be placed in foster care in terms of sections 155 and 156 of the same Act. The connection between child justice issues and child protection issues and care is however often overlooked, but is clearly stated in the Child Justice Act 75 of 2008 (section 50) and as mentioned in the latter sections of the Children’s Act 38 of 2005 (see later discussion of these acts in Chapter Two).

### **1.5 Problem Formulation**

South African legislation such as the Constitution of South Africa, the Children’s Act 38 of 2005, White Paper on Families in South Africa, 2005, the Child Justice Act 75 of 2008, the Children’s Bill of Rights of 2003, and other legislation have all endorsed the rights and the need for protection of children in line with all the international conventions. However, alternative care service agreements and arrangements, such as adoption and foster care placements, have become regular occurrences and pose a growing social and political issue for democracy and human development policy and social service debates, including child care and protection issues in South Africa. Foster care has been specifically affected as a result of the additional expectations stipulated in the Children’s Act 38 of 2005. The HIV/AIDS pandemic and the growing number of children orphaned by the increasing prevalence of the latter, as well as growing statutory caseloads of social workers, are particular cases in point. This state of affairs led to further unforeseen needs, such as the increased demand for more resources, especially human resources such as trained social workers, social auxiliary workers, foster parents, other social welfare professionals (child care staff), and more funds, all of which are perceived as having a direct impact on the living experiences of a foster child. Given the perception of a ‘dysfunctional’ substitute care system, the life of a foster child is currently perceived as directly and indirectly influenced by the social welfare system and operational services by formal partnerships between state and private non-profit sector (registered Child Care and Protection Non-Profit

Organizations/NPOs) in South Africa, as well as informal care arrangements of families. In the current more formal policy partnership arrangements, NPOs continually struggle to survive due to insufficient financial and other support from the state, which has a severe impact on the partnership services rendered by professionals to sustain foster children and their families.

Drawing on relevant theory, this study intended to explore, understand and describe whether or not foster care was a positive or negative experience by individuals that were fostered as children by examining their adult life histories. Thus, the main motivation was to investigate whether or not foster care was the best available option, and to reflect critically on professional social work practices and services in the field of foster care. There is currently very little documented evidence available to support or refute the perception that too many youth are removed from foster care before the age of eighteen years old in the Overberg District. This under-researched situation calls for further scientific investigation. The breakdown of adolescent placements is regarded as excessively high and appears to be a major cause of instability in substitute care placements. According to SCIE (2005, cited in Booysen, 2009:5) it is estimated that approximately half of all adolescent foster placements break down before the adolescent reaches the age of eighteen. (SCIE, 2005:47).

This study followed a life-historical approach, a new perspective, which could make a significant contribution to better understand the current field of alternative, substitute care services in professional social work in South Africa. This contribution may generate new specialised experiential social work knowledge and understanding informed by adults that have been in foster care. By documenting their perceptions and childhood experiences new ideas and recommendations for improved guidelines and contextually relevant skills training for social workers who are currently rendering foster care services to foster parents and families, may emerge.

## **1.6. Research Question**

For the purpose of this study the main research question formulated for the study was:

*What are the perceptions and life experiences of individual participants who transitioned from foster care placements into adulthood?*

## **1.7 Research Aim, Assumptions and Objectives of the study**

### 1.7.1 Research Aim

To explore, understand and describe the perceptions and life experiences of adults who were placed as children in foster care.

### 1.7.2 Research Assumptions

Given the current developmental policy context, situational analysis and current professional practical experiences, the following were key assumptions of the investigation:

1. *Too many children are removed from foster care before the age of eighteen years, but insufficient literature exists on studies carried out especially in the Overberg District, a semi-rural area in the Western Cape;*
2. *The high demand for more foster parents and lack of social workers to cope with the demand may have led to a lack of conscientious recruitment, lack of effective screening and insufficient or no training of foster parents, with devastating or traumatic consequences for the child or children in foster care;*
3. *Biological parents and families may regard foster care placement of their children as a relief to continue unstable, or unacceptable lifestyles that lead to a loss of contact with their children; and*
4. *Foster care placements may be characterised by unhealthy relationships between foster child and foster parents and/or siblings, as well as feelings of instability, uncertainty, confusion, frustration and continuing trauma.*

### 1.7.3 Research Objectives

Based on the above assumptions three key objectives informed the study:

1. *To explore, understand and describe the foster care and childhood perceptions and experiences of participants through their journey and transitions into adulthood.*
2. *To explore, understand and describe how professional social work services are delivered in the field of foster care in the Overstrand Service Delivery Area.*
3. *To provide recommendations for improvements in foster care support services.*

## 1.8 Methodology

This study used a single qualitative case study design as methodology to guide the research process.

### **1.8.1 Research Design: Qualitative Case Study Research**

Babbie and Mouton (2010:74) define research design as a plan or structured framework of how the researcher intends to conduct the research process in order to solve the research problem. Creswell (2009:4) describes qualitative research as an inquiry process of understanding that is based on a distinctive methodological tradition of investigation to explore a social or human problem. It is the approach in which the researcher aims to understand the phenomena under scrutiny (Jordaan & Jordaan, 1998:68). Thus, it is difficult for the qualitative researcher to remain detached and objective, because by interpreting the data the researcher is bound to include some of his or her experiences and ideologies.

Rubin and Babbie (2009:47) argue that qualitative research can be used to gain depth of understanding and bring deeper meaning to human experience. Furthermore, qualitative case study research treats ‘cases’ or ‘case settings’ as units of research that can be individuals, groups, organisations, movements, events or geographic communities (Neuman, 1997, p. 29 cited in Minnaar-McDonald, 2014). A case study thus refers to a researcher’s exploration of a phenomenon within a context using one or more cases, eliciting information from multiple data sources over time (Patton, 2002; Baxter & Jack, 2008). In this *qualitative case study*, the researcher wanted to gain a deeper meaning and understanding of adults living in the Overberg region that had childhood experiences of substitute foster care. Hence, the main aim was also to use multiple (different) data sources to be able to reach such an understanding and to describe and also validate the uniqueness of the childhood experiences of emerging adults that were in foster care. In this regard and for purposes of in-depth study, Kratochwill, Hitchcock, Horner, Levin, Odom, Rindskopf and Shadish (2010:2) explain that single case research designs may be considered as appropriate as they are based on using single participants (individuals) or a small group of participants, as the unit of intervention and the unit of data analysis. The latter design was thus well suited to do an in-depth study, because the subject of foster care from an adult’s life history perspective is relatively underexplored in the South African social work research context. As a qualitative research approach, case studies are also considered valuable to health science research to develop theory, evaluate programmes and interventions, because of its flexibility and rigor (Baxter & Jack, 2008; Yin, 2003).



## 1.8.2 Population and Sampling

### 1.8.2.1 Population and Setting

According to Neuman (2006:224), the term ‘population’ is an abstract concept of an entire group or people from which the sample or unit will be chosen. In the field of human sciences, population refers to all possible cases that one is interested in researching and people with specific characteristics in common that are relevant to the study (Monette, Sullivan & De Jong, 2008:136). In this case the population consisted of adults who were foster children placed by the three main registered Non-Profit Child Protection organizations in the Overberg region, including areas such as Kleinmond, Hermanus, Gansbaai and Stanford, which formed the setting for this case study.

### 1.8.2.2 Sampling

Sampling refers to a process of selecting individuals from the entire population in order to obtain information regarding a phenomenon, in such a way that the findings reflect the concerns of the population of interest (Brink, 2006:124). Bless, Higson- Smith and Kagee (2006:98) argues a *sample* is a subset of the whole population, which is investigated by a researcher and whose information may be generalised to the entire population. The researcher chose *purposive* sampling, as this *non-probability sampling technique* enabled him to make use of his judgement regarding the characteristics of the elements to be included in the sampling framework and to answer the research question (Bless et al., 2006:105-106). Furthermore, Neuman (2006:267-268) emphasises that the principle of *purposive* sampling is to get all possible cases that fit particular criteria using various methods as an acceptable kind of sampling for a special situation. Therefore, the sampling criteria in this study were gender (intersecting with race and class), age and geographic area. The sample of the case study comprised the selection of four adult women and five adult men, totalling *nine* individuals, aged between 25 and 35 years, from the Overstrand Municipality in the Overberg region who have been in foster care as children and who have emerged as young adults.

## 1.8.3 Method of Data Collection

### 1.8.3.1 Data Collection

The researcher collected data using two different methods: *semi-structured interviews* following a *life-history approach* and *document studies* (archived client case data /records). The time-duration of the interviews was between 1-2 hours and depended on the responses of the participants. Rowley (2002:17) refers to different sources, e.g. documents, artefacts, interviews and observations whereby participants are investigated in their life context. In this case documents, such as archived client case data stored as confidential social work organizational records were used to augment the interview narratives. The life-history approach promoted deeper penetration by encouraging participants to tell their stories in their own words and to present their views to the researcher (Abu Bakar & Abdullah, 2008:4). Furthermore, Wicks and Whiteford (2006:94-100) state that the life-history approach is about understanding human experiences and being attentive to how people construct their lives, by using a narrative approach to storytelling.

Ojermark (2007:4) indicates that the most common distinction in the life-history research perspective is between *life history* and *life story*, where *life story* is a narrated story by the participant. *Life history* is the later interpretive, presentational work by the researcher. Considering that the research topic was of a sensitive nature and that participants were requested to share their intimate life experiences, the researcher reconstructed and triangulated evidence using semi-structured interviews and social work practice documents (archived case data, e.g. reports) following the *life-history approach*.

### **1.8.3.2 Research Instrument**

The researcher designed an archived data extracting tool (Annexure 4: *Archived data extracting tool*) to screen and recruit for a sample from the foster care archived case file records. In addition, a life-story interview guide designed by McAdams (Revised 1995) (Annexure 5: *Interview guide*) was adapted for qualitative depth interviews about the story of the participant's life. The latter guide consists of *nine* topics or themes: *Life chapters in the life of a foster child; Critical Events during your life as a foster child; Life challenges as a foster child; Influences on the life history as a foster child; Stories and the life story of the foster child; Alternative Futures for the Life Story; Personal Ideology; Life Theme; and others*.

The two annexures (4 & 5) combined constituted the data collection 'research instrument' or tool.

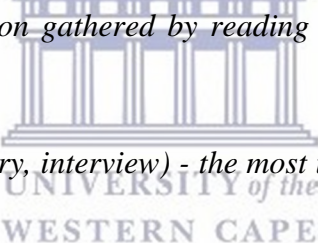


### 1.8.3.3 Data Recording

The data recording methods that were used by the researcher included audio-tape recordings to record the life-histories. The researcher additionally obtained data by means of studying case files and field notes. Additional methods of data recording focussed on aspects such as seating arrangements, communication patterns, and non-verbal communication to add to the transcripts in order to complete the data collection (De Vos et al., 2011:350).

### 1.8.3.4 Data Analysis, Coding and Triangulation

According to De Vos, Strydom, Fouché and Delport (2005:338) (see also De Vos et al., 2011); data analysis is the process of bringing order, structure and meaning to the mass of collected data. However, Bless and Kathuria (1993) stated in Bless et al. (2006:163) that the process of data analysis takes on many different forms, depending on the nature of the research question and design and the nature of the data. For the purpose of this study, the researcher made use of Tesch's 8 steps of data analysis (Creswell, 2009:186).

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1. *To get a sense of the information gathered by reading all the transcripts and jot down some ideas.*
  2. *Select one document (i.e. life-story, interview) - the most interesting / the shortest / the one on top of the pile.*
  3. *When this task has been completed for several informants, make a list of all the topics and cluster those similar.*
  4. *Find a fitting abbreviation for each of the identified topics and code it.*
  5. *Find the most descriptive wording for the topics and turn them into themes or categories.*
  6. *Make a final decision on the abbreviation for each theme or category and alphabetise these codes.*
  7. *Using the cut -and- paste method, assemble the data or material belonging to each theme or category in one place and do a preliminary analysis.*
  8. *If necessary, recode the existing data.*

*Triangulation* is when researchers use a variety of methods and means to elicit the type of information required (Creswell, 2009: 191,199). However, in this study, triangulation of data

sources was employed by means of studying case records (documents and textual analysis), together with the semi-structured life-history interviews.

### **1.9 Trustworthiness in Qualitative Research**

Johnson and Turner (2003) in Maree (2014:305) describe trustworthiness as the way in which the researcher is able to convince the audience of the credibility of the study and that the findings are worth paying attention to. Further to this Baxter (2008:554) states that through the use of a database the reliability of the case study will improve, because it enables the researcher to track and organize data sources including notes, key documents, tabular material narratives, photographs and audio records, etc. for easy retrieval at a later date. Triangulation of data sources (case data and interviews) is also a strategy to determine trustworthiness and reliability.

It is important to establish the trustworthiness and reliability of a study in order to validate the findings. Therefore, Guba's model of ensuring the trustworthiness of qualitative data (establishing truth value, triangulation, applicability, consistency and neutrality) was applied (Guba 1990, cited in Krefting, 1991:214).

### **1.10 Limitations and Delimitations**

The researcher had limited control of threats to the validity of the study. The findings cannot be generalised to all Child Protection Organisations registered as NPOs due to the fact that the study implemented a single case qualitative design approach. Limitations were also experienced in tracing the participants, as they were scattered and no longer resident in the areas served by selected organisations for this study.

### **1.11 Reflexivity**

While the significance of the study in terms of recent policy and ministerial questions were noted, the researcher took cognisance of the fact that the study was of an extremely sensitive nature, because participants were expected to share some of their intimate personal life experiences, views, values and beliefs. Therefore, being a male, the researcher critically examined his own pre-conceived personal and professional perceptions, professional managerial position and relationship of power and experiences, by turning the investigation away from the participants (male or female) towards introspection and reflection of the 'self', as a 'black' male professional person (Hsiung, 2008:4-6). 'Reflexivity' assisted the

researcher to become aware of his own biases, assumptions, locations, feelings, values and beliefs and he became aware of the strengths and pitfalls when embarking on the study and in engaging with the participants.

### **1.12 Ethical Consideration**

The researcher requested permission and ethical clearance from the Ethics Committee of the Senate and the Community and Health Science Faculty at the University of the Western Cape, the National, Provincial and Local Governing Boards of the participating Registered Child Protection Organizations. In order to meet the profession and University's requirements of informed consent, a letter was compiled and given to each participant to sign (Annexure 2), to ensure that their identities would not be disclosed. Data are kept in a locked space for at least five years and participation in this study was voluntary. The researcher is also a registered social worker who subscribes to the ethical code of the South African Council for Social Service Professionals (SACSSP), therefore confidentiality of all information provided by participants and participating organizations had to be protected (Mazibuko and Gray, 2004). Furthermore, Babbie and Mouton (2001:472) propose that to ensure anonymity, only the researcher and possibly a few other relevant people (social work professionals) are aware of the identity of the participants. This study was of a very sensitive and emotional nature, and therefore the ethical obligation rested on the researcher to conduct interviews in a way that did not pose too much risk for the participants. Leedy and Ormrod (2005:101) explain that the physical and emotional risks to participants during the implementation of a research study should not be bigger than the risks of everyday life. The participants were informed of their right not to participate in the study and that they may withdraw from the study at any stage without implications to themselves. Participants were also made aware of available counselling and other services should they need them.

### **1.13 Thesis Outline**

This thesis comprises six chapters.

#### **Chapter 1: Orientation to the study**

Chapter One provides an introduction to the study which comprises of the problem statement, aims and objectives of the study. The chapter also provides a brief description of the research

methodology that is further discussed in Chapter Three and an outline of the chapters to follow for discussion.

## **Chapter 2: Literature Review**

Chapter Two is devoted to the review of literature, taking into account international theoretical perspectives, policies and legislation (globally and nationally) to contextualise the local study on adults who emerged and transitioned through foster care and the child protection system in South Africa. This chapter also provides a conceptual framework, namely life-course theory combined with emerging adulthood perspectives for the study.

## **Chapter 3: Research Methodology**

Chapter Three contains the methodological framework, research design (qualitative case study methodology), research setting, population, sample and sampling strategies, data collection, data analysis and data verification, reflexivity, as well as ethical considerations.

## **Chapter 4: Data analysis and discussion of findings**

Chapter Four presents an analysis of data that has been collected through archived records and life-history narratives, and the discussion and presentation of findings. The chapter also presents the context of how the dynamics and demographics changed in terms of local trends in foster care placements and as part of the contextual changes of the foster care system.

## **Chapter 5: Continued Discussion of Findings**

This chapter continues the discussion of Chapter Four in terms of the presentation of the data.

## **Chapter 6**

This chapter presents the summary of findings, conclusions and recommendations of the study.



## Chapter 2

### Literature Review

#### 2.1 Introduction

The previous chapter introduced the scope for this study in terms of the research aim, goal, objectives and the main question of this qualitative case study that followed the life-history approach. This chapter provides an overview of the literature that was found relevant to contextualise the study of individuals who transitioned out of foster care into adulthood. Following De Vos et al., (2005) the literature review in qualitative studies is aimed at contributing to a clearer understanding of the nature and meaning of the problem, which has been identified and helped to build a framework for the research process (Rossman in De Vos et al., 2005), to contextualise the study. For the purpose of this study the researcher selected and reviewed relevant authors' perspectives that matched the assumptions of Life-Course Theory to explore and contextualise adult life histories and narratives within the context of the child protection and foster care field.

#### 2.2 Theoretical Framework: Life-Course Theory and emerging adulthood

According to Hutchinson (2010:11) the life-course perspective is a theoretical model that has emerged over the last 45 years across several disciplines such as sociology, anthropology, social history, demography and psychology. A sociologist, Glen Elder (1974, cited in Hutchinson, 2010:10) researched and wrote on the topic of life-course perspectives and studied the influence of historical forces on families, education and work roles during the Great Depression of the 1930s. Another scholar, Hareven (1978, 1982b, 1996, 2000, cited in Hutchinson, 2010:11) was part of those researchers that were developing a social history perspective that was more interested in how families change and adapt under changing historical conditions, and how individuals and families synchronize their lives to adapt to such changing social conditions. Life-Course Theory also draws on traditional theories of developmental psychology, which looks at the different life-stages and the events that occurred in the lives of those people.

Erikson's development theory (cited in Morris, 2010:20) is another theory that also addressed life stages and his theory could also be applicable to this research study. According to Morris (2014:20), Erikson addressed the notion of 'travelling through one's life-span by accomplishing certain developmental skills' ( 8 life stages) that one carries into adulthood,

e.g. trust, autonomy, initiative, industry, identity, intimacy, generativity and integrity. Erickson's theory concurs with some of the features of the Life-Course Theory, because to accomplish the development skills as identified by Erikson, the individual goes through experiences and critical events during his/her life-span as prescribed by the Life-Course Theory. Morris (2014:20) postulated that if an individual accomplishes the skills mentioned by Erikson's theory s/he will hopefully develop into a stable, loving, secure adult. But failure to complete skills during the eight stages will create an inability to successfully transition to the next phase. However, following Shin (2009:42), for an adolescent in foster care the normal development tasks associated with adolescence are often negatively influenced due to their experience of physical separation from birth parents, child abuse and neglect and even due to extended stay in foster care. Furthermore, youth in foster care are perceived to have lost stability in life, because they were separated from their biological family who are the people that supposedly help to form one's character and uniqueness. Erikson's theory (as cited in Morris, 2014) e.g. asserted that one must have accomplished physical, emotional and cognitive tasks in the correct order, but foster youth often have difficulty transitioning from stage to stage due to disruptions in their lives.

Life-Course Theory is thus about the understanding of the relationship between time and human behaviour which considers how chronological age, relationships, common life transitions and social change, shape people's lives from birth to death (Hutchinson, 2010:8). Following Hutchinson, there are several key ideas regarding the Life-Course Theory that are relevant to deliberate, especially for understanding the current context of foster care in this study. These ideas are for example the twists and turns in the paths of individual lives, recognizing the social influence of historical changes on human behaviour, recognizing the importance of timing of lives not just in terms of chronological age, but also in terms of biological age, psychological age, social age and spiritual age, emphasizing also the ways in which humans are interdependent and special attention given to the family as the primary arena for experiencing and interpreting the wider social world (Hutchinson, 2010:2).

Furthermore, the life-course perspective sees humans as capable of making choices and constructing their own life journeys within systems of opportunities and constraints, emphasizing diversity in life journeys and the many sources of that diversity and recognizing the linkages between early life experiences and later experiences in adulthood (Hutchinson, 2010).



According to Hutchinson (2010:9) to understand the life of a person you should start with an event history or sequence of events and experiences in that person's life. An event could be anything like the birth of a child, suffering of your mother's death while a teenager, going to the army, becoming a first-time father, getting divorced or being admitted to a psychiatric institution. Hutchinson (2010:10) further postulates that life course is also about viewing the life in terms of how culture and social institutions shape the pattern of an individual's life. When referring to foster care one could refer to cross cultural placements, attending the church denomination of the foster parents and not those of family, going to boarding school, placement in residential care instead of foster care and so forth. Although the researcher's perspective in this study is based on Life-Course Theory, the ecological theoretical perspective is also very applicable, because it describes the reciprocity between people and their environments.

According to Kadungure (2014:9) ecological theory places emphasis on the individual and the interrelationships with his or her environment, which concurs with the assumptions of Life-Course Theory?

Life-Course Theory is thus an important perspective that had appeal to explore the foster care child-hood experiences and life histories of adults. The McAdams Life-Story model (2001, 2009) is very applicable to Life-Course Theory, because it appeared suitable to examine the success factors that contributed to foster placements for adolescents in foster care (Hemmings, 2010:3). Furthermore, the McAdams Life-Story model as cited in Hemmings (2010: 3) looks at a young person's relationship with their foster carer or caregiver, their level of resilience, self-esteem and pro-social behaviour in relation to placement success. However, McAdams (2001, 2009) as cited in Hemmings (2010:17), has extensively addressed and explained the life-story model through his developmental framework, beginning from childhood to adolescence to emerging adulthood and finally to adulthood. Moreover, the McAdams life-story model (1995) referred to the narration of a person's past, present and anticipated future by the evolving story of the self, which provides meaning and purpose for understanding. Greeson (2013:41) argues that Life-Course Theory is concerned with relationship building, daily living, transitioning, chronological age and how people are socially shaped and changed from birth.

The period between adolescence and adulthood, which is also called '*the emerging adulthood stage*,' is considered a significant life-changing experience. Hemmings (2010:32) further



stressed that the adolescent period, from 12-16 years is seen as a period of major transition where the stability of knowing who 'one' once was as a child has gone, but the certainty of which one (or who one) will become (identity formation) within the adult world is still unknown. According to Arnett (2007:68) the age period 18-25 years old was proposed for the use of the term 'emerging'. This is the age or period when youth leave school, embark on higher education, enter the workforce, form relationships and become independent. However, young people emancipating from the child welfare system and entering into emerging adulthood are on their own earlier than other young people of their age, due to the overall extension of youth as a life-course phase over the last few decades (Greeson, 2013:41). Thus, the period of emerging adulthood is in motion when young adults experience anxiousness and they become afraid, because of the instability and identity challenges as they are unstructured during this stage of their lives. Following Arnett (2007:71), although most emerging adults appear to thrive on the freedom of this life stage, some find themselves lost and may begin to experience serious mental health problems. Arnett (2007:69) argued that emerging adulthood has five features: *the age of identity explorations, the age of instability, the self-focused age, the age of feeling in-between and the age of possibilities*. Emerging adulthood is considered perhaps the most heterogeneous period of the life course, because it is the least structured and the five features as mentioned above were not proposed as universal features, but as features that are significantly more common during emerging adulthood than in other periods.

Greeson (2013:41) in contrast suggests that the well-being of most young people improves during emerging youth, but the well-being of those who transition out of foster care (reaching a certain age), deteriorates, because they take on adult roles and responsibilities at a very young age. Arnett (2007:71) on the other hand stated that emerging adults are refusing to give up their teenage pleasures and take on adult responsibilities with catastrophic results. However, many emerging adults are ambivalent about taking on adult roles and responsibilities (Arnett, 2007:71). An assumption is made that unlike children living with their parents or family, foster children are unlikely to receive the necessary assistance and support. Therefore, they are forced to assume adult roles and responsibilities at a very tender age. The Life Course Theory considers the life stage transitioning from adolescence to young adulthood to be a crisis period during an individual's life, especially for those who have been fostered. Greeson (2013:42) argued that this could lead to persistent difficulties and hardships even later in the young adult's life.

However, life course theory has several advantages over traditional theories of human development, because it encourages greater attention to the impact of historical and social change on human behaviour (Hutchinson, 2010:32). Furthermore, life-course perspective focuses a lot on human agency and is not as deterministic as some earlier theories. It acknowledges people's strength and capacity for change. Hutchinson (2010: 34) also argues that the Life-Course Theory provides a very good conceptual framework for *culturally sensitive practice*. This important assumption about 'cultural' sensitivities or competencies has several implications for social work practice such as: helping persons or clients to make sense of their own life journey to improve their current situations; trying to understand the historical contexts of people's lives and how their behaviour is influenced by historical events; seeing or acknowledging the potential to develop social work interventions that can serve as turning points to help individuals' families, communities and organisations to get back on track; recognising that the lives of family members are linked across generations; encouraging the use of support systems developed by members of various cultural groups; providing guidance, support and finally helping to develop the person's sense of self and personal competence for making right choices in life (Hutchinson, 2010: 36).

### **2.3 Overview and nature of foster care services internationally**

There are different contexts for foster care globally, as well as regionally in Africa. However, the discussion in the literature of experiences of adolescents that were prepared to leave foster care in different countries and contexts around the world could begin to serve as a backdrop for developing improved understanding of the specialised policy driven foster care field of service in the current South African national, provincial and local community context. Hence, the researcher will briefly discuss some of the experiences of children leaving foster care on the grounds of age and the challenges which they face that may be relevant for the purpose of this explorative case study.

Kadungure (2014:13) in an unpublished Masters Thesis entitled: "The experiences of adolescents preparing to leave foster care on the grounds of age in East London" in the Eastern Cape, a very poverty stricken region of South Africa, reviewed and cited research evidence on foster care studies from different parts of the the world. He especially singled out examples of developed countries that had already developed policies that assisted social work services to implement preparatory programmes for adolescents leaving foster care. For example in the USA he reported on studies that found many adolescents who left foster care

due to their age, returned to live with their families of origin. And if the circumstances of their families have not changed, it is unlikely that they will be prepared or able to provide the support which they need in order to make the transition to adulthood successfully. Therefore, legislation in the U.S.A. started to make provision to increase financial support to state and local child welfare, to support programmes which will help adolescents leaving the foster care system (Kadungure, 2014:15). Following the findings documented in the study that was reviewed, “Independent living” programmes have been established in America to help young adults to overcome the difficulties which they faced when they leave foster care. Hence, through these programmes, young people leaving foster care received several types of assistance, including assistance to complete education and to find employment, instruction in the basic skills needed to live on their own, such as money management, hygiene, house-keeping and nutrition and supervised living arrangements, such as renting an apartment of their own or with others, while continuing to receive assistance from a child welfare worker (Kadungure, 2014:15).

Given the unfolding global trends of both developed and developing countries, and given the challenges of youth in general, South African social workers should also further investigate and observe what are contemporary policy trends and explore and review current legislation or policies to assist foster children transitioning out of foster care, especially due to their age.

In this regard Stein & Dumaret (2011) cited in Kadungure (2014:15) reported that countries such as England had a legal framework for children in foster care that are provided by the Children and Young Persons Act of 2008. This policy framework seeks to support and prepare each foster child for the time when they will be more independent and no longer in foster care. Earlier work by Stein (2008), cited in Kadungure (2014:16) reported on the fact that England and Wales developed and introduced special legislation such as “The Children Leaving Care Act 2000” by October 2001 with three aims in mind to:

1. *To delay and make sure that young persons are at least prepared and ready to leave foster care before transition.*
2. *To strengthen the assessment, preparation and planning for leaving foster care and to provide better support for young people transitioning and for after-care.*

*3. To improve the financial security for care leaving transitioning foster youth setting an age limit of 21-24 years; if they are enrolled in approved programmes of training and education.*

Kadungure (2014:16) further noted with special interest for the purpose of his study on adolescents leaving care that these new legal provisions in further British legislation by 2008 (eight years later) already included provisions for consultations with the children in foster care before moving them out of care (see ‘The Children and Young Persons Act of 2008’, cited in Kadungure, 2014:16). Hence, to prevent foster children from leaving foster care before they are ready, it was observed that they have rights to a personal advisor and given their own welfare system and context, the local authorities (municipalities) in Britain are obligated to provide a bursary for higher education. Their legal frameworks and local governmental context that provide for the welfare of children in England were thus well thought through where the care system places a great deal of emphasis on the need to support children transitioning from foster care.

Kadungure (2014:17) also reported on similar trends in France where there were more than 280 000 young people who benefitted from child welfare services in 2008. Dress (2008, cited in Kadungure, 2014:17) stated that the benefits included educational assistance and support for their families or placing them in foster care (Dress, 2008) cited in Kadungure (2014:17). Each individual case is assessed and reviewed every six months until the age of 21 years and these children are provided with a personal allowance to help them with their education or job training. They are allowed to continue staying with their foster families, but most of them have their own accommodation according to Stein and Dumaret (2011, see Kadungure, 2014:17).

The World Vision (2009, cited in Kadungure, 2014:18) stated that in Asia, foster care is developing slowly, due to increasing interest in coping with the large numbers of children in need of alternative care, and growing concerns regarding costly residential care. Following these global arguments, there is a lot of research still to be done in the Latin America and the Caribbean regions regarding foster care services, as not much literature were available concerning adolescents leaving foster care. Hence, there are still many children living without parental care, due to the reliance on residential care. Moreover, there were good responses in developing foster care programmes in countries such as Chile, Brazil, Paraguay, Argentina, Guatemala, Peru and Costa Rica. However, Brazil continues to make valuable efforts to

improve policy regarding alternative care and implemented a national plan for family and community-based care. The Brazilian government however focussed more on deinstitutionalization and had a commitment to increase preventative work and alternative care options (see The World Vision, 2009, cited in Kadungure, 2014:18).

It is apparent that not much research literature exists on the history of foster care service in Sub-Saharan Africa as the recent reviews were not able provide much evidence on these. Kandiwa (2010), and Kuyini et al., (2009) wrote on foster care in sub-Saharan Africa (see Kadungure, 2014:19), arguing that foster care was traditionally the responsibility of relatives and family members (kinship care) and not the state. However, the AIDS pandemic and poverty have placed enormous strain on foster care services, resulting in increasing numbers of children being orphaned and needing care. Governments in sub-Saharan Africa, including SA, had to find new ways to take care of these children and developed new and additional legislation to deal with the problem of children who are in need of such care and additional programmes such as the Child Support Grant (CSG) in SA with wider reach to support children had to be developed. However, children leaving foster care also need attention.

The other countries in sub-Saharan Africa such as South Africa, Namibia and Botswana formulated and amended legislation to provide foster care services, however, the human resource factor such as the lack of trained professional social workers that are required to render quality foster care services were not adequate, therefore improved care arrangements were growing at a slow pace (DSD, 2004).

In the rest of Africa Kadungure (2014:19) reported on The Save the Children organization who started an initiative implemented in Sudan to develop a type of foster care programme in a refugee camp based on traditional child rearing practice for those children that could not be reunified with their parents or extended families. They were encouraged to identify families in the camps with whom they would like to live. A small hut for the child was built next to the family home if the family agreed to the foster care programme which was common for the older children. Following this it was then expected from the family to supervise, monitor and guide the child, providing structure and discipline when it was needed; with the child often sharing meals and attending cultural gatherings with the family.

## **2.4 The history and nature of foster care within the South African context**

Foster care services in this study cannot be discussed without observing the historical context as South Africa transformed from an Apartheid system to a more democratic system. The most obvious feature was the shift from a race-based Apartheid system prior 1994 to a democratic system post-1994. As reflected in the White Paper for Social Welfare (1997), the historical South African policy context differs however from the rest of the world, because of the impact of a race-based Apartheid system on social needs, the dominance of the migrant labour system and the nature of the family care services system and how services were rendered to families in the past.

According to Ngwabi (2014:15), foster care in South Africa could be traced back to colonial times in 1856 when the first alternative act, Master and Servant Act was implemented. Over the years, legislation changed and was amended in terms of the protection of children. The Masters and Servant Act was repealed by the Children's Protection Act in 1913 and replaced by the Children's Act of 1960 then the Child Care Act 74 of 1983 and now the recent Children's Act 38 of 2005 which is reviewed on an ongoing basis. According to Lombard and Kleijn (2006:229), the South African social welfare system used the residual and institutional approaches which were anchored on Apartheid, Colonialism and Discrimination, but post 1994, the new democratic government implemented the rights-based developmental social welfare approach ( Patel, 2015:pg). This new approach involved a shift to integrated social service delivery that included foster care services; shifting from a residual and institutional treatment approach based on legislation, such as the Children's Act 74 of 1983, to a *developmental approach* based on legislation, such as the Children's Act 38 of 2005.

Although foster care existed on a racial basis during the apartheid times, and new non-discriminatory legislation was developed in democratic South Africa, the growing HIV/Aids pandemic added a different dimension urging the state and society to explore additional means. Alternative forms of care which included foster care became a more popular policy option. This new dimension significantly influenced the direction of social work services and despite the emphasis on the developmental approach that focuses on early detection and prevention, statutory interventions in family life that affected the lives of many children thrived. Kadungure's (2014:25) study pointed to the fact that communities in South Africa carry the heavy burden of a great many children requiring foster care, resulting from both the HIV and Aids pandemic. As a result, the burden of orphans and vulnerable children has been increasing and rely on foster care to create balance or restore stability in the lives of orphaned children (Bezuidenhout, 2008:231). There were far too many children who were abused and



neglected due to the inability of their parents to take care of them, a phenomenon itself influenced by the ever-prevalent grinding poverty. The number of children placed in foster care have thus grown from 454 199 in 2008 to 512 055 in 2014, due to the HIV/AIDS pandemic, as well as the newly implemented policies, like the Integrated Service Delivery Model, White Paper on Children and Families, The Child Justice Act, new legislation and the Children's Act (Skelton, 2012:4 & De Jager 2011:58).

Given the prevalence of the HIV/Aids pandemic in post-apartheid South Africa (SA), foster care placements have seen an exponential increase, influencing many families in all spheres of life. Hence, as a result of the growing HIV/AIDS infections, the burden of orphans and vulnerable children are increasing and rely on both *kinship and non-kinship foster care* as part of alternative care arrangements to restore stability in the life of orphaned children which require deeper investigation (Bezuidenhout, 2008:231). In this regard the Department of Social Development (DSD) appeared pro-active, advocating for foster care that would accommodate the increasing numbers of HIV/AIDS orphans. Factors like poverty, unemployment and family breakdowns put a lot of strain on the new democratic government's resources and these factors placed a very high demand on foster care services rendered by trained social workers. In addition, Post-Apartheid South African demographics and statistics reflected that the poorest of the poor are pre-dominantly 'black' and mostly affected by the growing rate of new infections which further resulted in the increasing politicization of the issue of foster care services, as there was greater awareness of the need for foster care among the general population in South Africa. Given the need for greater accessibility to foster care (SA Foster Care System, 2009:82), the latter care option had critical implications for the new developmental approach towards integrated social service delivery after 1994.<sup>1</sup> The new Constitution of SA also made the citizens of the country more aware of the Bill of Human Rights. Furthermore, adjustments to the Children's Act that governs child protection and foster care were made. Hence, the foster care grant policy was also adapted to ensure that foster children receive substitute care and protection in terms of the Children's Act (Act no 38) of 2005 (see also new regulations, section 71(6) of 2010). Apart from the Child Support Grant, a policy factor of concern is that families additionally view the foster care grant as a means to alleviate poverty in their households.

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<sup>1</sup> See Study by Ngwenya (2011) Factors contributing to the foster care backlog



## 2.5 Youth transitioning out of foster care

The Children's Act (Act No. 38) of 2005 (2010: section 180) stated that children in foster care must be discharged from care at the age of 18 years, unless an application for extension of care is submitted and granted. However, an application to extend the placement in foster care to enable a child to complete his education or training is permissible according to the Children's Act (Act No. 38) of 2005 (see section 176 of 2010). Furthermore, a child who reaches the age of 18 during foster care and has completed his high school education is required to exit foster care and no extension of foster care placement will be granted. These foster children are found without a safety net when they leave the security and protection of the environment which foster care has provided them. According to Morris (2014:14) foster youth may be at a loss if they have left the foster care system before they have employment experience, because being employed helps the youth to gain experience with personal contacts, teamwork and social skills that are all necessary for adapting to a healthy adulthood. Therefore, it is the role of the social worker to reunite foster children with their parents and to link them to resources to teach them skills towards emancipation. Morris (2014:8) stated that social workers should promote skill building to assist youth toward adulthood and to become self-sufficient once they leave foster care.

While the author's argument of skills development of youth transitioning out of foster care is very relevant to consider, an additional area that could be linked with previous assumptions of life course theory, is the issue of *cultural sensitivity* to kinship care issues, especially in the SA context. For example kinship foster care arrangements by grandparents and by local family traditions, raise the need for awareness of 'intergenerational' issues that may affect this 'transitioning' process. In this regard and as part of the preparation process it may be of critical importance to equip foster parents with awareness and coping skills, in order to manage the possible relational challenges between foster parents and the foster child. Effective support and training programmes (where non-existent) for foster parents could additionally help with the process of leading youth to independence.

According to Kadungure (2014:32) those adolescents who grew up in foster care and who were financially dependent on the government, could experience transitioning into adulthood as very painful when they reach the age of 18, because they may be left on their own, having to adjust to sudden independence and loss of support. Furthermore, foster children who are aging out of care on their own may lack long-term relationships with parents or mentors who

may be able to provide guidance to assume adult responsibilities. Gonzalez (2015:39) indicated that children who were placed in kinship care may endure decreases in placement disruptions, but this could also lead to a decrease in reunification rates with the child's parents. Regardless if children were placed in non-kinship care or even in kinship care, their lives are disrupted because they are removed from their family of origin. Therefore, Gillen (2005, cited in Gonzalez, 2015:39) indicated that the trauma of being taken from one's home or family can be described as follows: "Loss of a loved person is one of the most intensely painful experiences any human can suffer". Okpych (2012, cited in Morris, 2014:9) stated that fostered youth who experience multiple placement disruptions found it harder to establish daily living skills like financial management, resolving conflict and organising abilities that are usually sustained through relationships with supportive adults. Thomas (2005:118) summarises the role and responsibilities of a social worker rendering foster care services as follows: *"The worker to whom the child is assigned serves as the nucleus...the medium for surveillance and for assessment of the on-going life situation...and is responsible for working with each of the individuals involved...also responsible for arranging supplementary services, and integrating them"*. Therefore, a good working relationship between social worker, foster child, foster parents and biological parents is of essential importance to ensure successful fostering.

According to Morris (2014:9) permanent placement is about foster youth that are connected to a family for support that is supposed to consist of physical, emotional and social assistance. Therefore, social workers should play a pivotal role ensuring that foster children do receive this sense of belonging with their foster parents. Kadungure (2014:33) stated that the social worker should become an integral part of the child's life while in foster care and should give more support to the foster child in process of leaving foster care as it is a crisis period in a child's life. Therefore, the social worker's report regarding the child in need of care and protection should include recommendations to assist the child's family of origin. Kadungure (2014:33) further argue that an assessment of the therapeutic, educational, cultural, linguistic, developmental, socio-economic and spiritual needs of the child is of utmost importance to ensure fluent emancipation of the foster child. Hence, it is very important that the social worker ensures that there is regular contact between the child and his/her family throughout the foster care period. Furthermore, Kadungure (2014:33) stated that it will assist the foster child and the parents to challenge the reasons for the child unable to live at home and it will even help the child to form a realistic perception of his or her

family. However, according to Kadungure (2014:34) it appears that social workers are not very encouraging to ensure regular contact between the foster child and his or her family, and the longer they stay in foster care, the less likely it would happen that they will return home which makes it difficult when aging out of foster care.

A good relationship between social worker and foster children are also of importance to make the transition out of foster care easier. Therefore, according to Morris (2014:15) the social worker can model to the foster youth what a healthy relationship between foster youth and social worker should be. Furthermore, Morris (2014:15) argued that the importance of mentoring programmes for foster youth should not be ignored, because part of transitioning out of foster care is to have positive and reliable relationships with others. Kaplin, Skolnik and Turnball (2009, cited in Morris, 2014:15) stated that mentoring helps to empower foster youth and youth mentoring programmes aimed at providing positive long-term relationships that will help guide the foster youth to a positive path when they leave foster care. Therefore, the transition process could be fluent through support and guidance from the social worker.

The need for foster youth to have friends and healthy peer networks for support cannot be underestimated. Hence, Morris (2014:15) indicated that a youth's friendship with peers will shape the emotional and cognitive developments of how a youth interacts with others. According to Stott and Gustavsson (2010:619) as cited in Morris (2014:16), foster youth disconnect from relationships if they experience loss and disruption of norms, social networks, education, friendships and significant relationships that characterise their placement experience. Moreover, Stott and Gustavsson (2010) as cited in Morris (2014:16), postulate that placement disruption has been the greatest hindrance to foster youth's success. Therefore, youth need stability and permanency while they are in the foster care system, otherwise it could affect their ability to relate to others.

Given the history of Apartheid and the displacement of people, to reunite families in South Africa is a complex task, because biological families are constantly involved in processes of disintegration or change, due to too many factors (Perumal & Kasiram, 2008:161), for example, factors like migrant labour, divorce, teenage pregnancies, infertility, children being abandoned, HIV and AIDS, death, land and housing evictions. The result is too many adolescents leave foster care without the prospect of reunification not knowing where their biological family members are. This may suggest a special need for new legislation to improve foster care support services as there are no policies and legislation in place in SA to

assist youth to transition out of the foster care system (Kadungure, 2014:37). The consequences are that together with other youth, these adolescents continue to experience great difficulties in terms of transitioning into adulthood, personal insecurity and in self-managing to survive in a hostile world which suddenly offers them no support or comfort. In developed countries like USA, England, Australia and France there are sufficient support services provided to foster children leaving foster care due to age. Support mechanisms of these countries go beyond the age of 18 years. South Africa can only learn from these countries as there is not enough support in place for children leaving foster care who are supposed to start living independently.

According to Gonzalez (2015:48) the transition from adolescence to adulthood is an on-going process and is not a fixed moment in time. The emerging adulthood period is the age between 18 and 25 where these foster children should be exposed to independent decision making. Therefore, as indicated by Gonzalez (2015:14) the foster child aging out of foster care goes from state support to little or no support. This leaves the foster youth aging out of foster care with no other choice, but to make his or her own independent decisions. Foster youth could have successful outcomes when aging out of foster care if a good foundation had been laid down in the form of support on different levels like education, employment opportunities, and independent living skills, and if youth had engaged in healthy interpersonal relationships with supportive foster parents and adults.

## **2.6 Legislation and Policy Documents regarding Foster Care and Children's Rights**

Having discussed the transitioning of youth out of foster care, it is important to give a brief overview of selected legislation that deals with the rights of the child in foster care in SA. Martin and Mbambo (2011:26) argue that The National Child Protection System in SA is mostly built on three foundational laws; the Children's Act, the Criminal Law (Sexual Offences and Related Matters), Amendment Act (hereinafter referred to as the Sexual Offences Act) and the Child Justice Act, No. 75 of 2008. However, The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), the Constitution of the Republic South Africa, African Customary Law and the African Charter and the White Paper on Social Welfare, 1997 (that led to the White Paper on Families) are also integrally linked to child protection issues in SA and form an essential backdrop to this discussion.

### **2.6.1 The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)**

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child that came into being on 20 November 1989 formally excluded South Africa due to the Apartheid system and international sanctions against the country at the time. State parties from different countries expressed their faith in human rights and in the dignity and worth of the human person. According to the United Nations (2006:6), instruments of the international and continental rights impose obligations on State Parties to create a protective environment for children where they may be free from “all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse which is intentionally inflicted, either threatened or actual, which results in, or is highly likely to result in actual or potential harm to children’s health, survival, development or dignity”. According to Roose and Bouverne-De Bie (2007:431), the United Nations Convention on the rights of the child refers to the ‘3Ps’ which contains the protection of children against maltreatment and neglect and the right to be protected from all forms of exploitation; the right to food, health, education and to benefit from social security and lastly, the right to participation like the right to act in certain circumstances and the right to be involved in decision making. The Children’s Act (Act No. 38) of 2005 (2010: Section 10) makes provision for the rights of the child in need of care and protection to be able to participate in the deciding process in any matter concerning that child. According to Roose and Bouverne- De Bie (2007:433) although the child’s right to participate is deemed as very important, the protection of the child comes first. Furthermore, Milne (2005:31) refers to the importance of participation of children according to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child in so far that it speaks to the rights of children to form views, enjoy freedom of expression, freedom of thought, conscience and religion and of association and assembly. However, the Children’s Act 38 (Act No. 38) of 2005 (2010: Section 10 and 54) concurs with the view of Milne (2005:32), postulating that State Parties assured that the child is capable of forming his or her own views considering the age and maturity of the child, whereby the child will be provided with the opportunity to be heard in any judicial and administrative proceedings affecting the child. Furthermore, The Children’s Act 38 (Act No. 38) of 2005 (2010: Section 61) stated that the presiding officer in a children’s court must allow the child to participate in the proceedings depending on the child’s age, maturity and stage of development. However, the best interest of the child shall be the primary consideration. All countries that were signatories to the convention committed themselves to implement measures to ensure that the child will be protected and that the best interest of the child will be paramount. The United Nations has proclaimed that the child has the right to special care and assistance, therefore the family is

seen as the fundamental group of society and the natural environment for the growth and well-being of all its members and particularly children. However, children and its family members should be afforded protection and assistance so that it can fully assume its responsibilities within the community. The United Nations recognize that the child, for the full and harmonious development of his or her personality, should grow up in a stable and happy family environment. Promoting the UNCRC formed a critical part of the anti-apartheid struggle in which social workers participated and was later endorsed by the South African Children's Act 38 of 2005.

The latter legislation re-affirmed that the best interest of the child that is of paramount importance will be promoted and like the UNCRC, it upholds that the child will not be separated from his/her parents against their will, except when legislative procedures are needed to protect the child. In terms of the Children's Act 38 of 2005, the child protection system is implemented to protect children in need of care and subscribes to the kind of protection protocols to which the UNCRC appropriately refers.

### **2.6.2 African Customary Law, Child Protection Rights and the African Childrens Charter (ACC)**

South Africa became a signatory to a number of international and regional legal instruments, including the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACRWC) (1990), which involves the interplay between custom and children's rights, as well as the protection of cultural rights (Martin & Mbambo, 2011:21). According to Conradie, Swart, Morodi and Mtshali (2008:92), the South African Charter for the Rights of Children is linked to the African Charter. The African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child is based on the principles of human rights as it overlaps with the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, with specific reference to Article 28; the rights of the child (Conradie et al., 2008:107). Furthermore, the African Children's Charter (ACC) expresses concern about the situation that most African children face, because it takes note of critical factors such as their socioeconomic, cultural, traditional, and developmental circumstances, natural disasters, armed conflicts, exploitation and hunger (Conradie et al., 2008:92). In the light of this it promotes the idea that African children need special safeguards and care, because the ACC wants children to grow up in a family environment in an atmosphere of happiness, love and understanding.



The Children's Act 38 (Act No. 38) of 2005 (2010: Section 12(1)) clearly indicates that 'every child has the right not to be subjected to social, cultural and religious practices which are detrimental to his or her well-being'. Furthermore, the various legal instruments referred to, such as the UNCRC and the ACRWC adopted a similar definition of the child and guarantee that all children under the age of 18 years of age will be protected from all forms of abuse and exploitation (Martin & Mbambo, 2011:23). According to the Children's Act 38 (Act No. 38) of 2005 (2010: Section 7(1) (f) (ii)), the best interests of child standards should be applied, but the following factors should be taken into account: 'the need for the child to maintain connection with his or her family, extended family, culture or tradition'. Martin and Mbambo (2011:7) argued that customary, cultural and religious practices impact on the strength of child protection systems; that some of these practices strengthen and some of them tend to weaken National Child Protection Systems in the countries in question. Ehlers and Frank (2008:113) indicated that the UNCRC and the ACRWC work together to confer on all African children the right to participation and together these conventions impose an obligation to respect and promote the right of children to express their own views by taking into account their capability, age and maturity. All of these are to ensure the right of children to seek, receive and impart information and ideas on their *right to freedom of expression*.

### 2.6.3 The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa

The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa came into effect in 1996. The mentioned Constitution is the overarching institutional framework that guides the implementation of South Africa's policies and legislation. Furthermore, the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996 is described as the supreme law of South Africa and all other legislation are subjected to the Constitution of South Africa. Chapter two of the Constitution of South Africa, 1996 describes the *Bills of Rights* which is seen as the cornerstone of democracy in South Africa and enshrines the rights of all people in our country (Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996:5). Specifically, Section 28 of the Constitution lists the rights of children. The rights of children according to the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa that directly apply to those in *foster care* are Section 28 clauses (1), (2) and (3): *The right to family care or parental care, or to appropriate alternative care when removed from the family environment; the right to basic nutrition, shelter, basic healthcare services and social services; the right to be protected from maltreatment, neglect, abuse or degradation; the right to a legal practitioner assigned by and at the state's expense and the child's best interests are of paramount importance in every matter concerning the child.* Cultural rights



are also protected by the South African Constitution and it requires that customary law should apply when implementing it. Section 31 (1) of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996 refer to cultural, religious and linguistic communities who could not be denied their rights too. According to Martin and Mlambo (2011:26), the South African Constitution requires that the best interests of the child prevail if there is a conflict between customary law and children's rights. Furthermore, if any harm is being done to children's rights, section 30 and 31 of the South African Constitution will be imposed to abolish and change customary law. The rights of the child as indicated in the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996 have been applauded worldwide.

According to Conradie et al. (2008:162), the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996 also makes provision for legal presentation and assistance for parents or guardians for juvenile offenders like in other legislative documents. The Constitution, 1996 indicated that children are entitled to legal aid; specifically, Section 28 (1) (h) that makes provision for the right to a legal practitioner assigned by the State at the expenses of the State.

#### **2.6.4 The White Paper for Social Welfare (WPSW)**

The White Paper for Social Welfare (1997) was the first social welfare policy under the post-apartheid government which committed the country to secure basic welfare and human rights of children, youth and the aged. The implementation of the White Paper for Social Welfare (1997) resulted in a shift from a residual approach to a developmental approach as mentioned earlier in this research study and influenced the review and development of new and additional policies such as the White Paper on Families (2013). According to Ngwabi (2014:14) the residual approach is where the government provides limited intervention and expects private intervention and the individuals to take responsibility for their own needs. Whereas the developmental approach is inclusive of participation of citizens, including the poor in socio-economic development, the government, private sector, civil society and partnerships between individuals, groups and communities as intervention in social service delivery (Ngwabi, 2014:15). Perumal and Kasiram (2008:163) further argued that children are the 'experts in their own lives' and often bring valuable ideas, information and viewpoints to light that adults may have overlooked. Therefore, it is critical to listen to the voices of children, especially foster children, because the decisions taken directly affect their lives. Furthermore, the White Paper on Families refers to the shift to a developmental social

services approach, which includes the most current legislation applicable to fostering, the Children's Act 38 of 2005.

In this study it has already been stated that foster care services are primarily based on the implementation of the Children's Act 38 of 2005. An earlier version of the White Paper on Families (1997) as cited in Durand (2007:16) indicated that stress is placed on family life in South Africa due to violence, divorce, remarriage and establishing a new family and a lack of support and family disintegration. The latter features as mentioned, may lead directly to the removal of children who may then be placed in substitute care (foster care or in a child and youth care centre). The White Paper on Families (1997) thus promoted service outreach to families. Therefore, vulnerable young children need to be protected by family care services and one option that appears prominent seems to be foster care placements (Durand, 2007:17).

The main objectives of the final version of the White Paper on Families (WPF) (2013:17) based on the WPSW (1997), is to enhance the socialising, caring, nurturing, and supporting capabilities of families so that their members are able to contribute effectively to the overall development of the country; to empower families and their members by enabling them to identify, negotiate around, and maximize economic, labour market, and other opportunities available in the country and lastly, to improve the capabilities of families and their members to establish social interactions which make a meaningful contribution towards a sense of community, social cohesion and national solidarity. Perumal and Kasiram (2008:161) indicated that the White Paper for Social Welfare (1997) refer to a welfare system that should facilitate the development of human capacity and self-reliance within a caring and enabling socio-economic environment. However, without a supportive infrastructure it may be difficult to conceive how an enabling environment can be nurtured or how core human values can be instilled (Perumal & Kasiram, 2008:161). Foster children will not be able to reach their full human potential if they do not get the support from social workers and especially from their foster parents. Hence, the WPF (2013) take cognisance of vulnerable groups, such as children in need of care and protection and included also those in foster care (White Paper on Families, 2013:10). Furthermore, the White Paper on Families is perceived as wanting to prevent that vulnerable children fall through the safety net for families.

In promoting the overall social development policy approach of the WPSW (1997), the White Paper on Families (2013:69) generally promotes the much explained Integrated Service Delivery Model (ISDM) by placing a strong emphasis on prevention, early intervention,

statutory intervention and reunification services. In terms of delivering ‘prevention’ services families are assumed to be preserved through offering development and strengthening of programmes and structures to address and minimize strenuous family conditions, such as family disintegration. Hence, by encouraging family-centred kin fostering, the WPF promotes psychosocial support and other essential services by professionally trained staff (social workers, social auxiliary workers, psychologists etc.) to increase family capacity as well as community-based efforts to strengthen family support, including expanding foster care mechanisms and support to ensure rapid family placement of all children, putting preventative initiatives in place where there are risks (White Paper on Families, 2013:69). Moreover, based on early intervention the main focus suggests emphasis on family health issues and to reduce substance abuse, to ensure access to therapeutic services to families, and encourage family forums in society to address problems and suggestions, to provide psychosocial support to all victims of abuse (White Paper on Families, 2013:70). The WPF also has a statutory intervention function as it stresses the provision of support services to families affected by the removal of a family member. Lastly, and of relevance to foster care services, it emphasised the importance of *reintegration and reunification services* to family members who have been separated for extended periods of time from their families for various reasons and to sensitize community members to the special requirements of vulnerable families (WPF, 2013:71). Earlier, Durand (2007:26) concurred with this sentiment stating that one of the goals of foster care is to preserve families with the ultimate aim to reunify children with their biological families and to prepare the young person for independent living once they leave foster care. Hence, it is this special emphasis on the need for ‘*reintegration and reunification services*’ to families that is of significance to this further investigation and evidence-based study. The importance of acceptance, nurturance, care and provision of support services to the foster child and foster parents by the social workers may thus assist the child transitioning out of foster care to become a self-reliant, independent, valuable citizen in their country of origin. However, according to Durand (2007:2) difficulties arise in foster care placements and agencies rendering services if the resources and capacity to deal with the situation is not in place. It is most likely that foster parents would not be adequately trained to understand, and help or support the foster child in this phase.

### **2.6.5 The Children’s Act and the child in need of care and protection**

The researcher will in the following section explain in detail how the Children’s Act 38 of 2005 makes provision for the child in need of care and protection. According to Barbarin and

Richter, 2001 as cited in Armroodt (2011:22), although the family has the responsibility of caring, it also functions in an environment of social forces which shape family organisation, values and functioning. The Children's Act 38 of 2005 is implemented to protect children against the social forces which hamper family life. This Act (2010: Section 7(1)) requires that the best interest of the child principle is paramount when placement in foster care is recommended. This could have tremendous challenges and issues for a child if found that he or she was unnecessarily placed in foster care. Two issues are important to consider: did the child get the opportunity to express his views and ( depending on the age) was he or she part of the decision when placed in foster care as referred to in section 10 of the Children's Act 38 of 2005. Hence, were social, cultural and religious practices considered as described in section 12 of the Children's Act 38 of 2005 for the child in foster care?

The perspectives of adults on their own childhood and youth experiences during their foster care experiences in terms of above-mentioned clauses in the Children's Act 38 of 2005 were thus important for exploration in the study. Family reunification services and foster care supervision are also of utmost importance to prevent that the child is not placed indefinitely or in 'long-term' foster care. The question that emerged and resonated through readings and exploration was: Does the child in foster care receive the necessary family –reunification - and foster care supervision services? Section 186 and section 187 of the Children's Act 38 of 2005 for example refers to family-reunification and foster care supervision which are still considered very important for foster care supervision and social service delivery requirements, and which the WPF (2013) endorsed. These considerations were critical for exploring the childhood experiences of adults that have already left the system.

Foster care could thus be seen as alternative care from the perspective of the family of origin who is not able to care and protect their own children. Haupt (2012:3) with reference to the Canadian model indicates that the aim of foster care is to nurture the child and to provide opportunities and support to the foster child (ren) to grow and develop. The assumed outcome should however be to reunite the foster child with his family of origin. Conversely, the Guidelines for the Alternative Care of Children (UN 2009) define foster care as: "Situations where children are placed by a competent authority for the purpose of alternative care in the domestic environment of a family, other than the children's own family, that has been selected, qualified, approved and supervised for providing such care" (UN 2009).

Foster care in South Africa, is subsequently described in terms of section 180 clause 1 of the Children's Act No. 38 of 2005 (2010), as referring to "the placement of a child in need of care and protection in the care of a person who is not his or her parent or guardian". However, there is a common element in all the definitions of foster care, which, in one form or another, conveys the idea of caring for children in a *family environment* and that the *rights of parents and certain parental responsibilities* are not transferred to the providers of foster care (Kadungure, 2007:5816:21). According to Szabo and Ritchken (2002:60) fostering in the South African policy context implies the statutory placement of a child or children within a family setting. Such statutory actions cannot take place, without the intervention of a trained professional social worker who is registered in terms of the provisions of the South African Council for Social Service Professions (SACSSP). The aim of fostering is thus to provide the best appropriate alternative care for children whose biological parents for some reason are unable to take care of and or provide for them (Kuyini et al., 2009:440). Foster care placements in South Africa can be extended for a period of not more than two years at a time, from the date a court order was issued till the age of 18 years in terms of the Children's Act (Act No. 38) of 2005 (2010: Section 159(1) (b) and (3)), but not beyond this age. According to the Children's Act, No. 38 of 2005, Section 150(1) there are at least nine (9) conditions that determine whether a child is in need of care and protection and whether that requires the intervention of the social welfare authority, be that state or registered NPO. This refers to whether the child:

1. "Has been abandoned or orphaned and is without any visible means of support
2. Displays behaviour which cannot be controlled by the parent or caregiver
3. Lives or works on the streets or begs for a living
4. Is addicted to a dependence-producing substance and is without any support to obtain treatment for such dependency
5. Has been exploited or lives in circumstances that expose the child to exploitation
6. Lives in or is exposed to circumstances which may seriously harm that child's physical, mental or social well-being

7. May be at risk if returned to the custody of the parent, guardian or caregiver of the child as there is reason to believe that he or she will live in or be exposed to circumstances which may seriously harm the physical, mental or social well-being of the child
8. Is in a state of physical or mental neglect
9. Is being maltreated, abused, deliberately neglected or degraded by a parent, a caregiver, a person who has parental responsibilities and rights or a family member of the child or by a person under whose control the child is”.

### **2.6.6 Procedures for foster care placements**

A child can only be placed in foster care because of any one of the above nine reasons listed in Section 150 (1) of the Children’s Act. The procedures for being placed in foster care are further described in Section 180(1) of the Children’s Amendment Act, No. 41 of 2007; a child can be placed in foster care in one of two ways – as a result of a children’s court order, or as a result of a transfer by the provincial head of social development, from a more restrictive form of alternative care to foster care. Section 184 of the Children’s Amendment Act, No. 41 of 2007, determines that the court will base its decision to place a child in foster care in terms of section 156 on a report of the authorities written by a social worker. This report must consist of a holistic assessment of the child’s circumstances, as well as whether there is an available, suitable and willing person to act as a foster parent to the child. A “suitable” person is someone with a similar background to that of the child. These rights and expectations will be discussed in terms of two aspects, requirements and rights and responsibilities:

#### **a) Requirements**

Section 182(2) of the Children’s Amendment Act No. 41 of 2007 stipulates that for someone to become a foster parent, that person must be properly assessed by a social worker to determine whether the prospective foster parent is a fit and proper person who can be entrusted with the responsibility to provide foster care, whether this person is willing and able to successfully undertake, exercise and maintain the responsibilities that come with foster parenting, and lastly, whether this person has the capacity to provide an environment that is conducive to the child’s growth and development.

#### **b) Rights and responsibilities**



When the Children's Court issues a placement order, the rights and responsibilities of the foster parent must be stipulated in the court order. These rights and responsibilities are prescribed in detail in the draft regulations (Department of Social Development, 2008) in terms of the Children's Act. Section 70(1) of the draft regulations (Department of Social Development, 2008) asserts that a foster parent is primarily responsible for the day-to-day care of the foster child. A comprehensive definition for "care" is given in Section 1(1) of the Children's Act, No. 38 of 2005 to act as a guide for any caregiver. "Care" includes:

- "within available means, providing the child with
- a suitable place to live
- living conditions that are conducive to the child's health, well-being and development
- the necessary financial support
- safeguarding and promoting the well-being of the child
- protecting the child from maltreatment, abuse, neglect, degradation, discrimination, exploitation and any other physical, emotional or moral harm or hazards
- respecting, protecting, promoting and securing the fulfilment of, and guarding against any infringement of, the child's rights set out in the Bill of Rights and the principles set out in Chapter 2 of the Child Care Act
- guiding, directing and securing the child's education and upbringing, including religious and cultural education and upbringing, in a manner appropriate to the child's age, maturity and stage of development
- guide, advise and assisting the child in decisions to be taken by the child in a manner appropriate to the child's age, maturity and stage of development
- guiding the behaviour of the child in a humane manner
- maintaining a sound relationship with the child
- accommodating any special needs that the child may have
- generally, ensuring that the best interests of the child is the paramount concern in all matters affecting the child".

Section 181 of the Children's Act 38 of 2005 outlines three purposes of foster care relevant for exploration in this study: namely to '*protect and nurture children by providing a safe, healthy environment with positive support*'; '*promote the goals of permanency planning, first towards family reunification, or by connecting children to other safe and nurturing family relationships intended to last a lifetime*' and '*respect the individual and family by demonstrating a respect for cultural, ethnic and community diversity*'.

This provision contrasts with foster care in other African countries. For example in Ghana there is another humanitarian phenomenon relating to traditional foster care outside of the statutory system, (meaning children do not go through the statutory system), involving the



placement of children with family or kin without the involvement of any social service or welfare organisation (Kuyini et al., 2009:440). In simple terms, this can be called private foster care placements where legislation is not involved.

In South Africa the *Isibindi* model is closely related to the practice in Ghana where children are being cared for by community-based voluntary workers outside the judicial system. Allsopp (2011:82) refers to the *Isibindi* model as a form of “social franchise” that renders services to children, youth, families and communities without any statutory intervention, within their own communities. These community-based voluntary workers have various roles in that they support families to care for their children on a daily basis, doing developmental assessments and identifying potential problems or children at risk, and referring such children for professional social service intervention when needed (Allsopp, 2011:82). All of the above types of care are also found in South Africa.

Unlike previous studies, the current investigation however focused on adults who were placed in foster care as children in terms of either the Child Care Act of 1983 (Act No. 74) during the apartheid years, or the amended Act of 1991 (Act No. 86) or the Act of 2005 (Act No. 38). Both kinship foster care and non-kinship foster care will therefore be included in this study.

The new child care legislation that emerged in a democratic SA in the form of the Children’s Act (Act No. 38 of 2005) was clearly with the intention to reform the Apartheid laws on both parental care and alternative care (Matthias & Zaal, 2009:291). All new legislation and policy-making after 1994 had to comply with the SA Constitution and the Bill of Rights and is more inclusive. Unlike before, all child and family services to all ethnical groups had to be focused and reprioritised to meet the requirements of the developmental approach towards child and family care services based on these constitutional principles (Matthias & Zaal, 2009:292). The shift to the developmental approach did however not lessen the need for foster care services in SA. Foster care placements in SA are still growing at a tremendous rate and there is still a constant need for more foster parents. De Jager (2011:58) argued that the greater awareness of foster care among the general population and the fact that all orphans and abandoned children now qualify for financial assistance affected the rising demand for foster care. In current literature, practices in support of children in foster care now focus more on open communication between foster parent and child, consistent messages of love and support towards the child, and where possible a positive and supportive relationship between

the foster parents and the child's biological parents (Andersson, 2009 :14; Luke & Coyne, 2008:408; Mitchell, Kuczynski, Tubbs, Carolyn & Ross, 2010:178). Naccarato and DeLorenzo (2008:304) argue that the transition of foster youth into adulthood requires a comprehensive development plan and follow-up services which should give attention to a broader scope of services: social support, interpersonal skills, money management, job seeking and maintenance skills.

In SA statutory foster care support services also known as foster care supervision, became strenuous because of staff shortages, high rates of staff turnover, inexperienced staff and high caseloads, as well as limited resources (Child Welfare Information Gateway, 2011:6; De Jager, 2011:55). The shortage of social workers also resulted in them being overburdened with demanding caseloads. The size of caseloads for South African social workers is considered very high and usually exceed one hundred-and-twenty cases (120), while in the UK there were caseloads of about twelve (12) per social worker (Naidoo & Kasiram, 2006:117-119). The higher the caseload per social worker the lesser could be the attention and support to the child in foster care.

Practising social workers employed by Child Protection Organisations in SA are facing added challenges which in turn affect the ability of organisations to deliver foster care support services to children in care (Louw, 2013). The Department of Social Development partly outsourced statutory foster care to registered and licenced Child Protection Organisations and others who are expected to render services with fewer resources (time, human resources, and finances) than government officials or workers. This may have further effects on the lived experiences of foster children, because these agencies are overburdened with more and more cases with less funding and may be demotivating for social welfare professionals. A South African study by Earle (2008:6) indicated that sixty three percent (63%) of Child Welfare social workers had caseloads of more than sixty (60), and thirty-six percent (36%) had caseloads of more than one hundred (100).

Within the context of this study registered Child Protection Organisations subsidized by the state and rendering services in Kleinmond, Hermanus, Stanford and Gansbaai, confirmed these recorded challenges. Registered social workers from Kleinmond confirmed that there is one social worker rendering services to seventy-five foster care children and their families, while a social worker in Hermanus/Stanford had a case load of eighty-three foster children and families. Due to these high caseloads and crises management, practitioners are unable to

do regular foster care supervision services. The social workers in Gansbaai indicated that they have seventy-six children in foster care with one social worker in their employment. Apart from foster care supervision services, these mentioned organisations also render other children and family services.

### **2.6.7 Challenges of Children Placed in Foster Care**

A study conducted in the United States of America (USA) indicated that most children in foster care experience feelings of confusion, fear of the unknown, loss, sadness, anxiety and stress (Bruskas, 2008:70). Another American study by Weiner, Leon and Stiehl (2011:758-770) resonates with Bruskas's findings. Weiner et al. (2011:758) found that once children become part of the foster care system, they are continually exposed to stress factors like separation from the family and known persons, disruption in their mental health and educational services, as well as neglect, abuse and instability. Children entering the foster care system, e.g. present with mental illnesses due to the trauma of neglect, abuse and instability in their biological family (Weiner et al., 2011:758). According to Chipungu and Bent-Goodley (2004:85) some foster children are educationally challenged and disadvantaged, because when they are fostered they do not immediately enter school and are not satisfied with the quality of education they receive when in foster care. Foster children are often forced to change schools, and experience difficulty in forming peer networks and support networks, due to placement changes, as well as feeling stigmatised because of their foster care status (Chipungu et al., 2004:85). Unrau, Seita and Putney (2008:1263) indicate that other negative lasting consequences to former foster children are due to neglect or abuse of children by their biological parents, and all the trauma and losses they suffered they recall in their adult life.

Children in foster care also seem to be confronted by stigmatisation. Burgess, Rossvoll, Wallace and Daniel (2010:297) found in their study that young people in kinship care felt safe, cared for and loved by their foster parents, while it was indicated that youth in foster care with stranger foster parents, (non-kinship care) were immediately marked as being different from their friends. Unrau et al. (2008:1256; 1259; 1261) reflected that foster children described their loss of normalcy and the stigma of foster care during multiple moves, not seeing themselves as normal, and stigmatised due to placement moves. In Rwanda, foster parents sometimes hid fostering from their neighbours and children owing to the general stigma about fostering (Delap & Fulford, 2009:12). A study by Luke and Coyne (2008:405)

resonates with the above studies. According to Luke and Coyne (2008:404) foster children varied in number of placements from two to twenty-five placements; the participants were between eighteen and forty-six years old and experienced life as formerly fostered children.

Compared with biological children of carers, fostered children reported that they lacked educational material, money for school and clothing, were often asked to do home chores instead of playing, were hit, insulted and whipped by their caregivers on a regular basis, and the majority wished to live with their biological parents. Kuyini et al., (2009: 444) reported that in Ghana, the majority of the children expressed their satisfaction with living in traditional kinship foster care. They did however mention that there were sometimes physical and emotional abuse ; and that they were intimidated, when they were given to grandparents, uncles, aunts, brothers, sisters or extended family, after the head of the family and elders came together to make this decision with no formal law or welfare organisation involved. Some foster children in kinship foster care felt safe and loved for by their carers, although not getting the best support and living in financial challenging circumstances. Other factors were feelings of not getting the same treatment as the biological children, fear of asking, anger towards parents for placing them in foster care, wishing to leave foster home for a new home, and so forth (Kuyini et al., 2009:441; 444).

A South African study done by Tissiman (2008:45) revealed that a child placed in foster care almost always faces this as a traumatic experience, and their lives are disrupted even before they are placed.

#### **2.6.8 The Child Justice Act 75 of 2008 and Foster Care**

The Child Justice Act 75 of 2008 recognizes that before 1994, South Africa, as a country, had not given many of its children, particularly ‘black’ children, the opportunity to live and act like children, and that some children, as a result of circumstances in which they find themselves, have come into conflict with the law. According to Conradie et. al (2008: 110), the juvenile justice system in South Africa is based on the United Nations Charter on the Rights of the Child, on the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, and on the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996. The Criminal Procedures Act 51 of 1977 was the Act that sets out the procedural system that governs the prosecution of all persons, including juveniles who came into conflict with the law. According to Gallinetti (2009:12) during parliamentary debates in 2008, it was debated that a separate criminal justice and procedural system for children; entrenching the principles of restorative justice in the

criminal justice system; and promoting crime prevention initiatives to be included in the Child Justice Act. The South African Law Commission initiated a Project Committee from 1997 who engaged in consultative workshops, including children with the purpose to ensure that their voices are being heard in the drafting of new laws that affected them, e.g. the Child Justice Act (Gallinetti, 2009:9). With effect from 01 April 2010, a separate new Act for juveniles in conflict with law was implemented, known as the Child Justice Act 75 of 2008. Hess and Drowns (2004:4) postulate that children between the ages 7 and 14 years were presumed not to have intent to commit a crime, but with proven evidence could be found guilty, although children above 14 years were regarded as adults. However, according to the Child Justice Act 75 of 2008, a child older than 10 years and younger than 14 years could be charged, but criminal capacity needed to be proven by a qualified suitable person (Gallinetti, 2008:19). According to Badenhorst (2006:73) criminal capacity is prescribed by section 56 of the Child Justice Bill, 2002 stating that a child over the age of 10 and under the age of 14 years must be proven guilty by the State beyond a reasonable doubt.

The Child Justice Act aims to expand and entrench the principles of restorative justice in the criminal justice system for children who are in conflict with the law, while ensuring their responsibility and accountability for crimes committed. The mentioned act recognizes the present realities of crime in the country and the need to be proactive in crime prevention, by placing increased emphasis on the effective rehabilitation and reintegration of children to minimize the potential for re-offending. Furthermore, the Child Justice Act balances the interests of children and those of society, with due regard to the rights of victims and create incrementally, where appropriate, special mechanism, processes or procedures for children in conflict with the law. The Child Justice Act entrenches referrals in relation to child protection issues like family group conferences, monitoring, home-based supervision, victim-offender mediation, Ubuntu practices and other diversion options which are based on restorative justice and retribution (punishment of those violates the rights of others). The South African Child Justice Act No. 75 of 2008 is primarily based on the restorative and restitution-based child justice model (Martin & Mbambo, 2011:76). Restorative justice is within the context of criminal justice about repairing the harm done to a victim and a community and emphasises that the offender has to contribute to the repair (Hess & Drowns, 2004:45). However, Van Ness and Strong (2006:22) describe restorative justice as a process during which all parties with a stake in a particular offence meet to resolve collectively how to deal with the aftermath of the offence and its implications for the future. According to Martin and Mbambo

(2011:12), traditional restorative and communal approaches to child justice are enacted in the Child Justice Act in South Africa. Customary practices in rural communities lead to poor reporting and prosecution of crimes against children, because authorities should rather resolve crimes through traditional remedies (Martin & Mbambo, 2011:12). Furthermore, according to Martin and Mbambo (2011:76), the South African Child Justice Act is linked to customary child justice principles, like the provision of a continuum of disciplinary practices and constructive remedial alternatives to corporal and penal sanctions.

In broad terms the Child Justice Act takes into account the past and sometimes unduly harsh measures taken against some of these children; the long term benefits of a less rigid criminal justice process that suits the needs of children in conflict with the law in appropriate cases; and South African obligations as party to international and regional instruments relating to children, with particular reference to the African Charter on the rights and welfare of the child; in specific terms by raising the minimum age of criminal capacity for children and ensuring that the individual needs and circumstances of children in conflict with the law are assessed. The Child Justice Act 75 of 2008 makes provision for the assessment of juveniles committing crime by a probation officer who is a trained social worker. It makes provision for the assessment of children, holding of preliminary inquiries, diversion for a child justice court and restorative justice. According to Conradie et al. (2008:125) 'assessment' means the evaluation of a child and his or her circumstances which are standard procedure in the juvenile justice system. Furthermore, a juvenile in conflict with the law could be diverted from the criminal justice court by the presiding officer and the outcome of the preliminary enquiry (procedures chairing by the presiding officer) could be referring to the Children's Court. Although the Children's Court is there to give output to the Children's Act and not being part of the criminal process, a number of the sections overlap with the criminal justice system. However, according to Conradie et al. (2008:158) there are ways in which cases can be diverted from the criminal court to the children's court, e.g. the prosecutor may decide on certain grounds that a matter should be heard in the children's court rather than the criminal court, that the child does not have a parent or guardian or that it is in the best interest of the child to be taken to a place of safety and lastly, that the accused may be a child as referred to in section 14(4) of the Child Care Act, 1983.

## **2.7 The strength-based developmental approach in foster care**



The role of foster families is imperative to provide the foster child with a sense of belonging. The strength-based model informs the work that social services professionals undertake with children in need of care and with the families with whom they are integrated (White Paper on families, 2013). The principles underlying the strength-based approach are as follows according to Saleebey (1999 cited in Amroodt, 2011:19):

- Every individual, group or family has strengths
- Trauma, abuse, illness and struggle may cause injury, but they can also be sources of challenge and opportunity
- Every environment is full of resources
- The social services professional does not take the upper hand in decision making
- The context of caring and care giving supports strengths and solution finding.

In the foster care system in South Africa, it is recognised that the elements of family preservation, family reunification and reintegration are essential to ensure that the child in need of care does not remain in foster care for long periods of time. Children need to maintain connections with family relationships, to flourish and have their developmental needs met. Foster care placement becomes a reclaiming environment for the child and creates change to meet the needs of both the foster child and of society. One of the key features of the reclaiming environment according to Brendtro, 1999 (in Amroodt, 2011:19) is to experience belonging in a supportive community, rather than being lost in a depersonalized bureaucracy such as a residential centre. Therefore, foster care should be a better option than child and youth care placement. When foster caregivers fail to meet the foster child's basic needs, the child learns that she/he is unpredictable or unreliable. Some children will reach beyond their families and foster families in search of substitute attachments with other adults. The child who has experienced serious damage becomes "relationship resistant" and will develop insecure attachments and view even friendly, helpful adults with distrust according to Doyle (1990, cited in Amroodt, 2011:20). The child in this instance learns to employ protective behaviours which he/she has learnt through prior encounters with threatening adults. The helping adult should therefore be able to offer warm, consistent, stable and non-hostile attachments.



A child that is most in need of attachment is often the child whose behaviour is least likely to elicit nurturing behaviour from adults. In this discussion so far the researcher has given the reader an understanding of the lens through which the child, family and community are viewed by child-care professionals.

### **Ubuntu, Relationality and Circle of Courage as a Strength-Based Orientation to Foster Care**

First Nations people of North America, known as Indians have embraced a child developmental system and child-rearing practices based on care, respect and courage, which are referred to as '*the circle of courage*' (Ashworth, 2007:25). The circle of wholeness or circle of courage is based on the indigenous developmental assessment model that the North Americans referred to. It has also been embraced as relevant to South African and African values and traditions, ideas and practices (Haupt, 2012:19). In South Africa we also refer to the circle of courage as part of the strength-based approach in social work. Ashworth (2007:25) indicated that the circle of courage consists of four criteria that promote positive development and it creates a universal environment for all citizens in a community that embrace these, i.e. *a sense of belonging, spirit of mastery, spirit of independence and generosity*. However, within the foster-care environment the foster parent should understand the basics of each of the four values and know how to apply them to their own lives, so that they could reflect on what they would expect to see in a foster child in terms of the four values.

The *spirit of belonging* in children is seen as the responsibility of the entire community which includes parents and significant others and especially in the African culture where there is reference to the concept of Ubuntu which is about humanity, sharing and a collective sense of responsibility (Breetzke, 2001:43). For many vulnerable children, belonging will only be found in relationships with adults who recognise that living with and loving other human beings who return that love, is the most strengthening emotional experience in the world. Child rearing is not just the responsibility of the biological family. Children are also reared in the community by significant others (Brendtro, Brokenleg, Van Bockern, 2004). If children do not develop a positive sense of self-worth and belonging, they can be vulnerable to a range of social problems. The family and community are the most important influences on the child's sense of belonging and even though - as in the case of many children in need of care - they may have suffered a disrupted upbringing and their sense of belonging can be repaired

by forming close relationships with people later in their lives (Brendtro et al., 2004). As stated by Gilgun (2002:65), families, communities and governments must provide opportunities for young people to overcome adversities. Therefore, helping children form strong attachments and re-establishing their sense of belonging can be a powerful tool in rebuilding their lives. The focus of foster-care placements in which many children in need of care are placed, is to provide the child with opportunities to maintain ties with their community and family and to foster a sense of belonging. The child's foster family is there to provide and model positive family interactions and behaviour for the child. By means of continuous relationship-building, the child is able to regain a sense of belonging and form attachments in a healthy family environment (Leliebloom House training manual, 2004). There is a tradition of communal care of children in traditional South African communities saying that 'It takes a whole village to raise a child'. Therefore, Martin and Mbambo (2011:34) stated that traditional leaders in KwaZulu Natal echoed the same message heard in other communities assuming local traditions that parenting was not only for the biological parents of a child, but every adult was responsible for raising, caring and disciplining children in the village.

Kohn (2006, cited in Ashworth, 2007:26-27) argues that in Native America and First Nations, cultural significance is nourished even if children's parents are deceased. Most children are perceived as failing not because they lack cognitive skills, but because they feel isolated, detached or alienated from others. For Beetzke (2001:44) *mastery* is about competence but if they are not able to gain *mastery* over their environments or become competent, they may express their aggravation in negative ways like troubled behaviour. According to Ashworth (2007:29) children are taught to observe and listen to the more experienced and that is how they become competent and learn to solve problems. Following Collapy and Green (1995, cited in Ashworth, 2007:29) *mastery* is defined as 'the achievement of learning goals which include developing skills, expanding knowledge and gaining understanding. Hence, Beetzke (2001:44) argued Sioux child rearing is about listening, doing physical tasks, teaching and learning through stories and repetitive practices; and when they master things, they are perceived as models that became competent, but not in competition with others. Those who master things gain recognition from those around them and get satisfaction within themselves as reward for *mastery* or becoming competent.

The third valuable quadrant is *independence* ( or autonomy) and that is for young people to have control over their lives and a sense of meaning and worth (Beetzke, 2001:45).

Independence is built on having enough respect for young people to allow them to have control over their own future and to take responsibility for their decisions without others interfering (Beetzke, 2001:45). Ashworth (2007:31) postulates that free will is cultivated by responsibility, whereby children in tribal traditions are taught what is right without interference in their choices and to allow them to fail and learn from their experiences which mean respecting their right for independence.

The fourth quadrant is about the spirit of *generosity*, whereby children are taught from a young age about the culture of giving and to be able to give to those in need (Breetzke, 2001:46). Generosity or altruism are seen as inborn, a natural act for young children and not necessarily the giving of material things, but giving compliments, assisting strangers, opening doors for elderly people, kindness, forgiveness, being patient, apologising and giving some of their time to their communities (Ashworth, 2007:33).

## **2.8 Social Transformation and the foster care grant system in the South African context**

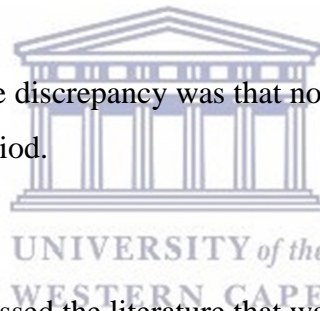
For various reasons, a number of children are vulnerable and at risk of being removed from their parental homes. Family and community life have been altered by a host of demographic and social transformations in South Africa. These include urbanisation, modernity, racial inequality, poverty, the Aids pandemic and community violence. These trends have had a major impact on families, leaving community and family life in a period of uncertainty, affecting cultural norms and values in communities according to Barbarin and Richter, 2001 (cited in Amroodt, 2011:22). This factor has been detrimental to family life in South Africa if taken in account statistics of children found in need of care and protection by the children's courts.

In 2005, the National Foster Care statistics listed 271 817 children in foster care and by 2009 this number had almost doubled to 511 479. At this time (2005) the Western Cape region alone had 29 818 children placed into court-ordered foster care according to South African Social Security Agency (2009, cited in Hall, 2013). Currently, the number of SA children accessing the foster care grant system is recorded in the system of SASSA, which is an administrative data system known as Socpen (Hall, 2013:93). Foster care grant beneficiaries totalled more than 532 000 for foster children by March 2013 in SA (Hall, 2013:93). The breakdown per province and number of these foster grant beneficiaries according to Hall (2013) are: Eastern Cape 117 231, Free State 41 317, Gauteng 58 722, Kwa-Zulu Natal 135 442, Limpopo 58 953, Mpumalanga 35 359, North West 42 219, Northern Cape 14 342, and

the Western Cape 28 578 amounting to a total of 532 159 for the entire South Africa. However, the total number according to the Strategic Plan (2009-2013:4) of the DSD differed as the total figure in this document stands currently at 601 074 children who benefit from the foster care grant scheme.

The previous situational analysis of the SA Foster Care System of almost a decade ago (2009:82) stated that there was a very sharp increase in the number of beneficiaries receiving a foster -care grant over the last ten years from 44 000 in 1998 to 454 000 in 2008. Hall and Sambu (2014:97) further elaborated the breakdown in statistics for the nine provinces of SA in terms of this escalation in numbers of foster-care grant beneficiaries: e.g. Eastern Cape 116 231 ( 22,7%), Free State 39 178 (7,6%), Gauteng 55 027 (10,7%), Kwa-Zulu Natal 125 702 (24,7%), Limpopo 58 571 (11,4%), Mpumalanga 33 877 (6,6%), North West 40 726 (8%), Northern Cape 14 307 (2,8%) and the Western Cape 28 497 (5,6%) amounting to a total of 512 055 (100%) for the entire South Africa by 2009. In terms of these figures KZN had the highest percentage, i.e. 24, 7 %.

However, a possible reason for the discrepancy was that no further studies have been done or commissioned during the same period.



## 2.9 Conclusion

In this chapter the researcher discussed the literature that was considered relevant to the study to build deeper social work understanding, in terms of childhood and youth experiences during fostering. The selected theoretical perspective, i.e. life-course theory was used as a framework to contextualise, discuss and reflect on selected literature that covered the scope of the foster child's journey and transition into adulthood through foster care.. The researcher further explored the local context of foster care in SA in terms of child care and child protection legislation and policies. In chapter 3 the researcher will discuss the research methodology and approach which he will employ to successfully implement the research project.

## Chapter Three

### 3. Research Methodology

#### 3.1 Introduction

This chapter describes the research methodology and qualitative case study design of the study that was used to explore the topic of ‘Child-hood Experiences of Foster Care in the Overberg Region of the Western Cape Province - An Adult Life History Perspective’.

The discussion provides an overview of the research question that directed the study, the main aim, assumptions, goal and objectives. The researcher described the target population and setting, explained the sampling and data collection methods and tools, analytical procedures, data verification and ethical considerations.

#### 3.2 Research Question

For the purpose of this study the main research question formulated for the study was:

*What are the perceptions and life experiences of individual participants who transitioned from foster care placements into adulthood?*

#### 3.3 Research Aim, Assumptions and Objectives of the study

##### 3.3.1 Aim

The aim of this research study was to explore through the life stories and histories of adults their perceptions and childhood experiences of foster care.

##### 3.3.2 Research Assumptions

As mentioned in Chapter One, given the current developmental policy context, situational analysis and current professional practical experiences, the following key assumptions were important to this investigation:

1. *Too many children are removed from foster care before the age of eighteen years old, but insufficient literature exists on studies carried out especially in the Overberg District, a semi-rural area in the Western Cape;*
2. *The high demand for more foster parents and lack of social workers to cope with the demand may have led to a lack of conscientious recruitment, lack of effective screening,*

*and insufficient or no training of foster parents, with devastating or traumatic consequences for the child or children in foster care;*

- 3. Biological parents and families may regard foster-care placement of their children as a relief to continue unstable, unacceptable lifestyles that lead to a loss of contact with their children; and*
- 4. Foster-care placements may be characterised by unhealthy relationships between foster child and foster parents and/or siblings, as well as feelings of instability, uncertainty, confusion, frustration and continuing trauma.*

### **3.3.3 Research Objectives**

Based on the above assumptions three key objectives informed the study:

- 1. To explore, understand and describe the foster care and childhood experiences of adults through their journey and transitions.*
- 2. To explore, understand and describe how social work services are delivered in the field of foster care in the Overstrand Service Delivery Area.*
- 3. To provide recommendations for improvements in foster-care support services.*

### **3.4 Qualitative Research Approach**

There are two major traditions of research methodology in the field of social sciences, i.e. quantitative and qualitative methodologies (Firestone, 1987). This study used a qualitative research approach to guide the research process. Qualitative research involves the study of people's beliefs, experience and value systems from their own perspective. Rubin and Babbie (1997:272) stated that the qualitative research approach emphasises depth of understanding and the deeper meanings of human experience that are used, with the aim of generating theoretically richer observations. To secure an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon in question, a qualitative research approach was selected to explore, understand and describe the perspectives of adults reflecting on their lives as foster children (Flick, 2009). Furthermore, Creswell (1998) states that the qualitative study answers the questions of "how" and "what".

The investigation attempted to capture the participant's views through their own spoken words to make sense of their perceptions and experiences as children and adolescents who were exposed to substitute care. Open-ended questions are commonly used, as it allows the



participant to describe lived experiences clearly and openly. The overall purpose is thus to achieve an understanding of how people make sense out of their lives and to outline the process steps (Merrimen, 2009). The qualitative research theory elicits participants' accounts of meaning, experiences or perceptions. Using the qualitative life history research approach, thus allowed the researcher to gain valuable insight and knowledge into the adult participants' narrations of foster care and transitions into adulthood. By drawing on life course theory as discussed in Chapter Two, the researcher generated a new perspective through making sense of the perceptions and experiences that were analysed in these narratives.

The nature of the study was both exploratory and descriptive, because the researcher explored and described adult perceptions and problems associated with the specialised area of social work foster care services in a particular region of which little was known (Royse, 2008:279). Furthermore, the researcher listened attentively to the views of participants that were captured in the emerging themes discussed in chapter 5 (See 5.3: Topics of the research tool; Table 2: Themes and sub-themes that emerged from the collected data). The perspectives and experiences of the participants in response to some of the questions that were posed hopefully created new meanings to them too in terms of their experiential life world. The study was also oriented to be 'narrative' in nature, because the words used by the participants to describe their life histories and childhood experiences were quoted to construct and reconstruct their own perceptions and experiences of being in foster care and not those of professionals.

### **3.5 Single Case Study Research Design**

Babbie and Mouton (2010:74) define research design as a plan or structured framework of how the researcher intends to conduct the research process in order to solve the research problem. Creswell (2009:4) describes qualitative research as an inquiry process of understanding that is based on a distinctive methodological tradition of investigation to explore a social or human problem. It is the approach in which the researcher aims to understand the phenomenon under scrutiny (Jordaan & Jordaan, 1998:68). Thus, it is difficult for the qualitative researcher to remain detached and objective, because by interpreting the data, the researcher is bound to include some of his or her experiences and ideologies.



Rubin and Babbie (2009:47) argue that qualitative research can be used to gain depth of understanding and bring deeper meaning to the human experiences which the researcher was pursuing with great interest by engaging in a qualitative case design.

By using life history in-depth interviews combined with document studies (See: 4.4.1 Flexibility in Purposive Sampling) the single case design, was followed for implementing these techniques for data collection. The research design according to Flick (2009) addresses the question of how to plan a research study. Ragin (2009, cited in Flick) defines the research design as a plan for collecting and analysing data which makes it possible for the researcher to answer the questions that he/she had posed. According to Maxwell (in Flick, 2009) there are several steps which contribute to a concrete research design, namely the goals of the study, the theoretical framework, concrete questions, selection of empirical material, methodological procedures, degree of consistency and control and generalisation of goals.

A single case study design that was exploratory, descriptive and contextual was the most suitable for this study, because the researcher studied the foster care perceptions and experiences of adult participants. The researcher employed this exploratory study to gain insight into the life histories of the participants. Data were collected through a dual process using archived case data and the facilitation of a life-history approach in the form of semi-structured interviews with nine participants between ages 25 and 35 who were in foster care as a child. Due to the lack of information on the experiences of being in foster care as a child or youth, the researcher explored this area of interest, as it will contribute to the field of knowledge to improve future service delivery to children placed in foster care. The literature review also justified this gap for an exploratory study. Babbie and Mouton (2001) state that an exploratory descriptive design can be particularly useful in areas where there is very little research done on the subject. They highlighted the fact that this design is used to uncover salient aspects of the subject. Mouton and Marais (1990) added another point stating exploratory research tries to uncover relationships and dimensions of a phenomenon by investigating the manner in which the phenomenon manifests itself to other related issues. The descriptive aspects of the design was thus employed to obtain more specific details from participants and gain more in-depth information about the “why” and “how” issues. The participants were able to share their own experiences, providing more detail about why or why not fostering of children should be an option and how social service professionals should support foster children. Creswell (1994) argues that the main purpose of an explorative

descriptive design is to examine relationships amongst variables and to provide an accurate description of a phenomenon that is being researched.

Another aspect of the single case design employed in this case was its contextual nature. A contextual design according to Mouton and Marais (1994) involves studying the phenomenon or design in terms of its immediate context. The context according to Creswell (1998) is situating the object of the study in its immediate environment. In a contextual strategy the phenomenon is studied, because of the immediate contextual significance. The researcher aimed to understand how participants experienced foster care in the family and community environments within the Kleinmond, Gansbaai, Stanford and Hermanus geographic areas in the Overberg region.

With stated main aim to develop an in-depth understanding of the unique childhood experiences of emerging adults that were in foster care in this region, Kratochwill, Hitchcock, Horner, Levin, Odom, Rindskopf, and Shadish (2010:2) explain that single case research designs are based on single participants (individuals) or a small group of participants as the unit of intervention and the unit of data analysis. The single case study design is well-suited to the study, because the subject of foster care from an adult's life history perspective is relatively underexplored in the South African context in the Overberg region.

### **3.6 Population and Sampling**

#### **3.6.1 Population and Setting**

According to Neuman (2006:224), the term 'population' is an abstract concept of an entire group or people from which the sample or unit will be chosen. In the field of human sciences, population refers to all possible cases that one is interested in researching people with specific characteristics in common that are relevant to the study (Monette, Sullivan & De Jong, 2008:136). In this case, the population consist of adults between the age of 25 and 35 who were foster children placed in foster care by Child Protection Organizations in the Overberg region.

The population for the study was screened and recruited by the researcher who requested written permission from Governance Boards of several child protection organisations. The participants were persons who resided or have resided in Hermanus, Kleinmond, Gansbaai and Stanford areas as foster children when they were still young as reflected in chapter 4 (See 4.5.3: Gaining entry to research sites vs accessing participants for interviews). The foster care

client profile of these communities is overrepresented by the Coloured ethnic group, although there are other 'race/ethnic' groups, it appeared on a lesser scale.

The setting for the study was the Western Cape Province, Overberg Region and included the towns of Kleinmond, Gansbaai, Stanford and Hermanus.

Due to the specialised needs, lack of human resources, and lack of research and adequate monitoring, for purposes of this study and the research setting, the foster care data base was perceived in need of constant updating. For example, foster care data of June 2014 of the DSD, Caledon indicated a number of 1 059 foster care children in foster care in the entire Overberg District (Balie: 2014). This figure is already outdated. These foster care cases were legally managed and supervised by the DSD, Caledon District social workers and in total amounted only to 39 foster care children, while the private NPO Sector and Child Protection Organizations of the regions managed over 1 020 foster care children (Balie: 2014). By January 2017, according to the foster care monitoring tool of the DSD, children in substitute foster care who received social work supervision services from a NPO in Kleinmond, amounted to 40 and those in Hermanus amounted to 255 (Cordom: 2017).

The data base of most of the Child Protection Organizations consists of mostly families and persons who are marginalised, poor, unemployed and disadvantaged. The majority of the families lack access to adequate housing facilities. Substance abuse (both alcohol and other drugs) are common. Almost all clients that are foster children and who receive social services from child protection organisations have been abused, neglected and were abandoned or orphaned.

### **3.6.2 Sampling**

Sampling refers to a process of selecting individuals from the entire population in order to obtain information regarding a phenomenon, in such a way that the findings reflect the concerns of the population of interest (Brink, 2006:124). Bless, Higson- Smith and Kagee (2006:98) argue that a sample is a subset of the whole population, which is actually investigated by a researcher and whose information will be generalised to the entire population. The researcher chose *purposive* sampling as this non-probability sampling technique assisted him to make judgements about important characteristics of elements to be included in the sampling framework that could help with answering the research question (Bless et al., 2006:105). Furthermore, Neuman (2006:267) emphasises that the principle of

purposive sampling is to get all possible cases that fit particular criteria using various methods as an acceptable kind of sampling for a special situation.

As stated previously (see sections 1.8.2.2 & 3.6.2), the principle of *purposive* sampling is to find all possible cases (in this case individual adult participants) that fit particular criteria: *gender* (intersecting with race and class), *age* and *geographic area*. The sample of the archived case records that was finally selected, thus comprised four adult women and five adult men, totalling nine individuals, aged between 25 and 35 years, from the Overstrand Municipality in the Overberg region who have been in foster care as children and who have emerged as young adults

### **3.6.3 Recruitment, Selection and Preparation of participants**

After screening and selection of archived records that matched the sampling criteria, the researcher contacted and recruited the potential participants physically with the assistance of some of the child protection organisations, community networks and family members to find out about the whereabouts of potential participants. The researcher first determined whether the participants had phone numbers, before establishing further contacting details, e.g. addresses. He then visited the addresses where participants lived. With the first contact the researcher explained the purpose of why he wanted to engage with the participants. Individual meetings were then arranged by the researcher using private venues which were convenient, accessible and conducive to participants and without any disruptions. The researcher provided the participants with information about the research during these meetings (see Information Sheet Annexure 3). They were informed about the purpose of the research, the research procedures, and to assess their willingness to participate in the research endeavour. In total, nine (9) participants were interviewed. Two (2) were from Kleinmond, three (3) from Hermanus, three (3) from Gansbaai and one (1) from Hermanus. The researcher had to ensure that the sample of participants met the criteria of diversity, from mixed cultures, mixed racial groups and mixed gender groups (e.g. five (5) participants were male, and four (4) females participated; three (3) were from the 'white' ethnic group; two (2) 'black' African; and four (4) represented the 'coloured' ethnic group.

The researcher carefully explained the significance of the study for social work services, how the interviews would be conducted and the questions that would be asked during interviews. The researcher further explained to the participants what the requirements would be; that the interviews will be recorded with their consent in order for the researcher to understand what

transpired during the interviews. Participants who volunteered to participate in the research were requested to sign consent forms (see Annexure 2). Arrangements were made for the semi-structured interviews to be conducted in English and Xhosa. Interviews of 60 - 120 minutes duration were scheduled with participants.

### **3.7 Method of Data Collection**

This study used a multi-prong data collection strategy consisting of three data collection methods: firstly, document studies (see discussion of literature and policy documents in Chapter Two) and archived organizational records; secondly, transcribed narratives of life histories based on semi-structured interviews; and finally, field notes.

Given the previous indepth-discussion of the selected literature and policies relevant to specialised child protection social work services and foster care in SA (See Chapter Two), this section will provide a brief overview explaining the data collection methods and research instruments developed to implement the single case design study, conducting the documentary study of secondary archived case records and data accessed with permission from Governance Boards of Child Protection Organizations, as well as using an Interview Guide for Life History narratives for the semi-structured interviews. Clarification of the interviewing techniques and skills used during the interviews with the participants as referred to in the next Chapter 4 (See 4.1: Introduction), are provided.

#### **3.7.1 Data Collection Methods and Research Instruments**

##### **Documentary study of Archived Records**

The researcher secured access to the archived documentary data ( foster care file/ case records ) of three major Child Protection Organizations in the Overberg region that render services in the towns of Hermanus, Gansbaai, Kleinmond and Stanford. These case files contained valuable documents and data produced in line with legislative requirements of the Children's Act that governs or regulates foster care services rendered by social workers employed by these organizations over the past decades. Ethnographic Content Analysis( ECA) (Bryman, 2004) of particular documents of importance to this study were Children's Court Documents, social work supervision, visitation, and progress reports, annual reports etc. (See list of data categories as specified in Annexure 4).

Numerous letters were forwarded to relevant authorities to obtain ethical clearance and permission and access to this documentation. Documentary evidence thus served two important purposes. Firstly, to commence the sampling process and secondly, as an additional means to collect data (De Vos et al, 2011:378).

As mentioned in Chapter 1 the researcher designed a data extracting tool (Annexure 4: Data Extracting Tool) to screen and recruit participants for the sample from the archived foster-care case records or files.

### **Semi- structured interviews**

Alston and Bowles (2003:95) indicated that the interview is a data collection method that is more flexibly used in qualitative research. According to Greef (cited in De Vos et al., 2011:342) interviewing is the predominant mode of data collection in qualitative research and information is obtained through the direct interchange between the researcher and participant (one-to-one interviews) or participants (focus groups). De Vos et al. (2002:314) distinguished the individual interview from a 'group interview', stating that a focus group can be described as an interview where a purposeful discussion takes place between eight to ten people. Creswell (2009:181) has a different version on the number of participants in a focus group, six to eight participants.

Qualitative interviewing techniques to ensure an effective interview is about the participant taking part in the research process. Therefore, he or she should be given the opportunity to do most of talking, with the researcher using sensible and easy words for the participant to understand, asking one question at a time, in an open-ended way. It is advisable to start with general questions, sequence questions from general to specific etc. (Greef in De Vos et al., 2011:343). Some of the techniques that the researcher used during data collection were to ensure effective time management and successful use of the interview guide that was designed for this purpose. The researcher limited his own remarks and allowed the participants to talk most of the time without interruptions. He only asked questions when he was not sure what the participant meant. The researcher also allowed for silences so that the participants were able to gather their thoughts. The researcher listened very attentively and jotted down fieldnotes during the interview in order not to lose track of his line of questioning.



### **3.8 Life History Interview Guide for individual face-to-face and semi-structured interviewing**

Qualitative studies usually employ three types of interviews: structured, unstructured and semi-structured interviews. Structured interviews are pre-determined and are prepared in advance to follow a specific format (Nicholls, 2009, cited in September, 2015:73).

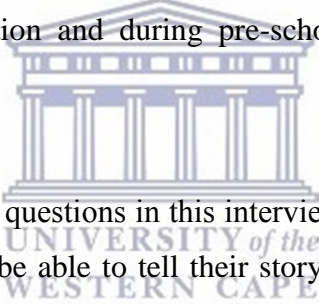
There are also other types of individual face-to-face interviews in qualitative research, namely unstructured interviews such as in-depth interviews and semi-structured interviews, which are more organised around a particular interest (Greef in De Vos et al., 2011:348). Unstructured interviews normally take place in an everyday lifestyle where participants take the lead in research, giving their versions rather than the researcher (Greef in De Vos et al., 2011:727). Semi-structured interviewers usually rely on an interview guide consisting of a list of questions. It is more focused but flexible on specific ideas that the researcher wants to probe (Fossey, Harvey, McDermott & Davidson, 2002:727).

Together with a data extracting tool (Annexure 4) for archived case documents discussed previously, this study used an adapted pre-designed semi-structured interview guide (Annexure 5) to conduct one-on-one interviews in order to gain a more detailed picture of the participant's beliefs, accounts or perceptions on the previously mentioned topic (De Vos et al., 2005). With the semi-structured life story interview guide the researcher had a set of pre-determined questions (See 5.3: Topics of the research tool) designed by McAdams (Revised 1995), and adapted for qualitative semi-structured interviews to elicit life histories. This latter tool consists of different themes on life chapters developed by McAdams (1985) who followed a life-story model built on Erikson's (1963) developmental concept of ego identity. According to McAdams (2001:100) there was an upsurge amongst researchers in autobiographical recollections, life-stories and narrative approaches to understand human experiences. Although the researcher focused on a life-history approach in this study (based on McAdams' Model of a life story built on 'identity'), which is the combination of this latter tool.

(Annexure 5) with the mentioned 'data extracting tool' for archived case data (Annexure 4) constituted a dual data collection strategy that proved to be a unique combination, accessible and effective for a social work single case design study that intended to be explorative, descriptive and contextual.



To supplement McAdams' (1985, 1993, 1996) life-story model, the researcher took into account the argument that the life-story model of identity takes the form of a story complete with setting, scenes, characters, plot and themes which had to be reflected in this research study. McAdams (2001:100) said that life story might conjure up association with case studies, but he indicated that a single case cannot be generalized to a population. According to McAdams (2001:101) *people normally selectively construed their past and future to construct stories that make sense to them, hence a person's life story key to the individuality of that person situated in a particular family and among acquaintances*. Following Erikson (1963) he argued people are only confronted with the problem of identity during the fifth of the eight stages (late adolescence and young adulthood) and it is during this time that they consolidate their beliefs and values into a personal ideology and making provisional commitments to life plans. McAdams (2001:104) argues that the development of the life story is about human intentions, because at the age of two, people understand intentions and engage in joint intentional interactions, from two years, humans experience a world from a subjective standpoint of an intention and during pre-school years they follow a relative coherent account.



The 'semi-structured' nature of the questions in this interview guide thus attempted to ensure that the participants are guided to be able to tell their story, but not be dictated by it (Smit, 1995). During the interview process the participants were given a clear idea of how the interview procedure would unfold. The assumption was that the participant is the expert on the needed information and was therefore allowed space to lead the interview based on the open-endedness of the questions.

Although the researcher set out to collect data via semi-structured interviewing as the main data collection method, it was also considered necessary to compare the information obtained through other means, e.g. case records.

### **3.9 Interview setting**

The setting is the physical location in which data collection takes place. It could be an area that is natural to those being studied, for example home, an office or any conducive setting. In the case of this study interviews were held in a conducive, non-threatening environment to make the participants feel comfortable as referred to in chapter 1 (See 1.12: Ethics Considerations). The interview setting was selected and agreed upon by the participants

beforehand. The researcher interviewed all nine participants in a setting that was comfortable and convenient to allow for confidentiality. According to De Vos et al., (2005) a quiet environment where no interruptions occur, facilitates the process. As already indicated the researcher gave a brief introduction of the project telephonically and physically when he visited addresses and confirmed a suitable date, time and venue with the participants. Upon meeting the participants, more detailed information was given to them regarding the project and the voluntary consent form was signed by participants.

Some interviews took place at the participant's home, organizational offices and other suitable venues, e.g. office spaces at a nearby college that were closed for the weekend. All the selected venues were conducive and not in operation during the interviews. The aim to promote active participation was thus met. This atmosphere allowed them to be comfortable enough to express their opinions freely.

### **3.10 Field notes**

The researcher made use of field notes throughout the interviews in order to capture the collected data and reflect on it after the interview. Field notes according to Babbie (2007:310) as cited in De Vos et al., (2011:359) should include empirical observations and interpretations, although the observations and interpretations should be kept distinct. The researcher wrote down his own emotions, pre-conceptions, expectations and prejudices so that this could later be referred to in the findings as referred to in Chapter 1 (See: 1.11 Reflexivity). Field notes were taken during the interview session to support the recordings.

### **3.11 Recording the interviews**

All interviews were tape recorded with prior consent from the participants as this allowed for a fuller record of data as compared to notes (Smith in De Vos et al., (2011:359). All participants were informed that the interviews would be recorded and their permissions were obtained prior to the interview. This was beneficial for the purpose of the study. The tape recorder was tested beforehand to identify technical problems that could result in the loss of data. Holloway and Wheeler (1996:68) state that the best form of recording interview data is tape recording, because the tapes contain the exact words used during the interview inclusive of questions. Recording the interviews safeguards researchers, in the sense that it prevents them from not making the mistake of forgetting important information. It also allows the researcher to maintain eye contact and pay attention to what is said.

### 3.12 Method of Data analysis and Coding

According to De Vos, Strydom, Fouché, and Delport (2005:338), data analysis is the process of bringing order, structure and meaning to the mass of collected data. However, Bless and Kathuria (1993) stated in Bless et al. (2006:163) that the process of data analysis takes on many different forms, depending upon the nature of the research question and design, and the nature of the data. Furthermore, Leedy and Ormrod (2010:152) argue that there is no 'single' right way to analyse the data in a qualitative study, the researcher begins with a large body of information and must, through inductive reasoning, sort and categorize it and gradually boil it down to a small set of abstract, underlying themes.

According to Creswell (2009:183) the process of analysing data consists of several steps which involve preparing the data for analysis, conducting different analyses, moving deeper and deeper into understanding the data, representing the data, and making an interpretation of the greater meaning of the data. The raw data like tapes and field notes were coded and categorised to make sense and meaning of the data collected. For the purpose of this study, the researcher made use of Tesch's 8 steps of data analysis:

1. *To get a sense of the information gathered the researchers will read all the transcripts and jot down some ideas.*
2. *Select one document (i.e. life-story, interview) - the most interesting / the shortest / the one on top of the pile. The researcher will select one interview, which is the longest interview and as the researcher read through all the data he will make notes in the margins of his underlying thoughts or ideas of the interview.*
3. *When this task has been completed for several informants, make a list of all the topics and cluster those similar. The next step will be to repeat the same process with all of the interviews, thus capturing all the underlying concepts of the nine interviews conducted. A list of all the topics will then be compiled and arranged into major topics, unique topics and those that are left over.*
4. *Find a fitting abbreviation for each of the identified topics and code it. The researcher will take the list of topics and will return to the data. The researcher will find a fitting abbreviation for each of the identified topics and the codes will be written next to the appropriate segments of text.*

5. *Find the most descriptive wording for the topics and turn them into themes or categories. The researcher will then further reduce the categories by grouping together similar categories. The researcher will also draw lines between the categories that show interrelationships.*
6. *Make a final decision on the abbreviation for each theme or category and alphabetise these codes.*
7. *Using the cut -and- paste method, assemble the data or material belonging to each theme or category in one place and do a preliminary analysis.*
8. *If necessary, recode the existing data (Creswell, 2009:186).*

This process was reviewed with the help of peer supervision who ensured that the relevant steps were implemented and followed. After some deliberations, the researcher amended the themes and subthemes as reflected in chapter 5 (See 5.3: Topics of the research tool) and was able to capture the broad themes and then break them down into more relevant subthemes. Upon completion of this process the data was summarised and linked to previous assumptions of relevant literature and emerging theories which assisted with clear understanding of the findings of the research study.

### **3.13 Trustworthiness and Data Verification**

The researcher implemented certain techniques and strategies to ensure that the collated data and the analysis were verified to enhance the value, credibility, trustworthiness, and reliability of the findings. Johnson and Turner (2003, as cited in Maree, 2014:305) describe *trustworthiness* as the way in which the researcher is able to convince the audience of the credibility of the study and that the findings are worth paying attention to. The following standards were set by Lincoln and Guba (1985, as cited in Krefting, 1991:215,222) and should be viewed as the criteria against which the trustworthiness of the project was measured:

- 1) *How credible are the particular findings of the study?*
- 2) *How transferable and applicable are these findings to another group and setting?*
- 3) *How sure can the researcher be that the findings would be replicated if the study was conducted with the same participants in the same context?*

*4) How sure can the reader be of the findings and that they are reflective of the participants and the inquiry itself?*

Further to this Baxter and Jack (2008:554) state that through the use of a database the reliability of the case study will improve, because it enables the researcher to track and organize data sources including notes, key documents, tabular materials narratives, photographs and audio records, etc. for easy retrieval at a later date. Triangulation of data sources (case data and interviews) is also a strategy to determine trustworthiness and reliability. It is important to establish the trustworthiness and reliability of a study in order to validate the findings. Therefore, Guba's model of ensuring the trustworthiness of qualitative data (establishing truth value, triangulation, applicability, consistency and neutrality) were applied (Guba cited in Krefting, 1991:214).

According to Babbie and Mouton (2009: 122) validity is about the extent, to which empirical measures reflect the real meaning of the concept under discussion; it also affirms the accuracy of the findings. Creswell's (2009: 190) version on qualitative validity is about the checking of the accuracy of the findings by employing certain procedures, while qualitative reliability is to ensure that the researcher's approach is consistent across different projects. Credibility refers to the internal validity of data, to prove that the study conducted was accurate and correct (De Vos et al. 2005:346). Furthermore, credibility is about exploring ways to confirm that the way the interpretations and concepts of the collated data are used has the same meaning for both the researcher and participant. Creswell (2009:235) indicates that validity strategies in qualitative research are procedures like member checking and triangulation data sources, which qualitative researchers use to demonstrate the accuracy of their findings and convince readers of this accuracy which will be explained below.

The researcher employed the following strategies to enhance the researcher and its reader's ability to access the accuracy of the findings:

- **Triangulation:** According to Krefting (1991:219), triangulation is a powerful strategy for enhancing the quality accuracy of research, particularly credibility and also the comparison of multiple perspectives by using different methods of data collection. In this study triangulation of data sources was employed by means of interviewing nine participants in three different towns of the Overstrand, Hermanus, Kleinmond and Gansbaai. The researcher conducted these interviews with adults who were fostered as children. Triangulation of collected data happened by comparing similarities and differences in face-

to-face semi-structured interview and narrative data and from participants, with pre-existing case data (case-files) and field notes of the same individuals.

- Member checking: Is to determine the accuracy of the qualitative findings by taking the final report back to the participants for studying and discussion (Creswell, 2009:191). To further enhance the accuracy, the researcher forwarded a copy of the transcribed interviews in Afrikaans with the accompanying translations in English and isiXhosa that were checked by an academic well versed in Afrikaans, to see whether the translations from Afrikaans to English and isiXhosa were in actual fact a true reflection of what was said in Afrikaans. Participants were then asked to as far as possible verify the correctness of the interpretation. Member checking is a technique that consists of continually testing the overall interpretations of the data, near the conclusion of the research with the participants, to ensure that the data is accurate (Lincoln & Guba, 1985 in Krefting 1991:219). This strategy was employed by taking the transcripts of the face-to-face interviews back to the participants to check the accuracy of the contents and the meanings attached to the contents and to provide an opportunity for further elaboration (Creswell, 2009:191). A copy of the research findings was presented as a hard copy to the participants in order to clarify the meanings and interpretation in the report.
- Biases: The researcher took cognisance of the fact that he had done the study from a certain professional and disciplinary perspective and cultural background. The researcher was conscious of his own power position and biases as a professional male social worker and from an ethnic group as stated before (See 3.16: Reflexivity). Language and culture are always the sensitive issues and the researcher therefore was very careful with regard to this. The researcher originates from a traditional 'Coloured' community where socio-economic challenges were part of the community. In the past years more 'black African' families 'migrated' from the Eastern Cape to settle in this region. This exponential growth in numbers is not adequately recognised by policy makers and service providers in the region. Considering the history of some of the Child Protection NPOs in the region, it is plausible that previously a very small percentage of 'black african' people, due to Apartheid migration restrictions, were placed in non-kinship foster care. In this regard Holloway and Wheeler (1996:5) suggested that to understand participants' interpretations the researcher should become exposed to the participants' life world and need to question their own assumptions and rather act like a stranger to the setting than being biased. If biased a researcher can lose track and participants can even decide to withdraw from the



study if they get the feeling of prejudice. In this study the researcher continuously reflected on how the findings could have been shaped by his own theoretical, professional and personal background.

- **Crystallisation:** Given other conflicting interpretations and/or conclusions regarding information collected and analysed, the researcher was confronted with discrepant and/or contradictory information that runs counter to the themes. These contradictions were explored with the participants during the face-to face semi-structured interviews and were highlighted in the report itself (see Chapters 5 & 6). Crystallisation is described as a framework that builds upon a tradition of diverse practices in studying everyday human behaviour, describing and interpreting cultural behaviour (ethnography) and qualitative representation (Alvesson & Skóldberg, 2000:2).
- **Spend prolonged time in the field:** The researcher spent prolonged time and involvement with the participants, because it determined how good and applicable the study was and how the relationship with the participants developed. Through this prolonged time with the participants, the researcher developed an in-depth understanding of the complexities of phenomenon under study (Creswell, 2009:192). This could enhance the quality of information shared by the participants, as well as their ability to share sensitive information. Holloway and Wheeler (1996) further stated 'prolonged involvement means spending enough time to learn about the culture and build trust with those participating in the research, because they can only understand when researchers have invested enough time in the setting'. In a qualitative research study, the researcher tries to increase the worth of the findings by decreasing the distance between the researcher and the participants, for example, by prolonged contact with participants or lengthy periods of observation according to Krefting (1991:217).

The researcher also addressed the following four aspects in order to ensure data verification in this qualitative research study according to Guba's model (in Krefting, 1991:215).

- **Truth value:** The level of confidence in the truth of the findings, based on the research design, participants and the context in which the study was undertaken, will determine the truth value of the study (Krefting, 1991:215). The truth value for the purposes of this study was enhanced through the use of semi-structured interviews as already mentioned and the researcher went back to the participants and discussed the study.



- **Applicability:** Guba (in Krefting, 1991:216) refers to applicability as the degree to which the findings of the research study are applicable to other contexts, settings or groups. It ensures that the research could be replicated in other contexts or groups in the field of child welfare and child protection; or even other government departments (social development, health, education) working with formerly foster children in other areas. Guba (in Krefting, 1991:216) also indicated that applicability has the aim to describe a particular phenomenon, 'foster care experiences of adults when they were children' and or transferability to other settings and groups as already mentioned.
- **Consistency:** Guba (in Krefting, 1991:216) refers to consistency as "whether the findings would be consistent if the inquiry were replicated with the same subjects or in a similar context". Consistency is about learning from the participants, rather than having control over them, therefore an independent coder will be used to ensure consistency. He argued that the researcher and the independent coder will independently code the data and subsequently, have consensus discussions with the study leader on the themes, subthemes and categories to present as research findings (Krefting, 1991:216). In these study chapters or themes of life history, the interview guide assisted with coding the related themes and subthemes. According to Rossman and Rallis (1998: 171) in Creswell, (2009:186) coding 'is the process of organizing the material into chunks or segments of text before bringing meaning to information'. Furthermore, coding involves taking the text information during the collection of the information, segmenting sentences into categories and then label these categories with a term (Creswell, 2009:186).
- **Neutrality:** Guba (in Krefting, 1991:216) states that neutrality in qualitative research should reflect the neutrality of the required data, rather than that of the researcher to ensure the study procedures and results are free from bias. The researcher enhanced neutrality and objectivity in this study by making use of field notes and tape-recordings. The researcher will increase the worth of the findings by decreasing the distance between the researcher and the participants; the emphasis of neutrality in qualitative research will be shifted from the researcher to the data (Krefting, 1991:217)

### **3.14 Limitations and Delimitations**

The researcher had limited control of threats to the validity of the study. The study was conducted in three languages, English, Afrikaans and IsiXhosa in order to allow participants to express themselves freely. The use of a translator was necessary, although it could have

resulted in information being biased. The sample population was previously fostered children, and for the one-on-one sessions, commitment from the participants was to require participating at a specific time and place. The researcher depended on the participants' full co-operation in order to gain the relevant data.

The findings of this single case study are limited to this semi-rural region and could not be generalised for the whole Western Cape which could influence external validity. The research study therefore is based on a small sample which limits the generalisation of the research findings. Findings cannot be generalised to all Child Protection Organisations registered as NPOs, due to the fact that it is a single case design study. Limitations were experienced in tracing the participants, as some of them were scattered in many different places, and may no longer be resident in the areas or towns served by selected NPO organisations for the study. The researcher had to screen and recruit more participants beyond the reach of some organizations in Kleinmond and Hermanus, because the selected participants who fitted the criteria moved out and were living abroad and in other parts of the country.

### **3.15 Reflexivity**

While the significance of the study in terms of recent social policy and ministerial questions and investigations about the foster care field and grant recipients are noted, the researcher took cognisance of the fact that the study could be of an extremely sensitive nature, because participants were expected to share their most intimate personal experiences, views, values and beliefs. Therefore, the researcher critically examined his own pre-conceived personal perceptions, professional position and experiences, by turning the investigation away from the participants (male or female) towards introspection of himself as a 'black' male professional person (Hsiung, 2008:4-6) and registered social worker. Reflexivity assisted the researcher to become aware of his own bias, assumptions, locations, feelings, values and beliefs/ideologies, and thus he became aware of the strengths and pitfalls when engaging with the participants.

### **3.16 Ethics Considerations**

The researcher successfully obtained permission and ethics clearance from the Ethics Committee of the Community and Health Science Faculty at the University of the Western Cape. Additionally, the researcher is a registered social worker who subscribes to the ethical

code of the South African Council for Social Service Professionals (SACSSP), therefore confidentiality of all information provided by participants must be protected.

Leedy and Ormrod (2010:101) argue that ethics considerations are one of the most important aspects within qualitative research. It has to do with morally important issues and how the participants will be protected against any harm. Several authors pointed out four important aspects of ethical issues which entail protection from harm, informed consent, right to privacy and honesty with professional colleagues (De Vos, 2011; Leedy and Ormrod, 2010:101). Strydom (in De Vos et al., 2011:115-126) reiterates and confirms certain additional ethical issues, e.g. harm to respondents, informed consent, deception of respondents, violation of privacy, actions and competence of researchers, cooperation with contributors, release or publication of the findings and the debriefing of subjects or respondents. Ethical considerations addressed in this study are discussed as follows:

### **3.16.1 Informed consent**

The importance of an informed consent form that was signed by participants was a very critical ethics issue to protect the rights of the participants. According to Strydom (in De Vos et al., 2011:117) the goal of the investigation, the procedures, advantages, procedures, disadvantages, dangers to which respondents may be exposed to, as well as the credibility of the researcher will be communicated to the voluntary participants. Participants were provided with sufficient information about the study to allow them to decide for or against their participation. It became important to make participants aware or be informed that they participate in this study on a voluntary basis and that they are free to quit from the investigation at any given time. The researcher drew up a consent form for the participants to get their permission to participate in the study and informed them about the nature of the study. Informed consent forms were given to participants after they had been provided with all the information pertaining to the research. The consent forms that were used in this research are Annexure 2 A or 2 B depending on the language spoken.

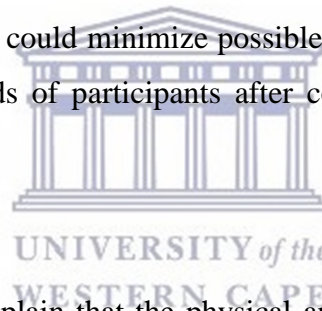
### **3.16.2 Confidentiality/Anonymity**

The researcher handled the names of participants confidentially during the study, while interacting with them regarding the qualitative research to prevent confidential information of participants from being shared. Confidentiality is about handling information in a confidential manner and it is about agreements between persons that others have access to private

information (Strydom in De Vos et al., 2011:119). According to Babbie (2001:472 as cited in De Vos et al., 2011:120) confidentiality implies that only the researcher and a few of his staff should be aware of the identity of the participants, while anonymity is the non-disclosure of any subject, even by the researcher. This study was very sensitive and of an emotional nature, and therefore the ethics obligation rested on the researcher, a qualified social worker, to conduct interviews in a way that did not pose too much risk for the participants, as well as participating NPOs. The names of the participants were waived, and numerical letters were assigned to each participant. Participant's confidential information recorded necessary for the study, was stored in a safe place and identifiable information after coding removed.

### **3.16.3 Debriefing**

Debriefing as ethical concept is of utmost importance for the researcher, because the interviews could have touched on very sensitive issues of the participants which might be difficult to deal with afterwards. According to Strydom (in De Vos et al. 2011:122), debriefing sessions after the study could minimize possible harm, rectify any misperceptions that may have arisen in the minds of participants after completion of the project and the sessions handled with sensitivity.



### **3.16.4 No harm**

Leedy and Ormrod (2005:101) explain that the physical and emotional risks to participants during the implementation of a research study should not be bigger than the risks of everyday life. The participants were informed of their right not to participate in the study and that they may withdraw from the study at any stage without implications to themselves. Participants were also made aware of available counselling and other services should they need them. However, Strydom (cited in De Vos et al., 2011:113) argues due to the fact that individual persons will be the participants in the study, data should never be obtained at the expense of human beings. It is important to avoid harm to participants which can be physically damaging and, in most cases, emotional. Ethical obligations rest with the researcher hence the need to protect participants, who should be thoroughly informed beforehand about the potential impact of the investigation, to give them the opportunity to withdraw from the investigation if they wish as indicated (see Strydom in De Vos et al., 2011:127-129).

Research must respect the right of privacy of participants and at no stage in documenting evidence should rights of any participant be violated (Leedy and Ormrod, 2010:102).

### 3.17 Conclusion

In this chapter the researcher gave the reader an understanding of the qualitative research approach that was employed for this study. The research was explorative, descriptive and contextual. The researcher gave a clear understanding of the research process which was followed in order to acquire the relevant data from participants. The researcher gave the reader an understanding of the skills that were used during data collection to ensure thicker descriptive data. In this chapter the researcher also discussed how the data was collected by following a dual strategy, and how it was analysed according to the eight steps described by Tesch (1990, in Creswell, 2009:186). Trustworthiness and the data verification methods which were employed, were also elaborated on extensively. Finally, the researcher elaborated on the limitations and delimitations of the study.



## Chapter 4

### 4. Findings and Results in Terms of Foster Care Case File Records

#### 4.1. Introduction

In the previous chapter the researcher discussed the qualitative research design and case methodology using documentary sources (case records) and life history interviews to answer the main research question namely: *What are the perceptions and life experiences of individual participants who transitioned from foster care placements into adulthood?* (See 3.2: Research Question; 3.5 Research Design in Chapter 3).

As stated previously this question was posed to gain a deeper understanding of adult perspectives and reflections on their further alternative or substitute child care lived experiences. Data gathered implemented a purposive sample of archived case records (Bryman, 2004) of past foster care clients. All participants received social work services from different agencies (registered NPOs). Hence archived data together with interview transcripts that were studied, analysed and triangulated were used to construct ‘narratives’ or life-stories’ of all nine participants that were selected and interviewed. Adult subjects who participated answered questions that were posed about different ‘chapters’ in their lived experiences of alternative foster care. Further probing and clarity were sought throughout the interviewing process and validated by records to gain an in-depth understanding of their further transitioning into adult life, as currently experienced in the context of the Cape Winelands/Overberg region in the Western Cape. The findings of this research encounter are briefly explained and elaborated on in this chapter.

For the purpose of discussion of findings of this single case design study, the discussion is divided into three broad sections: the *introductory first part* sketches the local community and organizational *context* (case) within in which foster care services were rendered by social workers of NPOs within the Overberg District in the Overstrand Municipal area that are relevant to the study. The regional demographics in terms of new settlement patterns and how it impacts on the study will be referred to as part of this discussion. The *second part* summarises the findings and results as extracted from the *foster care case records and documents* based on social work services rendered by practitioners to the foster child and their families. This discussion is then linked to the data collected by implementing the adapted qualitative research instrument based on the McAdams Life-Story model (2001,

2009). Given the guidelines of case study methodology and the constructivist approach (Baxter & Jack, 2008:545), the *third part* will attempt to analytically describe the case data and findings based on qualitative life history interviews conducted with the participants regarding their reflections on past experiences as a foster child. The researcher will also report on triangulation that was used as a powerful strategy for enhancing the quality and accuracy of the research, particularly credibility and also the comparison of multiple perspectives by using multi- and diverse qualitative methods of data collection, combining foster care case records and interviews (Krefting, 1991:219).

#### **4.2. Research Process Steps**

The boards of management of Child Protection Organizations in both Hermanus and Kleinmond were very helpful in providing access and permission to the researcher to conduct the study and collect his data using archived files. Furthermore, the researcher prepared an information guide to search for and extract the identifying details in the archived foster care case files to screen and recruit participants. There were approximately 20 foster care case files available as a total population that met the sampling criteria from which a sample of 6 participants needed to be identified. The researcher physically scrutinized all archived foster care files at the offices of the different child protection organisations in the Overstrand region, especially those organisations in Kleinmond and Hermanus.

The following section reflects on several issues pertaining to research roles that emerged in the implementation of the research process (Fouché & Delport in de Vos, *et al.*, 2005:79).

#### **4.3 Reflexivity**

The researcher took cognisance of the fact that the study was of an extremely sensitive nature, because participants shared their intimate personal experiences, views, values and beliefs. Therefore, being an experienced ethnic sensitive 'Coloured' male professional, the researcher, with the guidance of the gender-sensitive research literature that he was exposed to, became critically aware of the need to be prepared to reflect on and re-examine his own pre-conceived personal male, and professional perceptions, professional managerial power position and past social work frontline experiences. This forced him to turn the investigation journey slightly away from objectifying the participants (male or female) towards also seeking introspection and reflection of the 'self'. For example, as a 'black' male social work



supervisor who manages a team of diverse social workers ( male, and female from different cultural backgrounds) rendering child protection services, including foster care services on a daily basis (Hsiung, 2008:4-6), he became more conscious of these power relational and cultural dynamics. For example, the researcher was critically aware that his current understandings and perceptions were shaped by his direct professional experiences in the field of foster care as a South African social work practitioner. His current management position as Western Cape state official working closely with Non-Profit Organizations and partner child protection organisations could influence what information became available for the study. More importantly many of the organizations rendering services have an important and direct stake in rendering social services in partnership with government. All partners focus primarily on child protection and foster care. The study could thus provide a critical lens to reflect the researchers own assumptions, pre-conceived ideas, personal histories and social political location as a manager and supervisor of social workers as referred to by Hsiung (2008:28).

*Reflexivity* as referred and described in Chapter 1 and elaborated further in Chapter 3, assisted the researcher to develop a greater self-awareness; being more conscious of his own biases, assumptions, locations, feelings, values and beliefs. He thus became aware of the strengths and pitfalls when engaging with the participants as research subjects and not ‘clients’.

#### **4.4 Purposive Sampling, Diversity and Practical Dilemmas in initiating the research process for access to the study sites**

##### **4.4.1 Flexibility in Purposive Sampling**

The researcher initially approached two child protection organisations, in Hermanus and Kleinmond in the Overstrand region of the Western Cape. However, due to the criteria stated in the study design the researcher was not able to follow the initial stipulations of the sample.

The researcher experienced it exceptionally challenging to ‘purposively’ screen for the planned sampling approach using the criteria as stated in the initial approved research project proposal and planning the research inquiry that followed, e.g. the targeting categories of *age, ethnicity and gender*. Hence, as stated in Chapter 3 (See3.6.2: Sampling) to ensure that an adequate sample would be reached he had to adjust and broaden the set age range from 25-35 years old to 19-35 years of age, as there were not enough foster care files available for the targeted study population, due to archiving policies of different agencies. For example, in

order to meet the criterion of ‘inclusivity’ the researcher was not able to screen and recruit a ‘white’ male participant to meet all the sample selection criteria in the first phase of the sampling process. Hence, the broadening of the sample adding another organization and extending the request for permission from an additional Child Protection NPO solved the problem. As reported under 4.4.1 another Child Protection Organization in Hermanus/Stanford/Gansbaai in the Overstrand area was additionally selected to screen and recruit a ‘white’ male participant between 19 -35 years of age. The Provincial regional office of the organization gave further written permission for their social work professionals to assist the researcher in tracing the archived foster care case files. However, after numerous follow-up contacts with the different offices of this particular Organization in the Overstrand, the local Gansbaai office gave a quick response by indicating that they could assist by providing access to a case record for possible selection. The social auxiliary worker (an assistant to the official social workers) of the office in Gansbaai went out of his/her way to assist with the extra effort to track additional research subjects, by visiting and making telephonic contacts for this process which was appreciated and interpreted as ‘support’ for the study.

Furthermore, the researcher made a special effort to contact previous social workers of the organisation to assist in identifying certain subjects or participants whom they remembered was fostered at the time. Although the three social workers who were contacted were able to give names, it became an exhausting exercise to trace participants as most of their contact details no longer existed and some clients migrated out of the areas and no longer stayed at the addresses as recorded in the archived files. The researcher came to the conclusion that although foster care case records and files were accessible, available and existed, these documents were extremely important for data collection and for research purposes. In terms of the latter it should be treated with care and accountability. Hence, the research plan and time management for tracking ex-clients were found to be challenging for research efforts. In addition, apart from the organizational policies on archived records that varied considerably, the time allocation for researching such records should be done carefully taking into consideration the lack of digitally prepared documents and greater efforts needed for future social work research planning and designs.

#### 4.4.2 Agency Archival Policies and The Children's Act

The Bill of Rights, chapter two of the Constitution of South Africa, section 32 (1) protect the rights of any citizen to have access to personal information. This right was assumed by the researcher when he explored agency records for recruitment of potential participants for this study. Foster care case records *must be kept in archived* format for access by foster children or citizens if they need or request any information regarding their past. Furthermore, according to the National Archives of South Africa Act, 1996 (No.43 of 1996) section 11(2) states that public records identified in a disposal authority should have enduring value and shall be transferred to an archives repository when they have been in existence for 20 years.

Given the *ethics considerations* and the *purposive sampling process*, the final *selection* and *screening* of participant details (based on the criteria) was dependent on the availability of existing archived files that was found different according to the internal policies of participating Child Protection organizations. This was an unexpected finding. For example, specific child protection and care organizations, such as those operating in Hermanus dispose of their foster care archived case files five (5) years after termination of services, while other organisations had their records archived at a more centralised station/office, i.e. their Hermanus office; although, there were also foster care files archived in their Gansbaai satellite office. A provincial manager of one of the Child Protection organizations stated that this organization keeps foster care files for at least twenty-five years which is contradictory to the feedback received from their satellite Hermanus branch. According to circular 10/2017 in a policy document of another Child Protection organization, archived foster care files are never disposed of and are archived for an indefinite period of time. Contrary to registered NPOs, the State Department of Social Development's policy on archived documents is set out in an authorisation document 10/1/2/30 of 13 March 1963, which stated that in children's court cases foster care files are destroyed two years after the youngest child turned 18 years old. The latter practice contrasts sharply with Section 33(4)(a) of the more recent Post-Apartheid democratic Children's Act 38 of 2005 indicating that any record of court proceedings may only be disposed of after the expiry thereof, a period of 10 years since the date of finalisation of the matter in question. From the outset of this investigation the archiving policy of child protection records opened up a new ethical dilemma for both state and private Child Protection Organizations and Agencies that requires serious investigation and research for the future.

The sample of nine participants was thus purposively selected from archived case files and the total population of previously fostered children at four of the five participating child protection organisations within this Overberg District or region.

#### **4.5 Selected criteria – Some Reflections on the design**

##### **4.5.1 Resettlement and Change of Addresses as challenges in Sampling ‘Diversity’**

The issue of *diversity*, although extremely valuable, posed particular challenges in implementing the actual sampling selection criteria. The researcher found it daunting to identify, screen and select the original initial qualifying six participants, due to changing of contact details (addresses and phone numbers). The time and effort invested in tracking potential participants where some of these contacts no longer existed and participants resettled elsewhere were not anticipated. Hence, the researcher had to repeatedly go through the selected records to screen and source information following the schedule that was created for detection of relevant documentary data. Tracking new contacts took more time and the fear of not meeting deadlines affected progress and placed limitations on the size of the sample. Finally, by adding another child protection organization to the list, the researcher was able to recruit the total sample of nine participants who met all the criteria in terms of ‘diversity’, and who volunteered to participate in the study. (See 3.5: Research Design).

##### **4.5.2 Selected Criteria and ‘Suitability’ of Purposively Selected Subjects for Narrative Life History Approach**

In one of the nine cases that was selected, the researcher realised that the data gathered may not be of much value or ‘reliable’ as the information shared by this participant was very limited. In Chapter 3 (See 3.14: Method of Data Verification) the importance of value, credibility and reliability of findings were discussed. The assessment of the ‘reliability’ of data and the research instrument occurred after the researcher conducted the third interview (with the first ‘coloured’ Afrikaans-speaking male participant) in order to meet all the ‘diversity’ criteria.

For example, despite concerns with ‘diversity’ the set criteria still did not take into account the ‘suitability’ of all participants in terms of ‘understanding’ some of the questions of the designed instrument. The latter subject had ‘learning disabilities’ that posed some barrier in the communication process regarding issues that subjects needed to reflect on as part of data collection. Hence, the researcher understood that this participant had mental challenges due

to foetal alcohol syndrome and could not adequately participate in the interviewing process that used a life story narrative approach, suggesting questions about the ‘inclusivity’ of the life story model for all adults. Thus, an additional case record had to be selected to source an additional participant. The researcher was able to identify another ‘Coloured’ Afrikaans-speaking participant from the archived records of Badisa, Gansbaai.

#### **4.5.3 Gaining entry to sites vs accessing participants for interviews**

All participants were selected and screened through applying the set criteria. Almost all freely volunteered to participate in the study and agreed to sign the consent form as described in Chapter 1 (See Ethics Considerations, Chapter 1 and Chapter 3, 3.16 and 3.17). They were subsequently interviewed at different times and places which were carefully chosen for their convenience. Venues that became available were selected in terms of privacy and also to minimise disruptions. For example, interviews took place at different venues: participant’s homes, service centres, boardrooms, at a child and youth care centre and at an educational college. The researcher had to drive as far as Gansbaai, (130 kilometres), Grabouw, (100 kilometres), and Cape Town, (280 kilometres) to reach and interview the participants who formed part of the sample.

Appointments for interviews with the participants, were set at times that were mostly convenient to participants. However, there were a few small disruptions as will be clarified in the discussion. According to Greef as cited in De Vos et al., (2005: 350) the interview setting should be comfortable, non-threatening and easily accessible as was in most instances the case. As stated in Chapter 3 the venues where the interviews were conducted were at such convenient places, which promoted better interaction between participants and the researcher (See also 3.17: Ethics Considerations).

During the interviewing process the researcher asked probing and clarifying questions to facilitate the flow of the interview and to gain more rich and descriptive data (Rubin in De Vos et al., 2005). Demographic data of the nine participants are presented and discussed in the subsequent paragraphs. The findings of the data will be presented and discussed under the relevant themes and sub-themes in chapter five.

Planning for the semi-structured one-on-one life history interviews was daunting due to uncertainties as how participants may respond. Although feeling somewhat insecure, the

researcher was excited to start with data collection and the ambivalence and feelings of fear for failing subsided with the excitement to start with the data collection process.

The first interview with a female participant that was married and living with her own family did however alert the researcher to the implementation of the life story guide in terms of the sensitivities of issues that were raised and shared. This served to orientate him further for additional interviews.

#### **4.5.4 Other relevant issues and challenges in tracing adult foster care subjects for the research study**

Two outstanding issues and challenges that affected the recruitment, selection and tracking of the sample of participants and for designing the study were the movement or entrenchment of foster children deeper into the Child Protection system, and difficulties of extracting personal details for suitable participants .

##### **4.5.4.1 Challenges due to movement deeper into the child and youth care system:**

For the purpose of ‘identifying’ or ‘screening’ for purposive sampling, there were quite a few challenges encountered, because foster children were in most cases not only fostered by families but faced other substitute care arrangements. For example, ‘child protection’ interventions by registered social workers, i.e. ‘removal’ at a later stage and were placed in Child and Youth Care Centres, which were previously called ‘Children Homes’, School of Industries and/or Reform Schools. While the focus of the study was aimed at participants who have transitioned from foster care into ‘self-independence’ and or adulthood in family contexts, the existing foster care case records revealed that ‘historically’ many other foster children (those who did not meet the current sampling criteria), formed part of a substantial number that were moved out of child care centres and were placed or moved deeper into the child and youth care system, branching into other forms of alternative care, e.g. Children’s Home and Schools of Industries for a variety of reasons.

Hence, only after compiling all identifying details to recruit participants for this study from the foster care case records, the process of screening and selection following the set criteria for the study followed. The researcher needed certain identifying particulars to recruit subjects for his study. A separate schedule listing data categories was thus designed to be able to scrutinize the archived files. This data extraction tool (See Annexure 4) should be read in addition to the designed instrument (semi-structured life story interview guide) as the



research tool (see discussion in Chapter 4) adapted from McAdams (See Annexure 5) and consisted of information/data categories such as: name, address, age, ethnicity, gender, case file number, intake date, temporary detention order, children's court report, section 159 report, detail of foster parents and biological parents, etc.

The first participant that met all the sampling criteria was a 'coloured' Afrikaans-speaking, female and mother (of one child) who was 25 years of age and married. However, the participant's contact number did not exist anymore. After numerous efforts to make telephonic contact, the researcher was able to trace the participant through community members informing the researcher that the participant is employed as a shop assistant. This participant was interviewed using the adapted research instrument (the interview schedule) (See Annexure 5A: Interview guide). The data was recorded and transcribed as a pilot study to test the nature of the questions, duration of the interview and the quality of the data. Furthermore, with the necessary consultation of the literature the researcher adjusted some of the questions in the interview schedule to make sure it is more aligned to the main aim, question and the set research objectives.

#### **4.5.4.2 Challenges in extracting identifying particulars for selection of possible participants**

The researcher then planned a strategy to extract identifying details (Annexure 4: Data extracting tool) of all possible participants that met the criteria for the research study before any further contacts were made and data collection took place. In addition, the researcher contacted the office manager of a Child Protection agency in Hermanus, an organizationally - based social auxiliary worker in Gansbaai, a social auxiliary worker in Kleinmond to assist in tracking the one 'black' 'African' adult male, one 'black' 'African' adult female, a 'white' female and 'coloured' male as identified according to the diversity requirements of the sampling strategy.

#### **4.6 The profile of foster care in the Overberg District: Diversity and intersections of care placement; age, gender and race in foster care**

The tables below are based on a community survey that was conducted by Statistics South Africa during 2016 and it gives a reflection of the population, racial, age, gender and a profile or breakdown of commonly spoken languages in the entire Overstrand local municipality area.

<b>OVERSTRAND CS 2016</b>	
<b>RACIAL BREAKDOWN</b>	
Black African	39713
Coloured	27012
Indian/Asian	101
White	26582
<b>Total</b>	<b>93407</b>

Source: 2016 Community survey conducted by Statistics South Africa

<b>OVERSTRAND CS 2016</b>		
<b>AGE: BROAD AGE GROUPS GENDER BREAKDOWN</b>		
	<b>MALE</b>	<b>FEMALE</b>
0–14 (Children)	11247	11171
15–34 (Youth)	15217	15386
35–64 (Adults)	14901	14362
65+ (Elderly)	4889	6234
<b>Total</b>	<b>46254</b>	<b>47154</b>

Source: 2016 Community survey conducted by Statistics South Africa

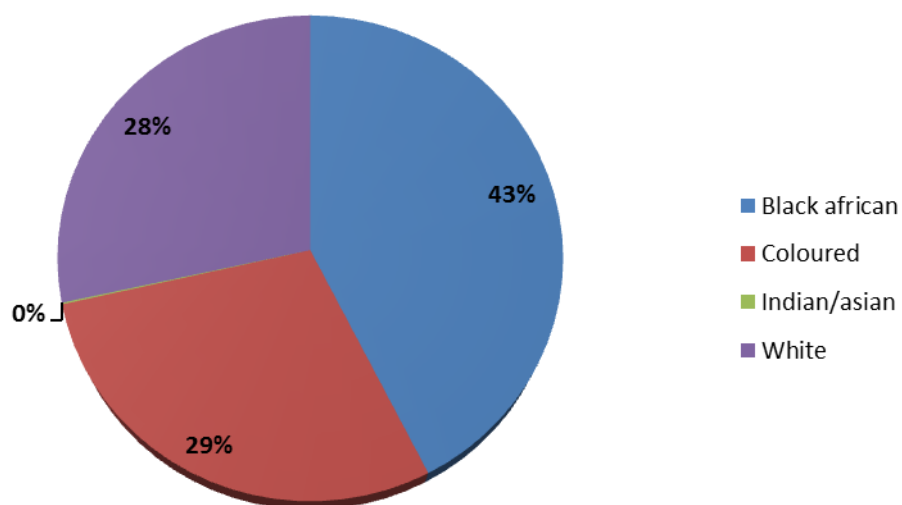
<b>OVERSTRAND CS 2016</b>	
<b>AGE: BROAD AGE GROUPS</b>	
0–14 (Children)	22418
15–34 (Youth)	30603
35–64 (Adults)	25854
65+ (Elderly)	14532
<b>Total</b>	<b>93407</b>

Source: 2016 Community survey conducted by Statistics South Africa

<b>OVERSTRAND CS 2016</b>	
<b>LANGUAGE MOST SPOKEN IN THE HOUSEHOLD</b>	
Afrikaans	43735
English	9774
Isindebele	162
Isixhosa	34305
Isizulu	256
Sepedi	0
Sesotho	1117
Setswana	110
Sign language	10
Siswati	0
Tshivenda	0
Xitsonga	69
Khoi; nama and san languages	0
Other	2128
Not applicable	1741
Not specified	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>93407</b>

**Source: 2016 Community survey conducted by Statistics South Africa**

### Community Survey 2016: Overstrand Racial breakdown



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Regions	Child Protection Organisation	Department of Social Development Service Delivery Areas	Foster Care Cases
Cape Winelands/Overberg	Badisa	<u>Cape</u>	4101
	Child Welfare	<u>Winelands/Overberg</u>	
	ACVV		
	Worcester	<u>Cape Winelands</u>	2864
	Ekumuniese Dienste	Stellenbosch	
		Drakenstein	

		Mbekweni Paarl East Langeberg Witzenberg Breederivier Breedevalley Zwelethemba <u>Overberg</u> Theewaterskloof Swellendam Cape Agulhas Overstrand	1237
<b>Metro North</b>	Badisa Child Welfare ACVV	Elsies river Langa Bellville Delft Cape Town Atlantis Milnerton Kensington Bonteheuwel	2606

<b>Metro South</b>	Badisa  Child Welfare  ACVV	Grassy Park  Gugulethu  Mitchell's Plain  Wynberg  Retreat  Fish Hoek  Nyanga  Athlone  Phillipi	2496
<b>Metro East</b>	Badisa  Child Welfare  ACVV	Kraaifontein  Eersterivier  Somerset-West  Khayelitsha	2754
<b>West Coast</b>	Badisa  Child Welfare  ACVV	Vredenburg  Saldanha  Vredendal  Clanwilliam  Piketberg  Malmesbury	1571
<b>Eden Karoo</b>	Badisa  Child Welfare	Oudtshoorn  Plettenberg	2256



	ACVV	George  Thembaletu  Ladismith  Riversdal  Mosselbay  Knysna  Murraysburg  Laingsburg	
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Child Protection Organisations: Theewaterskloof SDA	Foster care Cases	Care placement		Gender		Racial Group			
		Kinship	Non-kinship	M	F	C	W	B	I
<b>Badisa Villiersdorp</b>	111	74	37	51	60	96	5	10	0
<b>Badisa Caledon</b>	21	10	11	10	11	20	0	1	0
<b>ACVV Grabouw</b>	41	27	14	22	19	26	2	13	0
<b>Child Welfare Genadendal</b>	50	36	14	30	20	49	0	1	0
<b>Child Welfare Grabouw</b>	100	82	18	48	52	57	0	43	0
<b>DSD Grabouw</b>	63	47	16	29	34	45	1	17	0
<b>DSD Riviersonderend</b>	39	27	12	26	13	33	1	4	1
<b>DSD Botrivier</b>	31	25	6	20	11	27	0	4	0
<b>DSD Villiersdorp</b>	42	22	20	24	18	25	0	17	0

<b>DSD Caledon</b>	21	15	6	8	13	16	1	4	0
<b>Total:</b>	<b>519</b>	<b>367</b>	<b>152</b>	<b>268</b>	<b>251</b>	<b>404</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>104</b>	<b>1</b>

The tables give a reflection of recent foster care cases in the Overberg region which the Overstrand service area is part of. The Overberg is the municipal district and Theewaterskloof, Cape Agulhas, Swellendam and Overstrand, are the local municipal areas within the Overberg District where the Department of Social Development and the Child Protection Organisations render foster care services as referred to in chapter 2 (See 2.3.5: The Children's Act and the child in need of care and protection). The tables give a reflection of foster care cases recently in the Overberg District where the research study was done. Hence, the Overstrand municipal area was the specific local area in the Overberg District where the participants were recruited as reflected in chapter 5.

**Table 2: Copy of 2017 18 FC Project monthly NGHCO Joint DSDSASSA reporting template - July 2017- Theewaterskloof Service Delivery Area**

The Theewaterskloof municipal area is the biggest local municipal area in the Overberg region. Hence, the foster care cases are also the most (519), Overstrand (482), Cape Agulhas (168) and the least in the Swellendam area (68). The kinship foster care placement (367) is more than double the amount of non-kinship foster care (152) as referred to in Chapter 1, (See: Introduction and Rationale). There is a slight difference between female foster children (251) and their male counterparts (268). Hence, in terms of the racial groups there are almost three times more coloured children (404) in foster care than 'black' children (104) in the Theewaterskloof municipal area. In terms of the white population there are only 10 children in foster care, while there is one Indian foster child.

In terms of comparative figures regarding foster care placements on a racial level no information was available at a National or Provincial Level, however the researcher could make a comparison on a district (Overberg) and a local level (Overstrand).



Total:	<b>68</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>
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In terms of table 4 which gave a reflection on the Swellendam area there are 68 persons in foster care. Surprisingly, most children are in non-kinship foster care (36) than kinship foster care (32). Furthermore, more female persons (37) are in foster care than their male counterparts (31). There is an overwhelming number of 'coloured' persons in foster care (64) and a tremendous low number of white (2) and 'black' persons (2) in foster care.

**Table 5: Copy of 2017 18 FC Project monthly NGHCO Joint DSDSASSA reporting template - July 2017: Overstrand Service Delivery Area**

Child Protection Organisations: Overstrand SDA	Foster care Cases	Care placement		Gender		Racial Group			
		Kinship	Non-kinship	Male	Female	C	W	B	I
<b>Badisa Hermanus</b>	15	6	9	6	9	6	7	2	0
<b>Badisa Stanford</b>	37	24	13	15	22	31	0	6	0
<b>Badisa Gansbaai</b>	79	41	38	44	35	42	17	21	0
<b>Child Welfare Hermanus</b>	213	170	43	89	124	44	3	167	0
<b>Child Welfare Kleinmond</b>	77	50	27	39	38	54	7	16	0
<b>Department of Social Development</b>	61	44	17	27	34	56	2	3	0
Total:	<b>482</b>	<b>335</b>	<b>147</b>	<b>220</b>	<b>262</b>	<b>233</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>215</b>	<b>0</b>

With a foster care caseload of 482 (table 5) more children are placed in kinship foster care (335) than non-kinship foster care (147). Dorsey, Burns, Southerland, Cox, Wagner and Farmer (2012: 817) distinguish between two forms of fostering considered relevant in terms of similarities with the current South African cultural context where both kinship and non-kinship foster care are prevalent. Reference was made in Chapter 2 (See 2.3.5: The Children's Act and the child in need of care and protection) regarding kinship foster care which involves the placement of a child with a biologically related care-giving relative, and non-kinship fostering involves placement with non-biological care-givers. These ideas also

concur with a British study by Bostock (2004:13), who argued that kinship foster care is the placement of children with family or friends, and this kind of care is considered very beneficial, because families can build on existing relationships, and biological parents have easier access to their children. The general trend in the Overberg is that more children are placed in kinship care than in non-kinship care as reflected in table 1-5, although only table 4 reflects more foster children in non-kinship foster care than kinship foster care, but in terms of the population of Swellendam they are the smallest service delivery area for foster care services in the Overberg. Furthermore, more female persons were in foster care (262) than their male counterparts (233). In terms of 'race' and 'ethnicity' more coloured people are still placed in foster care (233), but specifically in Hermanus there is a very high number of Black African persons in foster care (215); more children from 'coloured' and 'white' ethnic groups placed in foster care. Hence, the community survey of 2016 as referred to in Chapter 4 (See 4.6: The profile of foster care in the Overberg District indicates peculiar diversity and intersections of gender, race and class. For example the Overstrand area indicated that the 'black' Africans are more represented in foster care placements than any other ethnic grouping. Moreover, according to Dassonville, Hunter, Cronje and Van Zyl (2014:20), due to more urban in-migration patterns, particularly from the Eastern Cape, most of the Black population live in Zwelihle (which is part of Hermanus in the Overstrand Municipal area), which has the biggest percentage share of population living in the Overstrand on the most concentrated space. In all the areas of the Overstrand except for the area of Gansbaai, there are fewer 'white' children in foster care placements. However, one should take into account that as a Child Protection NPO, in Gansbaai the service organization there served an area that was previously primarily populated by white residents, but migration of 'African Blacks' and 'Coloureds' in search of work also took place in the Gansbaai area.

#### **4.7 Summary and Conclusion**

The Western Cape Region for Social Development consists of six regions; Cape Winelands and Overberg, Metro North, Metro South, Metro East, West Coast and Eden Karoo as reflected in Chapter 4 (See, Table 1: Joint DSDSASSA reporting template - July 2017. Within these regions there are several Child Protection Organisations ( at least three), as well as Department of Social Development that employ registered social workers and social auxiliary workers to render foster care services. The regions with the highest foster care case loads as reflected in table 2 are: *Cape Winelands and Overberg (4 101)*, Metro East (2 754), Metro North (2 606), Metro South (2 496), Eden Karoo (2 256) and West Coast (1 572). The

Overberg as a district is part of the Cape Winelands and Overberg region and has a lesser share or proportion of foster case loads, e.g. a total of 1 237 children in foster care in the entire region for the period July 2017. It was not possible to establish the breakdown of these statistics on foster placements in terms of kinship and non-kinship care.

The Overberg district consists of four local municipal areas (Theewaterskloof, Overstrand, Cape Agulhas and Swellendam) where the Department of Social Development is responsible for four service delivery areas that fall within the Local Governmental municipal boundaries as mentioned, and are accountable for rendering foster care services. In these four service delivery areas there are also several ( at least three ) child protection organisations that are contracted and licenced service providers funded by the Department of Social Development to render foster care supervision services. However, they form part of the Non-Profit (Non-governmental) sector and the partnership arrangement with the State or Department of Social Development to render foster cares services in the different towns, farms and informal settlements of the Overberg District. The service delivery areas are listed from biggest to smallest, e.g. Theewaterskloof-, Overstrand-, Cape Agulhas- and Swellendam service delivery areas. By the end of July 2017, the latter service delivery areas included all the child protection organisations who deliver services to the following number of foster care children: Theewaterskloof (519), Overstrand (482), Cape Agulhas (168) and Swellendam (68).

In terms of the care placements it has been observed in recent statistics that more children are now placed in kinship foster care (and are from 'african' ethnic group); than non-kinship foster care in all the areas, which appear to be a new trend, at least in the Western Cape. However, in Swellendam which has the lowest number of foster care cases their number of non-kinship foster care placements (18) are higher than their kinship foster care placements (14). Furthermore, a breakdown of the foster care caseloads in the Overstrand Service Delivery Area where the research study was done showed interesting new trends. As mentioned, the Overstrand has the second highest number of foster care cases in the Overberg District as reflected in table 5. However, the local Child Protection NPOs in Hermanus has the highest number of foster care cases (482) in the Overstrand service delivery area after Theewaterskloof (519), more than the state. Moreover, the Department of Social Development (DSD) only render foster care services in the Overstrand Service Delivery Area with sixty one cases (61) since 01 April 2017, after the new demarcation of services and the takeover of an area from a previous NPO in Hermanus. Hence, the latter NPO in Hermanus

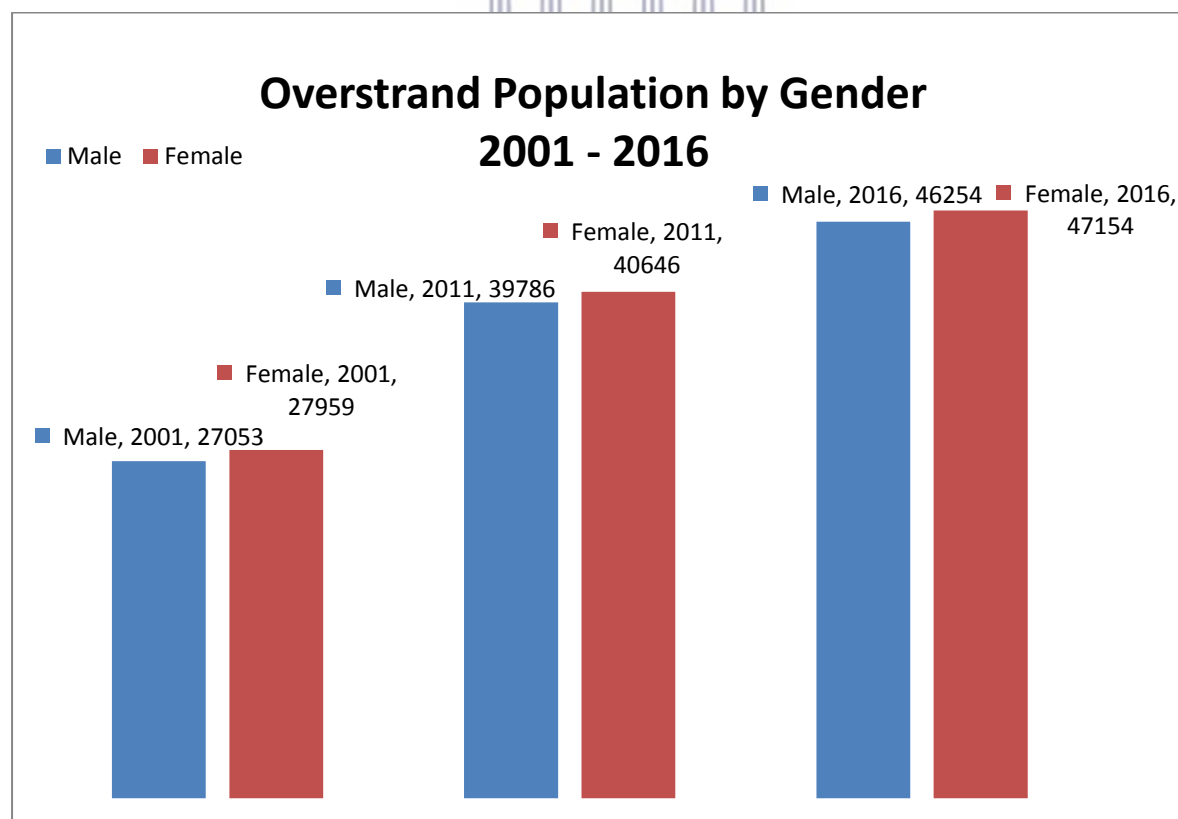
renders social work services to far more children in foster care than the other organisations in the Overstrand as reflected in table 5.

The researcher identified his population and sample from the foster care caseloads in the Overstrand Service Delivery and specifically focused on the Child Protection Organisations in Hermanus and Gansbaai, as well as others in Kleinmond. However, the researcher was able to trace more foster care cases from the case records of the latter, but one should take into account that one organization archived their foster care files, while the other destroyed their records after five years. It was just a coincidence that the researcher was still able to trace foster care files from one particular organization before it was destroyed.

From a research and documentation perspective the practice of destroying case records as referred to in chapter 4 (See 4.4.2 Agency Archival Policies and The Children's Act) deserve further special policy making attention.

#### 4.8 Demographic Information

**Table 6: Population and gender breakdown**



Source: Statistics South Africa, Census 2001, 2011, Community Survey 2016



Over all the three periods 2001, 2011 and 2016 as indicated, the female population is slightly higher than the male population in the Overstrand Municipal area. During 2016 the male population was 49, 52 per cent of the total population in Overstrand, while the female population amounts to 50, 48 per cent.

The table which follows indicated the population by ward and gender in the Overstrand Municipal area, 2011.

**Table 7: Population breakdown according to wards**

Population by Ward and Gender – Overstrand Municipality 2011				
Areas	Ward	Male	Female	Grand Total
Kleinbaai, Franskraal, Masekhane	1	3377	3077	6454
Blompark, Gansbaai	2	3329	3537	6866
Hermanus	3	1961	2306	4267
Westcliff, Mount Pleasant & Hemel and Aarde Valley	4	3686	4115	7801
Zwelihle South	5	3329	3016	6345
Zwelihle North	6	3312	3217	6529
Sandbaai	7	1886	2216	4102
Hawston, Fisherhaven & Honingklip	8	4588	4824	9412
Kleinmond and Protea town-east	9	1142	1304	2446
Protea town – west, Overhills (Palmiet, Betty's Bay, Pringle Bay, Rooi Els)	10	3376	3262	6638
Stanford, Baardskeersdersbos, Pearly Beach, Viljoenshof, Withoogte	11	4716	4370	9086
Zwelihle North-West	12	2742	2593	5335
Onrus & Vermont	13	2341	2810	5151
Grand Total				<b>80432</b>

**Source: 2011 Census, Statistics South Africa**

Zwelihle is a black community 'township' and includes three wards No. 5, No. 6 and No. 12 that are the biggest wards in Overstrand with the largest population totalling 18 209 residents.

In order to give a complete overview of the participants, the demographic information of the participants will be provided in table 8. This table includes the following information of

participants: *age, gender, ethnic group, culture, length of time in foster care and discharge clause.*

As referred to in chapter 3 (See 3.6.2: Sampling) the researcher's sample was purposively selected out of a population of previously foster care cases of Non-Profit Organizations in the areas of the Overstrand Municipal area, including the areas of Hermanus, Kleinmond, Gansbaai and Stanford. The sample of nine participants who were fostered, consisted of two 'coloured' females and one 'black' male under the supervision of an NPO from Hermanus; one 'coloured' male and one 'white' female under supervision of an organization in Kleinmond; one 'coloured' male, one 'black' female and one 'white' male under supervision of an organization in Gansbaai and one 'white' male under supervision of an NPO in Hermanus took part in this study. All nine participants were recruited by means of *non-probability purposive sampling methods*, as reflected in chapter 1 (See 1.8.2.2: Sampling) and participated in one-on-one semi-structured interviews. Hence, participant No. 9 was born out of a 'White', Afrikaans-speaking family, but grew up in a 'White', English-speaking family of who the foster mother was from England and the foster father from Portuguese background. Challenges were faced to interview the Xhosa-speaking female participant of Hermanus Child Welfare as she was never available. A substitute participant from the case records of Badisa in Gansbaai was thus recruited.

**Table 8: Overview of the Demographics of the Research participants**

Participant	Age	Gender	Ethnic Group	Culture	Length in foster care	Children's Act Discharge Clause
1	26	Female	Coloured	Afrikaans	17 years	Section 175 of the Children's Act 38/2005
2	22	Female	White	Afrikaans	15 years	Section 175 of the Children's Act 38/2005
3	27	Male	Coloured	Afrikaans	14 years	Section 175

						of the Children's Act 38/2005
<b>4</b>	25	Female	Coloured	Afrikaans	9 years	Section 175 of the Children's Act 38/2005
<b>5</b>	31	Male	Black	Xhosa	Unknown	Section 37 of the Child Care Act 74/1983
<b>6</b>	35	Male	Coloured	Afrikaans	10 years	Section 37 of the Child Care Act 74/1983
<b>7</b>	19	Male	White	Afrikaans	6 years	Section 175 of the Children's Act 38/2005
<b>8</b>	34	Male	White	English	15 years	Section 37 of the Child Care Act 74/1983
<b>9</b>	22	Female	Black	Xhosa	8 years	Section 175 of the Children's Act 38/2005

The researcher will briefly discuss the demographic data categories pertaining to the participants in the research study.

#### **4.8.1 Age of the Participants and living conditions**

A total of nine participants took part in the study. Due to regional demographic and population settlement trends there were no ‘Indian’ subjects found for recruitment and selection as reflected in chapter 4 (See Table 3- 4: Copy of 2017 18 FC Project monthly NGHCO Joint DSDSASSA reporting template - July 2017). The youngest participant who took part was a 19-year-old ‘white’ male, while the oldest participant was a 35-year-old ‘coloured’ male. Two participants were in their early twenties; three in their middle to late twenties and three in their thirties. *Participant one* lives in a wooden structure consisting of two rooms ( ‘Wendy house’) with her child and cohabitant partner which allowed for some level of safety and privacy on the premises of a well-known friend of them, in a previously designated ‘coloured’ township community in Hermanus. *Participant five* lives alone in an informal structure (shack dwelling) in a black township community, Zwelihle in Hermanus on premises with other persons and families that were also renting and living in informal structures. *Participant six* stays with his cohabitant partner and two minor children in a two-room house called the Reconstruction and Development Plan (RDP) house in a traditional coloured township community, called Blompark in Gansbaai. *Participant eight* lived alone in an upper-class community of Newlands, Cape Town running his own business. However, the other five participants of respectively twenty-two, twenty-seven, twenty-five, nineteen and twenty-two were all still staying with their foster parents, although all of them transitioned into adulthood.

#### **4.8.2 Gender**

*Five* of the *nine* participants who took part in the research study were male, while the remaining *four* were females. Due to the constraints for the researcher to reach the sample and the exhaustive exercise to screen many extra archived case files at Badisa Organization, it appeared coincidental that the five participants that were purposively selected were male and four were female. Hence, if more participants were contactable there could have been more female than male participants and vice versa.


#### **4.8.3 Ethnic groups**

Four of the participants who took part in the research study were “coloured”, three were “white” and two “black” participants. The sample was not exactly representative of the entire population of previously foster children, as one organization destroyed their files five years after termination of service which is contradictory with their policy framework as stated in Chapter 4 (See 4.4.2 Agency Archival Policies and The Children’s Act). Hence, it appeared

that the other organization archived their files in their Hermanus Office, as many of their files were available (See 4.4.2 Agency Archival Policies and The Children’s Act), but participants were not traceable. The findings are thus that most of the archived foster care case files that were scrutinized were of children that were from the ‘coloured’ township communities of Gansbaai, Hermanus, Hawston, Kleinmond and Mount Pleasant. Despite the growing ‘black’ African population in the region as seen in table below in Chapter 4 (See table 9: Overstrand Racial Group 2001-2011) foster care case records of the black communities, Zwelihle and Stanford were in the minority which raise questions about the impact of migration on social work services and the lack of research to update records for purposes of strategic planning for new directions in foster care services for this area.

The participation of the participants was voluntary (See 3.17.1: Informed consent), and the researcher had no control over the outcome of the sample, because it depended on who could be traced (for access and availability) and who would agree to participate (give consent), and whether they met the set criteria (in terms of diversity in terms of gender/ethnicity, and age etc.).

**Table 9: Overstrand Racial Group 2001-2011**



Year	Black African	Coloured	Indian/Asia	White	Other
2001	27%	37%	0,10%	36%	0%
2011	36%	31%	0,30%	31%	1,20%
2016	43%	29%	0,11%	28%	0%

**Source: 2011 Census, Statistics South Africa. Community Survey, 2016**

#### 4.8.4 Culture

Seven of the nine participants (majority) are from an Afrikaans-speaking language background, but one of them grew up in an English-speaking family from the age of approximately three years old. Hence, the parents of *Participant eight* were both Afrikaans-speaking “white” persons who were from Johannesburg. His foster mother originated from the United Kingdom and the foster father was from Portuguese background. He was socialized in an English-speaking “white” culture. The family origins of four of the participants are from an impoverished marginalised working class “coloured” community. Furthermore, the family background of the two Afrikaans-speaking “white” participants both stem from an impoverished “white” working class culture. Both were placed in the foster care

with foster parents who cared for them. Two of the participants originated from a poor, marginalised working class “black” Xhosa-speaking community. Both were respectively placed in the foster care of their maternal aunts. Five participants out of a total of nine were placed in kinship care and four in non-kinship care as reflected in table 4.7.1.

#### **4.8.5 Length in foster care**

Out of the nine participants, *Participant one* faced the longest period in foster care for almost 17 years. She was placed in foster care on 03 April 1996 in terms of the previous Child Care Act No. 74 of 1983 and was discharged from FC in terms of the newly implemented Children’s Act No. 38 of 2005 on 28 April 2010, after she left school in Grade 10. Hence, the participant was born on 24 November 1991 and her placement extended in terms of Section 176 of the Children’s Act no 38 of 2005. She was discharged in accordance with section 175 from the same act at the age of 19 years. *Participant two* was in foster care for almost 15 years from the age of five and a half years and was removed from her biological parents and placed on detention with her maternal aunt. She was then placed in non-kinship foster care from 06 September 2009 till September 2015 with foster parents who were unknown to the biological family, but screened as foster parents by one of the NPOs in Kleinmond. *Participant three* was still staying with his foster parents, although he was legally placed in foster care on 18 February 1994. He stayed in foster care for more than 14 years and was still staying with them. However, he was discharged in terms of the Children’s Act in 2008, as recommended in terms of section 175. But the foster care case records did not provide the specific dates regarding the termination or discharge of services regarding this participant. It appeared that *participant four* has been in foster care for almost eight to nine years, as the case records showed she was placed in alternative foster care on 09 October 2000, when her father died at age 8 years. The records did not state when the participant was discharged from foster care. But in the foster care file it was recorded that a section 159 report recommending extension of the FC period till 08 April 2010 was recorded. *Participant four* passed matric and a school report reflected that she was in matric during 2009; therefore, she should have been discharged in terms of section 175.

Regarding *Participant five* there was no case evidence available, although he claimed that he was fostered by his maternal aunt and she also confirmed that he and his younger brother were placed in her care as foster children. The case file records available from the NPO in Hermanus only reflected case file data of the younger brother of *participant five* who has

moved from the Hermanus area, hence there are no case files records of participant five available from the foster care case records. *Participant six* was in foster care for ten years as his foster care placement was from 29 October 1987. He was discharged after 10 years according to section 37 of the Child Care Act No. 74 of 1983 on 03 December 1997. *Participant seven* remained formally in foster care for six years, but stayed on much longer due to a private arrangement with his foster parents, as the foster mother is also his maternal aunt. He was placed in foster care from 11 June 2009 and discharged from this care arrangement in terms of the new Children's Act No. 38 of 2005 by the end of 2015 when he became eighteen years old and completed his matric. Reference was made in chapter four on the length of stay in foster care (See table 8: Overview of the Demographics of the Research participants).

*Participant eight* was only three years old when he was placed in foster care until the age of nineteen years. He had stayed in foster care for almost sixteen years and described his foster parents as the only parents he knew, as he had no interest in his biological parents. *Participant nine*, 22 years of age and was placed in foster care on 12 September 2007 at age of 14 years and services were terminated when she was discharged from the execution of the section 175 discharge order during 2016 when she became twenty-one years old. Hence, the foster care records did not indicate the school progress of the participant when she was discharged in terms of the Children's Act 38 of 2005, as the last grade stipulated was grade 10 during 2014. Chapter two (See 2.3.5: The Children's Act and the child in need of care and protection), gave a broad discussion on foster care and processes involved, as well as the table (See table 10: Process flow i.t.o placement of children in foster care until discharge).

#### **4.9 Summary and Conclusion**

The demographic table gave an overview of the findings of the case records for all nine participants that were included in the purposive sample in terms of *age, gender, ethnic group, culture, length of time in foster care and the discharge clause* to explain the profile of participants who were involved in this life history study. Hence, the sample was purposively selected from the foster care data base of the NGO welfare sector, BADISA and Child Welfare in a specific area, Overstrand local municipal area to get a broader sense of foster care lived experiences and services in this specific area as mentioned before.

#### **4.10 Foster Care living experiences - Researching Case file records**



#### 4.10.1 From ‘temporary safe care’ to ‘foster care’ to ‘discharge’

**Table 10: Process flow i.t.o. placement of children in foster care until discharge:**

Process flow	Child Care Act no. 74 of 1983	Children’s Act no. 38 of 2005
<b>Temporary removal</b>	<i>Form 4 of Section 13</i> i.t.o. above-mentioned Act	<i>Form 36 removal</i> i.t.o. above-mentioned Act
<b>Children’s Court Inquiry</b>	Found in need of care of care and protection i.t.o. <i>Section 14</i>	Found in need of care and protection i.t.o. <i>Section 150</i>
	Children placed in foster care i.t.o. <i>Section 15</i> (60 day rule )	Children placed in foster care i.t.o. <i>Section 156</i> (90 day rule)
<b>Extensions</b>	Foster care extensions every second year i.t.o. <i>Section 16(2)</i>	Foster care extensions every second year i.t.o. <i>Section 159</i>
<b>Transfer (if placement failed)</b>	Transfer to another foster care placement or child and youth care centre i.t.o. <i>Section 34</i>	Transfer to another foster care placement or child and youth care centre i.t.o. <i>Section 174</i>
<b>Discharge</b>	Discharge form the Child Care Act i.t.o. <i>Section 37</i>	Discharge form the Child Care Act i.t.o. <i>Section 175</i>
<b>Discharge beyond 18 years till 21 years old</b>	Discharge form the Child Care Act i.t.o. <i>Section 33(3)</i>	Discharge form the Child Care Act i.t.o. <i>Section 175</i>

**Sources: Child Care Act no. 74 of 1983 & Children’s Act no. 38 of 2005**

The afore-mentioned table explains the process flow of the movement of children that are removed thorough professional social workers’ interventions. Children removed from parental care into foster care *before* 01 April 2010 were transferred in terms of the Child Care Act 74 of 1983, although there was also a Children’s Amendment Act 41 of 2007 until the Children’s Act 38 of 2005 then in draft form, came to be fully implemented. Changes to the social work helping process regarding the investigation and placement of children in foster care and specifically in these cases, came to light as is the case for the participants who had been started with the issuing of a *Form 4* removal, in terms of *Section of 11, 12 and 13* of the

former Child Care Act 74 of 1983. According to the new Children's Act 38 of 2005 enacted 1 April 2010, a child will be removed with a *Form 36* and placed in temporary safe care if found in need of care in terms of *Section 150, 151 and 152* and after 90 days placed in foster care in terms of *Section 155* and placed in terms of *Section 156*. There could be different reasons for children to be removed from their biological family. However, from 'temporary safe care' placement, a child will be placed in 'foster care' in terms of certain findings as stated in *Section 14* of the old Child Care Act 74 of 1983. Furthermore, after the commissioner of child welfare issues a children's court order in terms of *Section 156* (foster care placement) the social worker needs to take responsibility as case manager to make sure a *Section 159* extension report in terms of the Children's Act 38 of 2005 is completed every second year. This report should reflect the services rendered by a registered social worker to the foster child and his biological parents as stated in Chapter 1 (See 1.1: Child Protection, South African Legislation, and Policy as relevant to appraise 'Foster Care' Studies), and to determine if the foster child had to remain longer in foster care or assess whether the conditions are suitable for the child to be placed back into the care of the biological parents. More so at this point (in terms of the same *Section 159* report) a social worker could recommend that a foster child becomes discharged from the Children's Act 38 of 2005 according to *Section 175 (3)* when he or she reaches the age of eighteen years. If beyond eighteen years old, the foster care placement of the foster child would be extended in terms of *Section 33(3)* of the Child Care Act 74 of 1983. However, the amended Children's Act 38 of 2005 in terms of *Section 176* of the Children's Act 38 of 2005, allows for the extension of the placement due to schooling and studying purposes. This extension can only happen with the permission of both the foster child, together with foster parent(s) for the placement to continue until the age of twenty-one (21). In such exceptional cases the placement is assessed on a year-to-year basis of evaluation of circumstances.

The social work process regarding foster care will be to open a file or case record for the participant starting with an intake form and afterwards all interviews, consultations, meetings or engagements, court reports regarding the foster child, his parents, foster parents and contacts with any other significant others, like the commissioner of the children's court, teachers and psychologist to be reflected in this case file. Hence, the researcher gave an overview of all reporting documents, services rendered to and the participant experiences as reflected in the foster care case file.

#### **4.10.1.1 Temporary safe care placement**

‘Temporary safe care placement’ in terms of *Section 151* of the Children’s Act 38 of 2005 normally takes place, because a child is found in need of care and protection and therefore needs to be urgently removed. For instance, *Participant one* was placed in temporary safe care by way of a temporary safe care order in terms of *Section 13* of the old Child Care Act 74 of 1983 due to the parents’ alcohol abuse and domestic violence which led to the death of the biological mother after the father murdered her. The mother and father were found incompetent to care for their three children and the participant stated during the interview that she was three years old when her father killed her mother in her presence.

#### **4.10.1.2 “Child in need of care and protection”**

In terms of *Section 150(1)* of the Children’s Act 38 of 2005 after a child is been placed in temporary safe care (*Section 151*) it is expected of the social worker to do an in-depth investigation regarding the circumstances of the child and then make a recommendation to the children’s court. The children’s court report should be finalised within 90 days since the intake interview took place. Normally, a social worker will recommend that the child be placed in foster care for the next two years. This will be done in accordance with *Section 15 (1)(a)* of the Child Care Act 74 of 1983, but since the implementation of the Children’s Act 38 of 2005, *Section 156* ( a provision that follows ‘temporary safe care placement’) is being used to issue an order. Hence, the social worker could make certain conditions to the recommendations, for e.g. that the child should be placed in foster care as stated in chapter 3 (See 2.3.5: The Children’s Act and the child in need of care and protection), the parents to pay a contribution order, parents to attend reunification services, a foster care grant to be paid to the foster parents and any other conditions of importance. The investigation will determine if according to the Children’s Act, no. 38 of 2005, *Section 150(1)* whether a child is in need of care and protection. If the child is to be found in need of care and protection, then the child will be placed in foster care in terms of *Section 156*. However, the participants were all placed in terms of the *Section 15 (1) (a)* of previous Child Care Act 74 of 1983. All the sections of the Child Care Act 74 of 1983 had been adjusted to the newly implemented Children’s Act 38 of 2005.

#### **4.11 Duration and extension of orders**

The participants could have been placed in foster care in terms of the Child Care Act 74 of 1983 section 15(1)(b) or else in terms of the Children’s Act 38 of 2005, in terms of section 156 (e)(i). However, all the participants in this study were removed from the care of their

biological parents in terms of the Child Care Act 74 of 1983, before enactment of the Children's Act 38 of 2005. After a child had been placed in foster care it is expected of the social worker to render family reunification services and foster care supervision services. According to Kadungure (2014:34), a South African study, it appears that social workers are not very encouraging to ensure regular contact between the foster child and his or her family and the longer they stay in foster care, the less likely it would happen that they will return home, which make it difficult when they age out of foster care. Furthermore, after every two years while in foster care an extension report in terms of *Section 16(2)* of the Children's Act 74/1983 needed to be completed in terms of foster care supervision and family reunification services. However, since the implementation of the new Children's Act 38/2005 extensions are done in terms of *Section 159*.

There could be many consequences for a child placed in foster care, especially if the foster care placement failed. The child could be transferred to another foster care placement or else the child could be placed deeper into the child care system, e.g. referral or transfer to a Child and Youth Care Centre. According to the Child Care Act 74 of 1983 in terms of *Section 34* or according to *Section 171* of the Children's Act 38 of 2005, transfer of children from one custody or institution to another could happen if foster care placements failed for numerous reasons: death or divorce or relocation in the case of foster care parent; loss of interest in the FC child and placement; behavioural challenges of foster child or any other related reason. (Be it foster parents deceased or divorced, relocated, not interested in the foster child anymore, foster child gives behavioural challenges or whatever the reason might be). Okpych (2012) as cited in Morris (2014:9) stated that fostered youth who experience multiple placement disruptions found it harder to establish daily living skills, like financial management, resolving conflict and organizational abilities that are usually sustained through relationships with supportive adults.

#### **4.12 Disruption of Foster Placements and Provisional transfer from alternative care**

The mentioned reports are completed when a foster child has to be transferred from one to another foster family or from the foster parents back to the biological parents. According to the amendment Children's Act 38 of 2005, if a child is transferred it is done in terms of *Section 174*. However, *Participant one* for example was transferred to the care of the daughter of her foster mother in terms of *Section 34* of the Children's Act no 74 of 1983, when the foster mother died during 2007. Therefore, if children are placed in foster care it is

recommended that children be placed in the care of the foster mother and foster father to prevent unnecessary disruptions in the life of the foster child if something should happen to one foster parent. Stott and Gustavsson (2010) cited in Morris (2014:16) postulate that placement disruption has been the greatest hindrance to foster youth's success. Therefore, youth need stability and permanency while they are in the foster care system, otherwise it may affect their relational life in terms of ability to relate to others.

#### **4.13 Discharge from foster care**

The provincial head of Social Development, may in the best interest of a child at any time whilst the child is in foster care, issue a notice directing that a child be discharged in terms of *Section 175* of the Children's Act 38 of 2005, or as previously in terms of *Section 37* of the Child Care Act 74 of 1983. Three participants in this study were however discharged in terms of *Section 37* of the Child Care Act 74 of 1983 and six participants were discharged in terms of *Section 175* of the Children's Act 38 of 2005. These participants were discharged due to different reasons as most of them reached the age of eighteen years old or even beyond eighteen years before they left the foster home. Five participants of the nine still remained with their foster parents, because they became a child of the family, although all five of them still maintain some contact with some of their biological families.

The consequences of discharge or transitioning out of foster care into independency are that in the Republic of South Africa, the State has no independent living programme in place for foster children exiting from foster care. According to Kadungure (2014:37), South Africa has no legislation to support children who reach the discharge age of 18 or when the adolescent is assessed as 'ready' to leave the foster care system. The consequences are that these adolescents experience great difficulties in terms of personal insecurity to do self-management and to survive in a world which suddenly offers them no support or comfort. Therefore, some participants face tremendous challenges at a very young age. Foster children sometimes do not have a home to stay after discharge from foster care and therefore some land up on the streets. In contrast, policies and legislation in countries such as U.S.A. make provision to increase financial support to state and local child welfare societies, to support programmes which help adolescents leaving the foster care system (Kadungure, 2014:15). "Independent living" programmes have been established in America to help young adults to overcome the difficulties which they face when they leave foster care, according to Kadungure (2014:15). Hence, through these programmes, young people who had left foster

care received several types of assistance, including assistance to complete education and to find employment, instruction in the basic skills needed to live on their own, such as money management, hygiene, house-keeping and nutrition, and supervised living arrangements, such as renting an apartment of their own or with others, while continuing to receive assistance from a child welfare worker. Greeson (2013:41) postulates that the well-being of most young people improves during emerging youth, but the well-being of those who transition out of foster care (reaching a certain age), deteriorates because they take on adult roles and responsibilities at a very young age. One of the participants in this study reported becoming pregnant at the young age of fourteen, while another had a sexual relationship when she was only sixteen years old. Hence, regarding this research study five of the nine participants still stay with their foster parents which could be an indication that there is, given the South African context and housing crises, not an independent living programme or sufficient opportunities for them to become independent.

#### **4.14 Remaining in foster care beyond 18 years**

A foster child in terms of *Section 176* of the Children's Act 38 of 2005 or else in terms of section 33 of the Child Care Act 74 of 1983 is entitled after reaching the age of eighteen years old, to remain in that foster care until the end of the year in which that person reaches the age of 18 years. On application by the social worker, a child in foster care is allowed to remain in care until the end of the year in which that foster child reaches the age of twenty years. However, the conditions will be that the foster parent and the foster child grant permission, the foster parent must be willing to and able to care for that foster child and the continued stay in foster care must be argued as necessary to enable the foster child to complete his school career or tertiary education. For example *Participant two* remained in foster care till the age of twenty-one to complete her matric and participant four also stayed in foster care till the age of twenty-one to complete a tertiary diploma in administration. Furthermore, foster placement of *Participant eight* was also extended till the age of nineteen, because he completed matric at that age. In addition, *Participant nine* also remained in foster care till the age of twenty-one, although she was not able to complete her matric.

#### **4.15 Summary and conclusion**

This chapter provided an overview on the complexities of foster care families in profile data extracted from case records for the nine participants that were sampled for the purposes of study. It provided some background of the regional context in terms of recent migration and



new settlement patterns, as well as the growing diversity of the population in this region which could be seen as resonating with general demographic trends and changes within the Western Cape region as a whole. This chapter also included a discussion of how variables such as *gender, culture, race, age and class* play a role intersecting with the lived experiences of the adults that were exposed to foster care, that now reveal consequences of new shifts in Child Protection policy and the effects on substitute care such as statutory ‘foster care’. The process flow i.t.o. placement and movement of children in foster care until discharge or transitioning in and out of care was reflected on in chapter 4 (See Table 8: Overview of the Demographics of the Research participants). What is significant is the issue of diversity of the participants and the effects of different life experiences of males and females (gender), and how variables, such as race intersected with gender and class. For example, the lifestyle and experiences of the ‘white’ male that was placed with a middle-class family in an upper-class environment stood out from the rest of the participants in the sample that represented mostly marginalised working class life styles and experiences. In addition, this chapter described the details and complexities of local contexts and how demographics are embedded in the context within which organizational foster care services are rendered by social workers employed by Non-Profit Organizations that are now called Designated Child Protection Organisations in terms of *Section 107* of the Children’s Act 38 of 2005.

The next chapter will report on the connections, similarities and information gaps between the archived foster care case records and the data generated through in-depth interviews.



## Chapter Five

### 5. Findings and Discussions of Data Generated by Semi-Structured Interviews

#### 5.1 Introduction

This chapter continues the discussion of findings and results that started in Chapter Four and provide an in-depth discussion of data (themes and sub-themes) generated by implementing the second research instrument, the life story interview guide developed by *Dan P. McAdams (1995)* that was adapted for the life-history approach which combined the study of archival case records (See Chapter 4) with the semi-structured interviews for this case study. An overview of the profile of the participants which includes their background and identity are briefly presented. The findings are then discussed under different themes and sub-themes corresponding to the research tool that was implemented for the analysis of the collected data.

#### 5.2 Participants' profile

The data obtained from nine participants who were purposively sampled was analysed. All subjects were fostered as children and were targeted for the study on the basis of their foster care case records that met the criteria as discussed and explained in Chapter 4. Archived records of NPOs in Gansbaai, Hermanus, Kleinmond and Stanford as well as the foster care case records formed part of the project. The research study included men and women across race/ethnicity and culture (See Chapter 4).

#### 5.3 Themes of the research findings

For easier presentation, the nine themes and sub-themes are shown in tabular form in table 5.1 followed by the discussion of the themes.

**Table 5.1: Themes and sub-themes that emerged from the collected data**

<b>Themes</b>	<b>Sub-Themes</b>
<b>5.3.1 Life chapters in the life of a foster child</b>	<b>5.3.1.1 Highpoints in your life-story as a foster child</b>
	<b>5.3.1.2 Low points in your life-story as a foster child</b>
<b>5.3.2 Critical events during your life as a foster child</b>	<b>5.3.2.1 Peak experiences in your life as a foster child</b>
	<b>5.3.2.2 Turning points in your life as a foster child</b>
	<b>5.3.2.3 Earliest memory in your life as a foster child</b>
	<b>5.3.2.4 Important childhood scene as a foster child</b>
	<b>5.3.2.5 Important adolescent scene as a foster child</b>
	<b>5.3.2.6 Important adult scene as a foster child</b>
	<b>5.3.2.7 One other important scene in your life as a foster child</b>
<b>5.3.3 The single greatest challenge in your life as a foster child</b>	
<b>5.3.4 Influences on the life history as a foster child</b>	<b>5.3.4.1 Positive influences on your life history</b>

	<b>5.3.4.2 Negative influences on your life history</b>
<b>5.3.5 Stories and the life-story of the foster child</b>	
<b>5.3.6 Alternative futures for the foster child</b>	<b>5.3.6.1 Positive future</b>
	<b>5.3.6.2 Negative future</b>
<b>5.3.7 Personal Ideology</b>	<b>5.3.7.1 Fundamental beliefs and values of the foster child</b>
	<b>5.3.7.2 Impact of Political and social issues on the life of the foster child</b>
<b>5.3.8 Life theme of the foster child</b>	
<b>5.3.9 Social work service intervention in the life of the foster child and the role of the foster parent</b>	

### **5.3.1 Theme: Life chapters in the life of a foster child**

Given that five of the nine participants were placed in kinship foster care, the overall experiences of these subjects appeared to have been positive. For example, five out of nine participants still felt a strong attachment towards their biological parents, although they understood the reasons for being placed in foster care. These are evident in some of the following quotations:

*‘Well my heart was broken I was very attached to my mother.’* (Participant, 2)

As reflected in the case file a school report in grade one stated that *participant two* was sometimes emotional and cried, but was happy where she was. It indicated that she missed her biological family.

*‘It’s that a lot of times I missed my parents.’* (Participant, 4)

*'Like my real parents I loved them.'*

(Participant, 5)

The case records of *participant five* indicated that he adapted well to the family and enjoyed playing with his friends and was very passionate about rugby and played for the school team.

*'The reason (for foster care) because she didn't care about us and drank too much.'*

(Participant, 6)

However, the foster care case records of *participant six* indicated that his mother lived with them in the foster home for long periods.

*'The thing that made me feel heartbroken is that I didn't have any contact with my mother and I missed her lot...' It was right to be placed in foster care' ... 'Because my mom and dad had many problems and fights and they didnt look after us properly.'*

(Participant, 7)

*Participant seven* was unaware about his mother's whereabouts. File records between the period 2013- 2015 also confirmed that the mother did not have contact with the participant and his siblings. Case records further reflected that the father of *participant seven* was unemployed for long periods and he was not always able to financially support his children. He allegedly abused alcohol and when drunk, physically abused his wife.

In comparison, statements by participant 1, 3, 8 and 9 gave no reflection on their feelings towards their parents and there was no further information in their records regarding their sense of belonging. The participants who responded on their emotions towards their parents were very specific. For example, views expressed by participants 2, 4, 5 and 7 similarly claimed that they missed their parents and felt heartbroken. Four of the nine participants who were interviewed are still staying with their foster parents, but all of them have some form of income and contribute to the households. Some of the participants (e.g. participant 2, 4, 5 and 7) who are mentioned expressed their attachment, love and connectedness towards their parents, although they do not have contact with them as some are deceased. All participants fully agreed that fostering was necessary at the time when they were removed.

Understanding the relational difficulties of their adjustment and transitioning into adulthood could be further clarified by Erikson's theory (1978) on the developmental concept of

identity as he stated that one must accomplish physical, emotional and cognitive tasks in some order. However, foster youth often face extraordinary relational difficulties due to disruptions in their lives. The latter point is made in a South African study by Tissiman (2008:45) who revealed that a child placed in foster care almost always encounters it as a traumatic experience, as also referred to in chapter 2 (See 2.3.5: The Children's Act and the child in need of care and protection).

### 5.3.1.1 Sub-theme: Highpoints in your life-story as a foster child

All the participants in this study called their foster parents 'mom' and 'dad'. Although some of the participants' own (biological) parents were still alive, the heroic figures in their lives were their foster parents. In most instances participants also saw friends and the community as very important figures in their lives, as they received support and understanding from them as indicated in chapter 1 (See discussion in Chapter 2). In responding to the question on highpoints in their lives as foster children, participants gave the following responses:

*'The greatest impact was my group of friends because they always inspired me and they were always there for me.' 'Another single person was my teacher on the other side.' 'She was also a star for me and she was a mother in class...'*

*'... I regarded her (foster mother) as my mother because she was a mother to me. ... I just say thank you today as a foster child - I work, I am a mother... the parents who raised me they are no more there but thank them for the way they raised me with good manners, respect for adults, greet, look after yourself...take good care of yourself... thank you how they raised me. I am today a grown woman in life.'*

(Participant, 1)

Participant two added another view saying:

*'Yes they (my friends) meant a lot to me when I cry ... they are there for me, I can never go to my mom and say mom listen look I had this problem or it is not so. '*

(Participant, 2)

Hence, this positive experience with peers was also corroborated by the foster care case records. For example, *participant two* was portrayed as a foster child in the foster care environment; someone who enjoyed going shopping with her foster parents, walking, baking and doing needlework.

*'...my aunt raised me I would say there was nothing that indicated that I was living with a person who was not my mother.'* (Participant, 3)

The foster care file of *participant three* described him as having bonded strongly with his foster parents, especially with his foster mother, but he also expressed desires to stay in contact with his biological mother.

The following quotes relate to the 'bonding' relations between foster parents and the foster child:

*'... such opportunities she never deprived me...she would give me enough time to go and have fun.'* (Participant, 3)

*'... they stood in for us as mother and father...'* (Participant, 6)

*'... they were always there when I needed it and supported me.'* (Participant, 7)

*'... my foster parents are my hero's... they did give us a good life.'* (Participant, 8)

The foster care case records of *participant eight* indicated that he regularly spoke out about his appreciation for the opportunities given by his foster parents. This participant learnt to become independent at a young age. His foster care case records further indicated that he was able to attend one of the best schools in the Western Cape, Rondebosch Boys High and also achieved a tertiary degree in hospitality, enabling him to run his own business successfully today:

*'... they (foster parents) loved me a lot and treated me like their own'.* (Participant, 8)

Case records further confirm that *participant eight* and his twin brother developed into well-mannered persons who related very well to their foster parents. There is still open communication between the foster family and the participant who still calls them mom and dad. The participant thus adopted his foster family as his 'real' family and his biological parents as his 'holiday parents'.

There was a strong correlation between the interviews and case records regarding participants 2, 3 and 8. However, although participants 1, 6 and 7, reflected similar views of appreciation and opportunities given by their foster parents, these were not reflected in the case file records. In the mentioned statements it was evident that participants 1, 2, 3, 6, 7 and 8

expressed similar views in terms of their gratitude towards their foster parents for what they had offered them in life. Hence, participants 1, 2 and 3 also referred to significant others like the role of teachers, aunts, other siblings and especially friends in their lives.

It can be argued that the majority of the participants appreciated the opportunity to be placed in foster care, because most of them identified positively with the parental role that their foster parents played. However, they also acknowledged the role played by prominent authority figures beyond the foster family and friends. These sentiments were expressed through appreciation for roles performed by teachers and other extended family members which support some of the authors' ideas discussed in chapter 2 (See 2.4: The strength-based development approach in foster care). Brendtro, Brokenleg and Van Bockern, (2004) for e.g argued that rearing children are also influenced by significant others in communities. Generally, the family and friendship structures are the most important influences in the child's sense of belonging. Many children who have been found in need of substitute care may have suffered a disrupted upbringing, but their sense of belonging can be repaired by forming close relationships with people later in their lives (Brendtro et al., 2004). By means of continuous relationship-building, people are able to regain a sense of positive self and belonging and can form attachments in a healthy family environment (Leliebloem House training manual, 2004). According to Ashworth (2007:29) children have the capacity to observe and listen in order to solve problems.

### **5.3.1.2 Sub-theme: Low points in your life-story as a foster child**

The early stages of foster care placements could be assumed to be a period of high-risk for adjustment of the foster child in foster care as it is a new environment and experience he or she enters.

In support of this point the voices of the participants appear to echo this:

*'...your foster parents also have children and you feel almost like you don't belong there.  
'...you are not our real sister.'* (Participant, 1)

The foster care case records of *participant one* stated that she felt very stranded when she was placed for the first time with the foster family, because she got the feeling the siblings do not want her in their home. It also appeared as if she was more connected to her biological father, because she saw him as the person who supported and cared for her:



*‘... there are always times when you miss your real people... just feel heartbroken, you cry, want time alone. .... when I was a foster child I did not know my previous family.’*

(Participant, 1)

This contrasts with the statement by *participant 2*:

*‘...he had rape me for three months...’*

(Participant, 2)

In the foster home when *participant two* was only ten years old, she was allegedly sexually abused again by a foster family member. She reported the case to her foster mother, but they did not want to believe her. She started creating problems, could not concentrate at school and started using alcohol at the age of sixteen years:

*‘...my past follow me.’ ... I felt I that I was in competition with their family... my mom’s instructions was I was never good enough.’*

(Participant, 2)

The mother of *participant two* became involved in an extra-marital relationship, which caused the father to leave his family. Following this, the mother could not provide in the basic needs of the participant; as the children were left to stay hungry, and allowed to beg for food from people in the community.

In the case of *participant three*, foster care case records stated that he had a very good connection with his mother and family.

*‘...there are other children in the house so sometimes you feel you are second choice. ...lots of time I missed my parents... they are both deceased.’*

(Participant, 4)

*‘... we did not have money; we had to take what we were given.’*

(Participant, 6)

*‘Made me feel heartbroken that I didn’t have contact with my mother and I missed her a lot.’*

(Participant, 7)

According to *participant seven* his mother and his foster mother were in conflict and the mother just decided to leave the area. The case records reflected that the participant was longing for his mother and this left him very sad.

The case file records of participants 4 and 6 gave no evidence to confirm the views they expressed during the interview. They said that they took what they received from their foster parents and appreciated them as they cared and loved them. All the above participants agreed that the foster care placements were not for them like home and they felt like second best or second-rate in the foster home. Their views could be compared with those expressed by several authors reviewed in chapter 2 (See 2.3.5: The Children's Act and the child in need of care and protection). For example, Bruskas' study conducted in the United States of America (USA) indicated that most children in foster care experience feelings of confusion, fear of the unknown, loss, sadness, anxiety and stress (Bruskas, 2008:70). Similarly, Weiner et al. (2011:758) found that once children become part of the foster care system they are continually exposed to stressful factors like separation from the family and known persons, disruption in their mental health and educational services, as well as neglect, abuse and instability. According to Gillen (2005) as cited in Gonzalez (2015:39) the trauma of being taken from one's home or family can be described as: "loss of a loved person is one of the most intensely painful experiences any human can suffer". Shin (2009:42) argued that for an adolescent in foster care the normative development tasks are often negatively influenced, due to their experiences of physical separation and abuse from birth parents, child abuse and neglect and even due to extended stay in foster care.

### 5.3.2 Theme: Critical events during your life as a foster child

Critical occurrences are deemed to be an integral part of the life of a foster child. The participants shared the following:

*'My brothers were in the back of the car and I had to climb out of the car'. 'I could not understand why I had to stay there alone and they cannot stay with me'. 'I just felt heartbroken ...they must go and I must stay'. Furthermore, '...to look back at what I've been through, the hardship, the good, I've learnt a lot, there were tears but today I can see I can talk a lot about it with a clear head.'* (Participant, 1)

There is no reflection in the foster care case files of any bereavement counselling that was offered for *participant one* with the death and loss of her mother. However, the case files do indicate that there was sometimes contact between the foster parent and the social workers of *participant one*. Since the death of the foster mother during 2007 there is no documentary

proof of any services rendered to this foster child up until 2009. Hence, only a transfer report in terms of section 34 of the Child Care Act 74 of 1983 is evident.

*‘... the time I wanted to commit suicide...’* (Participant, 2)

According to the case records of *participant two*, she tried to commit suicide by overdosing. She admitted to her foster mother for having had sex with a person six months after the incident. The participant became depressed and she started using alcohol at the age of sixteen years, which later became a habit. She felt like a failure and tried to commit suicide again.

*‘...when I failed at school... I felt bad because I felt I was disappointing her because she was pushing me to continue with school...It was very painful’.* (Participant, 3)

*‘...when my foster father passed away...’* (Participant, 4)

*‘There was a teacher he would hit you in your face...’* (Participant, 5)

*‘I think my most critical point of my journey was... ending up in the foster home’... the accident... it change my life...I also try to do better on it, it was a bad thing but it became positive.’* (Participant, 8)

The case records stated that *participant eight* was seriously hurt in an accident during 1991 when he was only eight years old. He was hospitalised and remained out of school for quite some time. The participant’s school progress was hampered due to the accident and he experienced it as very traumatic. However, he was able to recover totally.

In the above statements it was evident that participants 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 8 experienced critical events in their lives that varied from separation from siblings, suicide, failing at school, passing on of a foster father and ending up in a foster home. Hence, in terms of participants 3, 4 and 5 it is evident that there are no reflections of above issues; critical occurrences in their foster care case files.

Morris (2014:0) refers to Erikson who addresses the issue of ‘travelling through one’s life-span’ by discussing the accomplishment of certain developmental skills (8 life stages) that get carried into adulthood; *trust, autonomy, initiative, industry, identity, intimacy, generativity and integrity*. Hence, Erickson’s theory (see also Kadungure, 2014) concurs with some of the features of the Life-Course Theory (See 2.2.1: Life-Course Theory and emerging adulthood),

because to accomplish the development skills as identified by Erikson, the individual goes through experiences and critical events during his/her life-span as prescribed by the Life-Course Theory.

### 5.3.2.1 Sub-theme: Peak experiences in your life as a foster child

An important assumption of reference to ‘peak experiences’ in the life story model could be that almost all persons at a certain stage in their life experience extremely positive emotions, like joy, excitement, happiness, upliftment and deeper inner peace. Moreover, persons in foster care although they may come from disruptive backgrounds, they too enjoy moments of joy. The following quotes expressed narratives about the peak experiences of the participants:

*‘...how I grow up; how people raised me... not just what I can say today is I stand out knowing I come out of a good home, I had good foster parents, the encouragement I received, good happiness, I am just happy, I’m not dependent on drugs... I can just trust in the Lord.’*  
(Participant, 1)

The case file records of *participant one* further indicated that she easily adjusted to the foster home and was accepted as a biological child in the family.

*‘...my first job...’ ‘...when I got my driver’s license’ .... ‘Christmas lunch’.* (Participant, 2)

*‘...I played soccer....so I achieved there and would participate in sports events and things like that.’*  
(Participant, 3)

*‘...I’ve studied but I’m not yet what I want to be.’*  
(Participant, 4)

Case records stated that this participant progressed very well within the foster care environment. She completed matric and achieved a tertiary diploma that allowed her to work as an assistant in management.

*‘...I’m glad that I’m older and work for myself now.’*  
(Participant, 6)

*‘... the fact that I could finish school and also that I work for my family and I can also help them’.*  
(Participant, 7)

*‘... is going to school in Cape Town to the boarding school. That was really ‘lekker’ and I made friends there that I have forever...’*  
(Participant, 8)

*Participant eight* had the privilege to attend Rondebosch High School in Rondebosch, Cape Town, a school previously designated or reserved (under pre-1994 apartheid laws) for ‘white’ middle class learners with very high academic standards.

Hence, all participants, except no. 5, reflected on peak or positive experiences during their lives as foster children. These positive responses ranged from praising of good foster parents, involvement in their sports activities, having Christmas lunches, providing opportunities to study, getting work; completing school and the fact that one participant was in boarding school and could associate with good friends. Most of the details provided by participants on positive peak incidents during the interviews were corroborated. But there were no reflections in the case file records of participants 2, 3, 6 and 7 in terms of these issues. It also appeared that *participant 9* had no views during collection of data on issues regarding peak experiences.

It was previously suggested that the foster care placement may become a reclaiming environment for the child (See 2.4: The strength-based development approach in foster care), providing an opportunity to create change to meet the needs of both the foster child and of the foster family and society. One of the key features of the reclaiming environment according to Brendtro, 1999 (in Amroodt, 2011:19) is to experience belonging in a supportive community, rather than being lost in a depersonalized bureaucracy. This follows on Burgess, Rossvoll, Wallace and Daniel’s (2010:297;298) point about young people in kinship foster care needing to feel safe, cared for and loved by their foster parents (See 1: Introduction and Rationale). It was indicated that youth in foster care with stranger foster parents, (non-kinship foster care) were immediately marked as being different from their friends.

### **5.3.2.2 Sub-theme: Turning points in your life as a foster child**

At a certain stage of one’s life a person could experience a particular episode that may be deemed a turning point in your life. The following quotes reflect what was reported as the turning points in the lived experiences of the participants:

*‘...When I was in Standard 6, my foster mother had passed on.... I had to go right or left. I told myself you can’t go left because left is bad, go right. You have to think for yourself... look forward and see well. To myself I said ... you are grown you must go, whatever happens look forward and all that will help is to have the Lord on my side’.* (Participant, 1)

*Participant one's* foster mother deceased when she was still very young, and she was then transferred to the care of her foster mother's eldest daughter. However, since then the family lost their house and the foster child literally ended up on the streets. She became independent at a very tender young age and found employment.

*'... it was my first child... there are things that I can stop doing because I saw that I was on another level now and I'm an adult. Things like alcohol... I cut back and smoking cigarettes ... I stopped partying... and started saving money... I knew I had a child and I have to wake up and go to work.'* (Participant, 3)

*'...there were times I smoked dagga... I withdrew from those friends. My mother (foster mother) also said 'choose the right friends'.* (Participant, 5)

*'...now I had to work for myself and there wasn't any work... there were times when I'd decide I want to go to Queenstown and not come back.'* (Participant, 6)

It was the turning point in the life of *participant six* when he started working in the building industry at the age of seventeen years with not much school education.

*'... getting fostered, like I said was getting to know a good family and getting it work at yourself.'* (Participant, 8)

The case records stated that the foster parents ensured that *participant eight* had a happy and secured future.

What was evident in the above statements is that five of the nine participants experienced some critical turning points in their lives (death of foster parent, homelessness, becoming a teenage father; unemployment, substance abuse, starting a job at a young age, and being placed in foster care itself). Hence, three participants: 2, 4 and 7 had no views to reflect during the interview on this topic. When comparing these incidents there were no similarities in the individual views from participants 1, 3, 5, 6 and 8 in terms of these turning points in their lives. *Participant 1* gave her view that the day when her foster mother died, was the turning point for her, because she had to stand on her own. While for *participant 3* it was the responsibility of becoming a father; *participant 5* started smoking dagga but withdrew later from the wrong friends and *participant 6* realised he had to start work but there was no work. For *participant 8* it was a turning point in his life when he was fostered.



Hence, the above responses of participants gave some details regarding the individuality expressed in those turning points or incidents that impacted their lives to consider as changes and life decisions. The consideration about change and life decision making are important to compare with the views in the literature on Life-Course Theory that were reviewed.

In this regard Kadungure (2014:37), e.g. stated that South Africa has no legislation to support children who reach the age when they should leave the foster care system and suddenly they are left without comfort at this stage, which could seriously affect their life-changing decisions. Therefore, as indicated by Gonzalez (2015:14) the foster child aging out of foster go from State support to little or no support. Greeson (2013:41) further argued that young people who become emancipated from the child welfare system and enter emerging adulthood are on their own much earlier than other young people of their age (See 2.2.1: Life-Course Theory and emerging adulthood). This may result in the overall extension of youth as a life-course phase that may last a few decades. However, others argued that through continuous relationship-building, the child is able to regain a sense of belonging and form attachments in a healthy family environment (Leliebloem House training manual, 2004). But the latter view is contrary to Greeson's ideas on 'emerging adults', as he postulates that the well-being of those who transition out of foster care (reaching a certain age), may be compromised as they take on adult roles and responsibilities at a very young age.

Hence following Life-Course Theory, Hutchinson (2010:2) argues that the key idea regarding this perspective is to attempt to understand the twists and turns in the paths of the individual's life.

### **5.3.2.3 Sub-theme: Earliest memory in your life as foster child**

The life history approach assumes that significant events could have happened in one's early life as a child that stay in your memory or help to shape the person you are today. The following quotes from participants are very relevant to understand the issue:

*'... when I turned 7 and I was getting a bit naughty and I didn't do as she had told me...she had packed my bag...and said to me that she was going to call the welfare and they were going to fetch me... I stood by the gate and cried and thought where I am going to go now... I cried and sat on the bag thinking you can't leave these people you love this 'auntie' and she loves me too why is she sending me away, what did I do? I said I'm not going and I won't do it ever again... I felt that was one of those memories in my life'. '...as children we make the*



*sound 'nch'... and I remember she (foster mother) take a bottle and slammed me straight across my face. Today I laugh about it because it's a good memory that she left me.'*

(Participant, 1)

*'... I can remember I was around five when I was removed from my biological parents. I had a kangaroo puppet I know I stole it when I was small always at the welfare offices there was always the teddie bears. And I know there was of the welfare people who have seen me, then I put it in my jacket and pretended as if my stomach is full (laugh) and then my mom come and they want me to get rid of the teddy; some of them wanted to take all that memories away from me.'*

(Participant, 2)

*'... I can remember the sleeping conditions of we sleeping together in one room...we shared beds and then i remember...when I was with my real brothers when I was smaller. We used to have those visits with the parents to the social workers that was usually fun times when we can play'(the participants was then around 2 years old).'*

(Participant, 8)

The evidence of these statements indicated that there were few similarities in the issues as participants 1, 2 and 3 had different views. The other participants gave no reflections during interviews and there were no records in the case files to verify these matters. *Participant 1* could remember that there was a period when her foster mother did not want to care for her anymore; while *participant 2* still had the memories of stealing a puppet at the welfare office, which she still kept with her. *Participant 8* vaguely remembered that when he was a toddler there was a time that he slept at the 'nanny house' where he was placed in temporary safe care.

These narratives at ages 7, 5 and 2 or 3 years remembered by participants seem to validate some of the assumptions of the 'autobiographical memory' in the life-history approach.

According to McAdams (2001, 2009) as cited in Hemmings (2010:23) autobiographical memory is very essential, because it provides a structure for the later emergence of the life story and such memory emerges around the age of children of two and four years old. Hemmings (2010:23) further stated that this means these toddlers can remember and tell little anecdotes about things that have happened to them, and portray this intention within their story, such as wanting an ice-cream whilst on a trip to the sea side. A study by Tissiman (2008:45) reveals that a placement of children in foster care is almost always a traumatic experience, and their lives are disrupted or at risk as reflected also in chapter one (See 1.4.5:

The Children's Act and the Child in Need of Care), even before they are placed which could be remembered for a long time.

The things or events that children of these early ages remember, may thus impact on relations and abilities to build relationships in later life.

#### **5.3.2.4 Sub-theme: Important childhood scene as a foster child**

All persons are deemed to have experiences and memories of their childhood which they regard as of importance or of significance. The following quotes describe the specific childhood scenes that the participants remembered:

*'...I went to the pool (without permission) instead of washing the dishes. Today I'm learned, I clean... I feel like if I am in my home I am much safer because that is what my foster mother) would always say 'stay in the house because outside it is dangerous.'* (Participant, 1)

*'... toe ek begin netbal speel het. (since I started playing netball). ...' my first party was when I was nine...It was my first party my mom and them took us to Spur.'* (Participant, 2)

*'... there were those things maybe someone from outside... The problem is I was always happy and I seldom ever felt sad. ... it gave that 'get up and do' attitude and patience. If you didn't get anything today then you wake up and try again tomorrow. Sometimes you would set your trap in the garden and wait... we wanted those black birds. We would go fishing as well with other people. It shows that you can share and cooperate with other people.... it's like starting a new job, you don't know the culture of the place and you learn how the people there are and how things are done. You first have to get to know the people, some may be short tempered, some might not like jokes, some may be rude, so you have to get to know them.'* (Participant, 3)

*'...when I got my first phone at the age of 10... I had always wanted a phone but I never said and then one on Christmas I got this present.'* (Participant, 4)

*'We played a lot... We just played 'kennetjies' ... we play touch.'* (Participant, 6)

The case file records of *participant six* indicated that he adapted well to the family and enjoyed playing with his friends and was very passionate about rugby and played for the school team.

*'... memory of when I was in Hermanus ..I used to do a lot of sport and surfing ... that accident is something I always will remember and I will never forget'.* (Participant, 8)

It is clear from above statements that the participants identified very different experiences of their childhood which were of significance to them. Some mentioned leisure, gifts, while others mentioned trauma, etc. Participants 6 and 8 remembered how they played and took part in games and sport activities like 'kennetjie', touch rugby and surfing. According to *participant 8* he would always remember from his childhood years the accident where he got seriously hurt. *Participant 1* remembered that she left the foster home without permission and learnt from her foster mother the importance of staying in your home and you would be safe; *participant 2* remembered her first birthday party at 9 years of age; *participant 3* learnt that through fishing and catching birds you would understand people and for *participant 4* her important childhood scene was the Christmas when she received her first cell phone at the age of 10 years old. Participants 5, 7 and 9 did not reflect any views on above issues and only the views of *participant 6* during the interviews were connected to the case file records.

Morris (2014:15) argued that a youth's friendship relations with peers contribute in shaping the emotional and cognitive developments of how a young person interacts with others. Erikson's development theory (1978) speaks about life stages and his theory could also be applicable to childhood as a life-stage (See also 2.2.1: Life-Course Theory and emerging adulthood) and it could be negative or positive of nature.

#### **5.3.2.5 Sub-theme: Important adolescent scene as a foster child**

The period between adolescence and adulthood, which is also called the emerging adulthood stage, is considered a significant life-changing experience. The following quotes from participants expressed their emerging adulthood:

*'I had a friend who I'd always bring along home with me after school and we'd make chips and waste the oil...we would always clean-up... she (foster mother) knew in the evenings when she got home that we were using her things. She always put me in the corner in the room, ...and she'd say "you don't get out of that room" and I'd stay there until 7 o'clock in the evening and I'd always say to her 'I'm going to tell my dad that mommy smokes' and she always had a R2 for me and I'd go over the road and play games so that i would forget.'*

(Participant, 1)

*‘...my past brings me back that gave me a short temper...’ ‘... yes if me and my mom goes a little bit shopping or do something nice because it is mom and daughter together...’*

(Participant, 2)

*‘... it was these things of love; it was this lady who was living with this other man but we knew each other and I knew the man she was living with and as I would go there I went as a child but she had other intentions... ... that’s one of the reasons I failed at school because I would wake up and pass there on my way to school, and I would eat lunch there. ... I told my aunt what was happening. The problem is that I got tired and I was overwhelmed... She always wanted me to be next to her. It started off very slowly but grew. We had even planned to move away together. I had even been to her home in Virginia in the Free State and her brothers also noticed that something was going on between us.’*

(Participant, 3)

*‘...the fact that my friends did things that I told myself I wasn’t going to do and I wasn’t intimidated by that and I told myself that I don’t have to do it and I’m not going to do it.’*

(Participant, 4)

Case file records for *participant four* confirmed that the foster parents never had any problems with the foster child. It indicated further that this *participant* avoided negative peer influences and made good choices and decisions in life, because her friends started experimenting with cigarettes and alcohol and she immediately distanced her from them.

*‘The most difficult for me was to accept that I was being raised by other people. The children at the school would always ask me where my real parents are and why I don’t live with them.’*

(Participant, 7)

*Participant seven* and his siblings moved in with their maternal aunt and her husband. Hence, the participant was spared all the trauma in the lovely caring environment which his foster parents was able to give, but the sense of belonging was broken as he did not get the opportunity to grow up in the caring environment of his own family. He was able to complete his matric, while living in the foster care home with his maternal aunt and her husband. The foster parents offered stability and only wanted the best for him and his siblings.

*‘...that is quite important..... the negative things that happened to me and all that stuff... and the fact that i go into sports and I had these goals in my life... I think that was a great path I took because I had all these things in Hermanus... I could have done drugs, but I didn't, I focus on sport and all my friends and family and things... I behave much better as a teenage as younger.*

(Participant, 8)

*‘Being supported at home. Like they showed me about life and told me about things that happen in life and protecting my child so that my child doesn't end up in the same situation that I was in. To be able to raise my child properly, they gave me support. Educating me, till grade 12, I finished last year.’*

(Participant, 9)

It is evident from the above views that the participants experienced very different adolescent ‘scenes’ as part of their life stories. *Participant 1* remembered that she was disobedient and locked up by her foster mother. However, she threatened her foster mother that she would tell the foster father she was smoking. In turn the participant received money (R2, 00) from the foster mother to play games nearby. For *participant 2* it was the shopping and nice things she and the foster mother did together; for *participant 3* it was a bad experience to become involved with an older, married woman; *participant 4* remembered that she never allowed her friends to intimidate her and for *participant 7* it was difficult to accept being raised by other people. The views of participants 4 and 7 were similar to their case file records. Participants 5 and 6 did not respond on above issues and there was no reference in their foster care case file records. *Participant 8* learnt a lot out of the negative things that happened to him and became a stronger positive person who rather chose sports, instead of using drugs. *Participant 9* appreciated the support she received from her family to raise her child and to be able to complete her matric.

Following Morris (2014:9), permanent placement is about foster youth that are connected to a family for support that is supposed to consist of physical, emotional and social assistance. Hemmings (2010:32) stated that the adolescent period of 12-16 years, is seen as a period of major transition where the stability of knowing who ‘one’ once was as a child has gone, but the certainty of which one will become within the adult world is still unknown. According to Shin (2009:42) for adolescents in foster care the normative development tasks associated with adolescence are often negatively influenced due to their experience of physical separation from birth parents, child abuse and neglect and even due to extended stay in foster care. However, any person experiencing the adolescent stage is deemed to experience important or

significant events, be it negative or positive. Burgess, Rossvoll, Wallace and Daniel (2010:297; 298) draws a distinction between kinship and non-kinship. They found in their study that young people in kinship care felt safe, cared for and loved by their foster parents as even stated in chapter two (See 2.3.5: The Children's Act and the child in need of care and protection), while it was indicated that youth in foster care with stranger, non-kinship foster parents, were immediately marked as being different from their friends.

### 5.3.2.6 Sub-theme: Important late adolescence scene as a foster child

Late adolescence is the age or period when youth leave school, embark on higher education, enter the workforce, form relationships and become independent. The following expressions of participants are very applicable:

*'After 21 I got a job, I said to myself you must earn your own money, you must have your own place, you can't think back to when you were little those are things that happened you have to look forward. I also had a boyfriend ... 22 when I got a boyfriend and 23 when I had a baby. What stands out is that I am now grown and can stand on my own two feet sir and look forward.'*

(Participant, 1)

*'It's not coming to me I had to think very hard.'*

(Participant, 4)

The case files of participant four indicated that she completed matric and even completed a tertiary diploma.

*'I would say its independence, learning to be independent and standing on one's own.'*

(Participant, 6)

*'...I obviously did my matric and that was a great thing it was a great achievement... a gap year and I worked and I save and I went to the UK and I work there for 2 years try to find out what I want to do in life... I taking the gap year and working in the hospitality... I study hospitality at the University of Cape Technology.'*

(Participant, 8)

The case records of participant eight reflected that the participant received many opportunities during his foster care placements and even the best education opportunities.



*'I'm 22. Wanting to go to school. I cannot say there is any event just that I would still like to go to school. A College... I am going in June.'* (Participant, 9)

The researcher found a correlation in the motivation and aspirational views expressed by *participant 4*, a 25-year-old female, 'coloured', Afrikaans-speaking person and that of *participant 8*, a 34-year-old male, 'white', English-speaking person. Both participants completed their school career and received tertiary education. Hence, *participant 9*, a 22-year-old female, black and Xhosa-speaking person appeared very ambitious to get to a College. In addition, although *participant 1*, a 26-year-old female, 'coloured', Afrikaans-speaking person and *participant 3*, a 31-year-old male, Black, Xhosa-speaking person had not completed their school careers, they shared views on how they became independent in life.

Unlike the supportive foster care policy measures that Kadungure (2014:15) point out in terms of the "independent living" programmes established in America to help young adults overcome the difficulties which they face when they leave foster care, the South African developmental context is very different, as most young people who are from poorer socio-economic backgrounds and who strive to become 'independent' are forced to enter the labour market, most times without any assistance. Arnett (2007:68) proposed the term 'emerging' adults to refer to the age period 18-25 years old. However, young people emancipating from the child welfare system and entering into 'emerging adulthood' are on their own earlier than other young people of their age (See 2.2.1: Life-Course Theory and emerging adulthood), due to the overall extension of youth as a life-course phase over the last few decades according to Greeson (2013:41).

### **5.3.2.7 Sub-theme: One other important scene in your life as a foster child**

While participants went through their life journey, there were more events beyond foster care that stood out in their memory as being significant. The participants gave meaning to other important events in their lives as foster children as follows:

*'When it was my birthday I never received a gift or well wishes from other people before my foster placement. My foster parents would always give me 3 choices- it's money, clothes or Spur and I'd never been to Spur or Kentucky or anything so each year I chose one thing.'*

(Participant, 1)



*'I would say the event with the older woman that was the one because I didn't have any other events while I was in foster care. I was delayed a lot because of that; I was not the type of person for it.'*

(Participant, 3)

*'To have grown up with my own parents.'*

(Participant, 4)

*'I made wrong decisions in life and blah but it all works its way out you know going through all the negatives at a younger age helped me to make the right decisions... at boarding school I made a lot of friends and connections and... I was honest from day one with them I said I was foster and I had a different surname as my parents and that they were a lot older...I think that's the most important thing for me being successful in life and letting my parents know that they never made a mistake when they take me in as a foster child and they can be proud of me the way I turned out.'*

(Participant, 8)

In summary, it became evident to the researcher that there is no correlation between the different participants' views on the above issue of reporting 'one other important scene' in their lives. Hence, participants 2, 5, 6 and 7 did not give their views during data collection on these issues. Further on, *participant 1*, a 26-year-old female, 'coloured', Afrikaans-speaking participant viewed that she never received a gift before. She was placed in foster care, but during her years as foster child always received things of value. For *participant 3*, 31 years old, male, Black, Xhosa-speaking person, he felt his life was delayed due to a relationship with an older woman. It was very important for *participant 4*, 25 years old, female, 'coloured', Afrikaans-speaking person to have grown up with his own parents, which never materialized. For *participant 8*, 34 years old, male, white, English-speaking person it was how the negative happenings had motivated him to make the right decisions for his future.

Adhering to the principles of the life-history approach that use Life-Course Theory, the latter attempts at relationship building, daily living, transitioning, chronological age, and how people are socially shaped and changed, from birth are important (Greeson, 2013:41; See Chapter 2 and discussion in 2.2.1: Life-Course Theory and emerging adulthood). McAdams' life-story model (1995) for example refers to narration of a person's past, present and anticipated future, pointing to an evolving story of the self, which provides meaning and purpose of each individual.

### **5.3.3 Theme: The single greatest challenge in your life as a foster child**

During your life history as a journey from birth through the different life-stages most people experience scenes, but there is sometimes a specific scene or event which is your single greatest challenge that you have faced. The participants expressed their life challenges as follows:

*‘...the most difficult was the day she (foster mother) passed away, that was the hardest in my life... that was really my most difficult of my entire foster... She gave me a very good life, today when I look at my child I want the same for him that she taught me.’* (Participant, 1)

The most traumatic period for *participant one* according to case file records was when her foster mother died, because she perceived this person as the only mother figure she knew and described her as her role-model. The participant also described another traumatic event she experienced as the day when she and her siblings were separated.

*‘... I think that was when I want to suicide...we went to the welfare, and then they got forms for rehab, I agreed and said I will go to make them happy. And like my mom say it’s for them not for me and I’m like, all that will help me is you and your support.’ I had nightmares and I went to a psychologist.’* (Participant, 2)

*‘...I would say the event with the older woman... I was delayed a lot because of that; I was not the type of person for it.’...because it was a way to bring light to it and put a stop to it... Since there was a meeting about it I would say they assisted me. There was a difference after when I compare to before when I was still involved there. I was able to function properly because before I was not able to focus but after I could focus because the weight was lifted.’*

(Participant, 3)

*‘I tried to accept that I am now with foster parents and not my own parents and every time I just carried on and hoped it would get better.’ I couldn’t say my mom does this and my dad does this because they weren’t my own parents...’I didn’t speak out about how I felt so that does why no one knew how I felt but I would think to myself that it will get better. To say that I appreciate them and to care about other people.’* (Participant, 4)

*‘...my greatest challenge in life is what I was just saying not knowing so what happened to me in my older age like uhm I do enjoyed...I’ve got a real disgust towards alcohol and that can maybe me because my parents drank a lot.’...my foster parents helped me a lot like I said*

*they were a lot older their ideas and logic was from the old time so they don't know like things happening now in the world the technology and all the other things uhm ya but I rely on my brother and sister who are a lot older than me, also my friends.* ' (Participant, 8)

It is clear from the above narrations that participant 5-7 and 9 did not voice their opinions in terms of the above issue, namely 'single greatest challenge'. Hence, participant 1-4 and 8 had different views regarding their single greatest challenge during their life as a foster child. *Participant one*, a friendly 26-year-old, 'coloured', female, Afrikaans-speaking person found it hardest in life when her foster mother died, while she was still in foster care. The second participant (no. 2), an attractive 22-year-old, white, female, Afrikaans-speaking person found her greatest single challenge when she became suicidal but survived the attempt. *Participant 3*, a 27-year-old, male, Black, Xhosa found it challenging in his foster care youth life when he got involved in a relationship with an older married woman. In addition, *participant 4*, a 25-year-old, female, coloured and Afrikaans-speaking found it very difficult to accept that she is with foster parents and not with her biological parents.

Most of these revelations appear to support arguments that the trauma of being taken from one's home or family is an intensely painful experience, and that once children become part of the foster care system they are continually exposed to stressful factors, amongst others, separation from the family and known persons, disruption in their mental health and educational services, as well as neglect, abuse and instability (Gillen: 2005, cited in Gonzalez ,2015:39; Weiner et al., 2011:758; See also Chapter 2; section 2.3.5: The Children's Act and the child in need of care and protection). Arnett's (2007:71) arguments appear relevant to contextualise these varied views in that although most emerging adults appear to thrive on the freedom of this life stage, others find themselves lost and may begin to experience serious mental health problems.

#### **5.3.4 Theme: Influences on the life history as a foster child**

In this sample of nine participants the majority saw their foster care parents as persons who had a positive influence in their lives, and for some participants social workers were somehow supportive. Any person could have a negative or positive influence on the foster child, be it a social worker, foster parent, biological parent, priest, teachers, church organisation or anybody else. Kadushin (1980:359) states that the social worker assures the foster parents that his/her occasional negative feelings towards the foster child are

understandable, acceptable and normal and that an occasional failure in dealing with the foster child is inevitable. It is understandable that most participants would see their foster parents as very influential in their lives, because they become increasingly attached to the participant and felt responsible to ensure that the participant's development needs are effectively met.

According to Galloway, Wessels and Strydom (2013:126) it became clear that foster parents have an eagerness to care for the foster child in their care, but despite this eagerness they often experienced negative feelings because of the children's behaviour and this confuses them. It causes them to become anxious and they may feel out of control. This is underlined by Guishard-Pine, et al. (2007:34) when they state: "Very often when a child in your care is driving you to distraction, it is natural to find yourself tuning in to the negatives – how they disrupt, how they hurt themselves, how unhelpful certain ways of behaving are, and even how their behaviour does not make sense to you."

The responses of the participants to this theme of 'influences' will be discussed in the sub-themes below.

#### **5.3.4.1 Sub-theme: Positive influences on your life history**

To describe foster parenting is to state that it is more than being a parent, because you have to care for someone else's child. The rewards for parenting could include contributing and making a difference to a child's life but fostering can be challenging in ways that can affect care-giving foster parents physically, emotionally and financially. This issue of 'positive influences on your life' was expressed by participants in the following citations:

*'We had a Youth group at the NG Church. Every afternoon there was something for children with no parents. I joined the group... and I stayed with it because it was also to introduce me to people, socialize with people and get to know them better..... Another single person was my teacher on the other side.' 'She was also a star for me and she was a mother in class. She would say I should take good care of myself and I should put effort into my school work....'*

(Participant, 1)

*'...I will say my mom...I said so many things of her. I still love her.'*

(Participant, 2)

According to the foster care case records of *participant two* the foster placement was described as very stable as the foster child was very happy.

*'I would say my sister because she was also there for me and she went through what I went through. She always helped me and said she understands how I feel but I never said how I felt but it showed'.* (Participant, 4)

*'That auntie (foster mother) there where I lived.'* (Participant, 5)

*'My friends and my family.'* (Participant, 6)

*Participant six* indicated that he adapted well to the family and enjoyed playing with his friends and was very passionate about rugby and played for the school team.

*'The greatest impact was my group of friends because they always inspired me and they were always there for me.' My father (biological) as well. He always came to visit, showed that he cared about us and thought about us and brought us things.'* (Participant, 7)

*Participant seven* liked to be with friends but also liked to be at home to enjoy time spending with his play station. The need for foster youth to have friends to lean on friendships for peer support cannot be underestimated. In addition, *participant seven* had regular contact with his father who lived nearby and there was a bond between them. The participant's father visited the foster home regularly. He was employed and financially independent and gave the participant pocket money.

*'...the greatest influence on my story will be again my foster parents and again the school I went to... being in the boarding school being in that environment the discipline there I think helped me a lot.'* (Participant, 8)

The foster parents and foster children (*participant eight*) arrived in Hermanus during November 1989 and had contact with the social worker who observed that a very close bond between foster children and foster family members existed.

To summarise, there were different persons that had a positive influence on the lives of the participants. However, three of the nine, participants 3, 4 and 9 did not identify anyone. The participants who expressed views on persons who influenced them positively had mostly similar influential persons in their lives: for *participant one* it was the youth group (peers) at

the church where other foster children also attended; the love and the care of teachers (authoritative figures), foster parents and friends in the life of participants 2, 5, 6, 7 and 8. *Participant 7* even saw his biological father as a person who had a great impact on his life, who cared for him because he continued to regularly visit him at the house of the foster parents. Furthermore, the views of four of the nine, participants 2, 6, 7 and 8 during the interviews correlated with the data in their foster care case files where the love, care and interest of the role players mentioned were reflected.

However, while reunification work and re-establishing relations with biological family is often stressed as important in most policies and social work publications on foster care, contact with biological family was not mentioned as a positive influence in their lives.

Durand (2007:26) for example stated that one of the goals of foster care is to preserve families with the ultimate aim to reunify children with their biological families and to prepare the young person for independent living once he/she left foster care. But except for one participant who shared the continued contact with his father as a positive influence, the latter aim, i.e. 'reunification' with biological families was not the standard practice; and hence were not found a 'positive influence' in the views of these participants.

#### **5.3.4.2 Sub-theme: Negative influences on your life history**

When asked about negative influences in their life histories, the participants in this research study also reflected that their biological family and biological parents had a negative impact on their life story. Some of the responses by participants on this issue were captured as follows:

*'...there it's my real family; my nieces and nephews. They would always say to me outright that you live with other people and they always wanted to be better than me because I did not have what they had and they would take things from me when I am coming from the shop. To this day they always have something to say to me (negative).'* (Participant, 1)

According to the case file records *participant one* was rejected by the maternal grandfather and he did not want to take care of her anymore. Further in the case records the participant stated that due to the rejection of her biological family she developed a dislike in them and did not show any interest in them.



*‘...the only negative influence was my real parents and then after that everything was just positive... I also said the social workers could be more involved after like I say five or so like if I want still found out information now I would like to like there’s a file there and there is information in that file like I said that not a negative thing out I’m thinking out loud now. The negative does not know where your roots are’.* (Participant, 8)

Case records of *participant eight* reflected that his biological parents were not much concerned when they heard that the foster parents planned to move to another area. The participant when visiting his biological parents and siblings during holidays found it more traumatic when separated from the siblings than from the parents. The participant stated in case records that he had no need to have contact with his biological parents.

In summary, it is evident in corroborating archived records and transcripts that both participants 1 and 8 who reflected their views had similar opinions that their biological families had negative influences on their lives. *Participant one*, a 26-year-old, ‘coloured’, female, Afrikaans-speaking person felt that her biological family rejected her and that she was badly treated by her nieces and nephews. This information was verified as her foster care records identified similar negative influences in the maternal grandfather who rejected her and she developed a dislike in her biological family. *Participant 8*, a 34-year-old, white, English-speaking male also felt negatively towards his biological parents and he was also of the view that social workers should do more for their clients. Foster care case records of *Participant 8* stated that his parents were not concerned when they heard that the foster parents were going to leave the area with the foster children. While *participant 8*, mentioned his biological parents he also experienced it very traumatic when he had to leave his siblings behind after visiting them during holidays. All the other participants did not express their views on the matter.

The White Paper on Families (1997) cited in Durand (2007:16) emphasises the importance of the family unit in family life in South Africa. This focus is despite many social problems and factors that affect the family. These factors have been detrimental to family life in South Africa especially if growing statistics of children found in need of care and protection by the children’s courts are taken into account.



This scenario raises serious questions regarding family wellbeing, family interventions, child care and protection work and early prevention and assessments for interventions by social workers and other helping professions.

### 5.3.5 Theme: Stories and the life-story of the foster child

One of the assumptions of the life-history approach is that in narrating the life story of the participants, there could be stories that have had an impact on their lives, be it stories told by participant's parents, teachers, friends, family, on the radio, in movies, in churches, in synagogues and so forth. Furthermore, some of these stories could be the participant's favourite ones and it may be of significance to understand how these stories may have influenced or shaped how participants think about their own lives and their life-histories. The following quotes revealed some stories that stuck with participants:

*'Boetie and Sissie (story at school) was like glue; they did things together and were always together.'* (Participant, 1)

In the case file of *participant one* it is stated that the participant had a very strong bond and love for her siblings, but they were separated as the foster mother only wanted the participant in her foster care.

*Participant one* also quoted another story: *'...It was Jennifer Lopez, she and her husband were always fighting and there was always this child in the middle. I named this one because it reminded me of my parents, they were the same. They were always fighting and I was always in the middle and that's where I saw my mother die in front of me and how my father killed my mother in front of me. That is why I do not like any fighting...'* (Participant, 1)

In this regard, the researcher observed with interest the file entry or note in the foster care case records of *participant one* where the view reflected by a social work case manager was one of 'surprise', stating that *participant one* 'did not show any trauma after the death of her mother although she was present during the incident'. The participant often had to stay with family and friends when the domestic violence happened which became allegedly very brutal.

*'...I wanted to say 'dus ek Anna' (character in story) ... it's about the mother and stepfather... I will compare the stepfather as my nephew... he raped me and in the book the*

*stepfather raped Anna... And the mother also didn't believe what Anna told her... Anna's case, the mother loved the boyfriend too much...* (Participant, 2)

According to case file records at the age of ten *participant two* was raped over a period by a cousin of her foster family and she tried to commit suicide on more than one occasion.

*'It will also help my children because I can also tell them about my life so that they can also understand their own lives so that when they come across such things they will have heard from me and they can try and help others as well.'* (Participant, 3)

*'It's a film by the name of A Boy Called Toos, ...The film is about a young son who the mother was pregnant with and she gave the child away but she was under the influence of alcohol and was on drugs. He grew up in the streets on his own, stealing, living here and there. Then he gets older and later comes to a place where he stole and sees a photo of his mom but he didn't know it was his mom but could see this person looked familiar, the old man he stole from was his grandfather but he didn't know and he looked for his other and family afterwards and they explained to him that his mother passed away and he grew up with his grandfather and lived there. Then he could live another life than the one he lived previously.' ...it teaches me whatever situation I may go in I can get out of that situation.' The influence of the story on the participant is...' it did about the choices I made in life'.* (Participant, 4)

According to the case records of *participant four*, she was described by a grade four teacher as hardworking, and a person who easily associated with friends. Throughout her school career she was described by teachers and others as a generous, respectful, good academic performer, with a good soft and gentle personality who did not give any problems.

*'Trompie was a naughty child. I'm sure Sir can remember Swartkat?... They were naughty children and we lived that and we did the same things but we got caught...' we learnt how a person can be naughty and how a person can be calm and how a person shrills at other people and be restful.' It is just that we had to struggle at night for another man (drug dealer) while he slept and then the next day give him the money. '.. the message was yho why are we making other people rich and we get nothing?'* (Participant, 6)

*'...my story are so different towards others story... if I could compare my story with a story I always thought of myself of a bit of privilege...there was a disney movie with a mouse that*

*was lost... the mouse was also an orphan and then he found a nice family... I watch movies of Oliver Twist you know he was also an orphan and I feel for those stories... I always feel for other children that is in a similar situation like me and I felt for their stories...you know you always see this you should not be foster for fame things like that you fostering to benefit that child a lot of people also foster children for different reasons like my parents... I will never know what their reasons were... it was for a good reason like they said uhm they said in the past that because of me and my brother coming we helped the family getting together... they want to have more kids...obviously make the family a bit stronger like I said and that was a silly reason to have us if that was their reason but I don't think it was.'* (Participant, 8)

According to the foster care case records of *participant eight*, his foster parents were able to give him the best, because the foster father was a wealthy man who had his own business and generated his own income.

*'I dreamt of finishing school so that I can work and have a bright future like other children because my parents left me when I was young. But things didn't work out that way because I got pregnant. Because the way they acted they were making me drop out but I'm happy I got to finish and pass my matric.'* (Participant, 9)

*Participant nine* was described by her grade six teacher as one of his best students and very independent. Following the case descriptions, this participant according to one of her teachers was expected to grow into a very positive person in life as she was a hard worker and her homework was always done. However, the participant fell pregnant at a very young age (fourteen years old) but remained positive to go back to school to complete her schooling and she did.

To summarise above statements, participants 1-9, excluding 5 and 7 told stories that correlated with their own lives as foster children. Hence, the stories they told which they had read or watched were connected to their own lives as reported on in case file records. *Participant one* spoke about a story at school where a brother and sister were like glue and that reminded her of her connection with her two brothers. *Participant two* found a correlation between her and a movie and saw a connection between the character in the movie and herself where she was raped and the female character herself was sexually abused. Therefore, the participants found similarities in their own personal lives and identities in terms of the stories they remembered.

### 5.3.6 Theme: Alternative futures for the foster child

#### 5.3.6.1 Sub-theme: Positive future

Any person should have goals and dreams in life, so much more children who are in foster care. Therefore, following McAdam's Life Story model it was deemed significant to find out from the participants what their visions were for a positive future. In addition, the researcher wanted the participant to describe what they would like to see happening for themselves in the future, including the goals and dreams they aspired to.

The participant's responses in terms of what they wanted to accomplish in their lives as ex-foster children were as follow:

*'I've always wanted to be a welfare worker....to help other people's children and remove them from the streets, place them in foster care and just to share with them what happened to me as a foster child...'*

(Participant, 1)

*'I want to be like a psychologist, so that girls not get the feeling they had to talk to a normal person. They... talk to a person who truly has gone through trauma. My dream is...to have a future, good work, good husband and I want children...., if they have problems I will always make time never mind where I am.... if I had enough money I will send it to them (foster parents) and will tell them there is money spoil yourselves you have done a lot. You take a child who was a stranger and brought her up as if it was your own child.'*

(Participant, 2)

*'I see myself as a stable person with a good job. I want to own my own business. Like an internet shop but I want to do it for free; the printing and all that. I have thought about it from my school days when we would do projects and those kinds of things.'*

(Participant, 4)

*'I want to go and study so I can get a decent job. I want to study to be a mechanic. There are other things but I wanting to do that so I can work and help my foster parents because they raised me and buy those presents and things.'*

(Participant, 7)

*'...I would like to have my own family and I would like to have my own house and I want to be able to give my child my real child a better life you know and not have children if I can't look after them. ...I'm not prepared to have a child until I'm able to that look good after my*

*child... I would like to have a family and my parents to be still alive and I would like to be successful I would like to foster a child maybe one day.* (Participant, 8)

Four participants 3, 5, 6 and 9 of the nine interviewed did not voice their opinions regarding their aspirations and dreams in life. Hence, participants 1, 2, 4 and 8 gave clear descriptions about a positive future that they envisioned. They all wanted to be successful in life. Furthermore, although they had dreams, four participants of the nine: 1, 2, 4 and 7 would have loved to do something to care for others, like being a 'welfare worker' and 'help those in need' and 'being a psychologist' and 'to serve others' from the perspective of a person who personally experienced trauma. Moreover, *participant 7* dreamt to have her own business (internet shop) to give free services to the community, while *participant 8*, although already 34 years old wanted to have his own family and maybe foster a child himself one day.

The latter revelations draw attention to the previous discussion on the principles of the circle of courage (See 2.4: The strength-based developmental approach in foster care) stressing the ideas of mastering resilience and discovering self-worth that can help create a well-grounded child (Ashworth, 2007:26). Mitchell, Kuczynski, Tubbs, Carolynn and Ross (2010:178). It emphasises that there should be open communication between foster parent and child, consistent messages of love and support towards the child, and where possible a positive and supportive relationship between the foster parents and the child's biological parents. However, for the transition of foster youth into adulthood, there should be a comprehensive development plan and follow-up services which give attention to social support, interpersonal skills, money management, job seeking and maintenance skills (Naccarato & DeLorenzo, 2008:304).

### **5.3.6.2 Sub-theme: Negative future**

Most people could have fears for the future or be scared of undesirable incidents that could happen. Hence, one of the participants responded by expressing her fears for the future, because she was scared that she could have a bad future if she became like her biological parents one day. The following responses are:

*'I'm scared my child will be taken away or I will die in front of my child or he will die in front of me. I also don't want him to see his father maybe or any man beat me in front of him; those are things that really scare me.'* (Participant, 1)

*'I am already on a point of fear so I am afraid that my foster parents will write me off which they had already done by now.' ... What I hate is when they refer to my biological parents, and say I already walk the same route as them, it hurts me.'* (Participant, 2)

*'...something that I would not like to see happen is to see myself involved in crime and other things that will not build me.'* (Participant, 3)

*'What makes me scared is if my aunt passes away... she is my pillar of strength and I depend on her for everything.'* (Participant, 4)

According to the foster care case records of *participant four* she was ... happy with her foster care placement and had a sense of belonging.

*'I don't think of such things (fears for the future).'* (Participant, 5)

*'What makes me scared is that I won't get work or struggle to get work.'* (Participant, 7)

*'My fear for the future is not being able to provide for my family... I won't have a family if I can't provide so...'* (Participant, 8)

In summary, it became evident from above statements that there was no similarity or correlation between the views of the participants during the interviews and the case file records, because in the case file records there is no reference to the above issues. Participants 6 and 9 had no views or opinions on above-mentioned issues in terms of a negative future. Although participants 1- 8, excluding participants 6 and 9 had different views of what they are scared of or feared for, they in most instances commonly referred to fears regarding what could happen to their foster parents. Hence, *participant one* was scared that her child could die in front of her, or her boyfriend would fight with her in front of their child and *participant two* had the fear that her foster parents would write her off. *Participant four* feared that her aunt (foster mother) could pass away; *participant five* did not think of fears, *participant seven* had the fear that she will not get a job one day and *participant eight* feared that he would not be able to provide for his family one day.

Previous research findings by several authors on foster care (Blome, Shields, & Verdieck, 2009:258, 268; Bruskas, 2008:70; Havalchak, White, O' Brien, Pecora, & Sepulveda, 2009:4; Stott, 2011:61; White, O'Brien, White, Pecora, & Philips, 2007:420) thus validate the current study findings that the person maturing out of foster care often finds it difficult to make the



transition into adult life. Several authors discussed in Chapter 2 maintained that they remain at risk for negative consequences, such as higher levels of risk for substance abuse, delinquency, involvement in criminal activities and violence, poor long-term adjustment, failure to complete school, limited tertiary qualifications, often facing high unemployment, risky sexual behaviour, and having children of their own at a very young age. Emerging adulthood is thus seen as a period where adults experience anxiety, instability and identity challenges (Arnett, 2007(b):25), but they also have other, more positive, caring ambitions.

### 5.3.7 Theme: Personal Ideology

#### 5.3.7.1 Sub-theme: Fundamental beliefs and values on the life of the foster child

Fundamental beliefs and values are of great significance in most people's lives. The following expression by one participant regarding religion supports this:

*'...the light must shines through you; the Lord says your light should shine and I live it out through my face, my body, my friendly nature, my place, my phone. I show that I am with the Lord through my speech and how I talk to people.... If I see that you don't have, I will give my last to you... I care for those who don't have...'* (Participant, 1)

*'...Where was he (God) then when I need him to help when I was rape for three months. And I want to stop believe, for me was it the man did not exist...And I just said take him away please just take him away, away God that he can stop hurt me.'* (Participant, 2)

*'I do go to church but not as regularly as I should. I've always had the idea that you can't do anything without the Lord, he is always there for you. So I would say I don't forget about Him and I believe everything happens because of Him so I will always believe that everything happens because of Him...'* (Participant, 4)

*'My religion is very good and that we encourage other people, many people who are in the streets. My vision is to help other people so that they can have the same life that I had... I serve the lord; praise the lord, have faith in the lord... I pray and sing... Every day...Monday, Wednesday and Sunday because now I have youth duties...'* (Participant, 6)

The foster care case records of *participant six* stated that his family members are very musical and played instruments. Therefore, they enjoyed music within the family



environment. Furthermore, due to the love for music, especially Gospel music practised in the foster family, this participant was influenced and became a reborn Christian.

*‘...I’m a believer of God my parents took me to church when I was small I went to Roman Catholic... I also believe you make your own luck a lot of people pray and that sort of stuff I understand why they do that but I mean in my situations it could go either way I don’t think anybody else know which way to go except my parents and these people you can call it faith that sort of thing you know it could be anything it is not... I learned you need to practise what you preach I don’t go to church every Sunday but I pray and always listen to people and talk to people and help them and give back to the community I like to give like I think what can I do for Nelson Mandela day... in charities where I’m involve with like this one where they feed people those are the kind of things you know you must practice what you preach.’*

(Participant, 8)

Participant eight was allowed to participate as an altar boy in their church at the age of six years.

It is clear in these statements that almost all participants expressed strong religious beliefs. Participant two was traumatised due to the rape and admitted she doubted the existence of God. Participants one and six became reborn Christians and like participant one indicated she believed that your light must shine through your actions. Hence, participant six stated he lives his life doing the work of God almost every day and his case records stated how his foster family played musical instruments in church, which he also mastered to do. All the participants voiced that they were ‘believers’ but practised religion and their faith differently, because some stated that they would go to church on a more regular basis, while others attended their churches irregularly, but continued to believe and pray to a God. Three participants: 3, 5 and 7 did not share their opinions regarding their religious beliefs.

Hutchinson (2010:10) postulates that life course is about viewing the life course in terms of how culture and social institutions shape the pattern of an individual’s life. When referring to foster care one could refer to cross-cultural placements, by attending the church denomination of the foster parents and not those of family, going to boarding school, going to residential care instead of foster care and so forth. Kadungure (2014:33) also argued that an assessment of the therapeutic, educational, cultural, linguistic, developmental, socio-economic and spiritual needs of the child is of utmost importance to ensure fluent

emancipation of the foster child. Hence, whilst the Children's Act 38 (Act no. 38) of 2005 (2010: Section 12(1) regulates that 'every child has the right not to be subjected to social, cultural and religious practices which are detrimental to his or her well-being' (See 2.3.5: The Children's Act and the child in need of care and protection), assessing the effects of this intention in terms of foster care appears invisible to outsiders.

### 5.3.7.2 Sub-theme: Impact of Political and Social issues on the life of the foster child

Most people have specific viewpoints regarding politics and social issues in life. There could be particular political or social issues which are near to their hearts or are of significance in their lives. The following views were shared when participants were asked about the impact of political and social issues on their lives as a foster care child:

*'I struggle with conflict, when it comes to conflict I run away. When it comes to shouting I'll get a bit cheeky but not fighting and such... I saw the whole Zuma thing and I'm just scared that we don't have water anymore, and he's firing people and wanting to take away our jobs, I just think if we can't go to work tomorrow then we won't eat; but I'm not really into politics.'*

(Participant, 1)

*'Well people must just not fight, I do not like it when people fight if I see a guilty person fight with a person that is not guilty than I will stand up and state my view... the water and the criminal records, people that do break-ins and then those murders of recently... What had made me very angry is that baby that were left in that ditch,'*

(Participant, 2)

*'Life is what you make it. Whatever happens in your life it's the choices you make, don't linger on in situations that come your way.'*

(Participant, 4)

*'...I can't say whether I was raised right or wrong. My aunt had no children so I don't know, I would see it as though she's mistreating me but my uncle would tell me that she was treating me right because she wants me to have a bright future...'*

(Participant, 7)

*'... for me is being a patient person being a good person listening to people uhm not judging people... first and found out their story before I make a judgement 'I focus on my immediate surroundings and being successful myself ... I do vote and I do what I have to do in life but I try not that bother me to much... the government was good to us... they can do more for people in this kind of situations more homes more support from the government for the*

*disable and the mentally disabled... I know there is a lot of poor people and these things but I talk about these people who are born and can't do things for themselves.'* (Participant, 8)

The statements above indicate that participants 1, 2, 4, 7 and 8 have different views regarding the impact of politics and social issues on their lives. However, participants 3, 5, 6 and 9 did not voice their views on above mentioned issues. There is also no correlation between the interviews and foster care case file records, because there is no reference made in the case files records of all participants in terms of the political and social issues in their lives. Hence, *participant one* stated that she could be cheeky sometimes but did not like conflict and was concerned about the water crises and scared that Zuma as president of the ruling government could create unemployment. *Participant two* was also concerned about the water crises, but also postulated that she did not like it when people fought and would intervene. She was also concerned about the crime. For *participant four* it was more about what you make from your life and the choices you make, while *participant seven* was worried if his aunt (foster mother) would give him the right education. *Participant eight* stated that he was not interested in politics but voted in elections. He was focused on his immediate future and his own success in life but believed government could do more for the poor and disabled.

Greeson (2013:41) argues that Life-Course Theory concerns relationship building, daily living, transitioning, chronological age and how people are socially shaped and changed from birth. Milne (2005:31) refers to the importance of participation of children according to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, in so far that it speaks to the rights of children to form views, enjoy freedom of expression, freedom of thought, conscience and religion and of association and assembly as also stated in chapter two (See 2.3.1: The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)).

### **5.3.8 Theme: Life theme of the foster child**

Foster children like most of all other children could have experienced events or incidents, while developing throughout their journey to become an adult. Hence, if a participant looks back over his or her entire life with chapters and scenes extending into the past, they could discern a central theme, message or idea that runs throughout their life history. This statement is reflected in the following responses:

*‘...I made it at the end of the day, my foster parents were there for me and I am thankful for them. I’m glad I got to a welfare worker who placed me with good foster parents... It’s not always bad to be a foster child, there are good times and bad times....’* (Participant, 1)

The foster care case records postulated that *participant one* adjusted well as a foster child with the family and enjoyed everybody’s support (teachers, friends and foster family members).

*‘Although I had now pain I try always to smile...I had on my phone, ‘don’t cry about something you never had...’* (Participant, 2)

According to archived records of *participant two* she and her siblings were all removed from their parents’ care, because of a ‘family back ground of low moral life styles, sexual and physical abuse by the biological mother’s partner and other social economic challenges’.

Other applicable quotes...

*‘is when I and my mother(foster) were very close, when I was young without worries... she (friend) found out that I was raped and she told me now she know why I want to sleep every time over with her...And she (friend) burst out of tears and she prayed for me...’* (Participant, 2)

According to the foster care case file of *participant two* she described her foster mother as a lovely person who bought things for her, who gave her money and read the Bible to her every night. Furthermore, the participant made a drawing as a very young child where she described her foster family as her own family.

*‘I would say the way I was treated... because you learn something, there are lots you learn to get to where you are. For example I can do everything for myself; today I can live on my own, also learning the right things that will put you in a good place... I would say respect and it shows where I come from and how I was treated... Be able to put boundaries and advise people.’* (Participant, 3)

*‘To help other children... Because I know how it feels to not have grown up with your own parents so I will feel for them... I would say the middle point is I and how I can better myself in the life... the other part that I learnt from my foster parents is how they had faith in God. It*

*was good for me to have learnt that from them because it showed how things should be done... because I know how it is to be a foster child.* (Participant, 4)

*'...if my aunt didn't want to look after us we would have ended up at another place. It's probably through God's grace that she stood in for us as a foster parent.* (Participant, 6)

*Participant six* stated that his central theme was that his family must be safe.

*'... i think the theme is family so I think family is very important so family making time for your family... parents are always there for you and they will teach you hard lessons I mean my father taught me hard lessons in life he never gave me something for free you have to work for it and when you make a mistake you need to fix that mistake yourself and that helped me as well but he also said he will give me opportunities that I deserve like the good education.* (Participant, 8)

According to the case records of *participant eight* the foster parents stated that they exercised strict discipline with both foster children, as well as with their adult biological children.

In summary, regarding above statements the central themes for the participants have some similarities but it also varies. Participants 1, 2, 4, 6 and 8 gave their views and they expressed that central to their lives were the role played by foster parents and this indicated the importance attached to family life. For example, *participant one* made it clear that the social worker who placed her in foster care was also part of her life theme, but for *participant four* it was to help other children and central to herself was to enrich her own life too. The foster care case file records gave information to confirm the interview data of participants as it reflected that *participant one* had lots of support from teachers, foster family and others, while *participant two* remembered the times when she was very close to her foster mother and records of participants 6 and 8 stated that foster parents gave opportunities and cared for them. However, participants 3, 5, 7 and 9 did not give their views during interviews on the matter and even in archived case records there was nothing to verify.

According to Morris (2014:9), permanent placements are about foster youth that are connected to a family for support that is supposed to provide of physical, emotional and social assistance. The White Paper on Social Welfare (1997) as cited in Durand (2007:16), indicates that stress is put on family life in South Africa due to violence, divorce, remarriage and establishing a new family and a lack of support and family disintegration. Hence,

Perumal and Kasiram (2008:161) cited in Kadunguru (2014) argued to reunite families is often difficult in South Africa, due to the fact that biological families disintegrate when factors such as migration (migrant labour), divorce, teenage pregnancies, infertility, children being abandoned, HIV and AIDS and death play a role.

### **5.3.9 Theme: Social work service intervention in the life of the foster child**

The researcher saw it as very significant to know what the participant has learnt from being a foster child and being exposed to social work intervention that took place, having experienced the role(s) of the foster parenting and how he or she will implement these life lessons learnt. The following responses are:

*Participant one quote: 'I feel she wanted to protect me (social worker).'* (Participant, 1)

*'... I will recommend parents (foster) should not brought up (in discussions) their biological parents...Like say for example you are in a fight and say aagh, you became just like K. or C. (nicknames of parents)... 'they (social workers) must interact regularly with the children like sessions when the foster parents are not present, that the specific child just know it is confidential... The foster parent is not going to hear what the child said, the child not needs to be afraid and just talk.'*

(Participant, 2)

In the foster care case files there were only two process notes in the entire foster care file of *participant two* that indicated that there was some contact between the social worker and the participant. No further proof or evidence could be established if this participant ever engaged with or communicated with a social worker.

*'My foster parents were always with me...the welfare should not be so close with the foster parents than your trust also became lesser... they(social workers) make contact but not that much...They had only visit me when I was younger , that time I had think what is the use of it...'*

(Participant, 2)

The foster care case file records of *participant two*, it indicated that she never got the opportunity to speak in private to a social worker, because her foster mother was always present giving information on her behalf to the social worker. Hence, she maintained that she did not trust social workers. *Participant two* expressed her dislike for social workers and psychologists openly, because according to her they have failed her. She believed that the



above-mentioned professionals could not help her and were of the view she was able to cope on her own. Social work intervention does take place between the foster care supervision worker and the reunification worker and also with the foster families and biological families, although regular contact work is not done. The interventions between the social workers were mostly regarding contact between participant and biological family. The biological parents were motivated to keep in contact with *participant two*. The researcher verified in foster care case files that almost eight social workers had rendered services regarding the supervision of *participant two* which indicated that too many rotations of social workers took place.

It was further verified that no social work foster care supervision services were rendered for a whole year in the case of *participant two*, according to her foster care file, because services were rendered only on 07 September 2015 and then a year later on 15 September 2016. There was a period when it appeared as if the social auxiliary worker was the case worker for *participant two*. This participant remembered the social auxiliary worker as the only person she knew and thought she was a professional social worker.

*‘They (social workers) must go there (home-visits) each and every week, three times a week to check how the children are living. They must also have events or programmes... to see when the children are not treated well; it will be easy to spot that in a programme because maybe the child will have a lack of interest in what is happening because something is bothering them and then you ask the person they are staying with they will say ‘no so-and-so is ok’ but you will see that no. Or if you notice something in the child you’re able to take the child somewhere else so that the child can speak about what is bothering them.’*

(Participant, 3)

*‘To be more involved. I would say they (social workers) can maybe visit the foster child/children twice a week to ask how things are going and to give that child support...They are there or they do the things like I said but they take a long time, they must be faster...Say for instance if a person reports that a child is being abused or something they must react faster to that.’*

(Participant, 4)

*Participant four* had a very peaceful period as foster child who was very well adjusted and never gave any problems to her foster parents. She had the opportunity to attend a foster care children’s group when she was eight years old. There were too many social workers rotating during the participant’s foster care stay, to be specific, six social workers. The assumptions

were that the participant did not know some of the social workers due to the constant rotation that took place. The supervision social worker arranged a foster care group for foster parents during 2004, which were attended by the foster care mother. According to foster care case records during 2004, when *participant four* was twelve years old she attempted suicide by overdosing on pills. The case records stated that the social worker intervened and arranged for psychological services to assist the participant. Furthermore, the foster mother gave lots of support and guidance, as well as the social worker.

*‘They (social workers) must provide a lot of support to the family so that no problems will come up for the child and always check how things are going and how they are... Now we spoke about three times than there was another worker. No not regular (contact between participant and social worker) ... In the beginning I was angry with them because I didn’t know these things but no I’m older I see that they help you and help with problems also. The few times when I spoke to them and I had a problem they would call me in and talk to me about it and then also call the foster parents in to talk and to find a solution. They taught us how to support each other.’*

(Participant, 7)

In terms of *participant seven* all the administration requirements which the social worker was responsible for was in place. More so the reports for the Children’s Court, especially extension reports (Section 159 reports) and discharge from foster care in terms of section 37 of the Child Care Act no 74 of 1983.

*‘...the social worker did not have much influence on my decision on my life i think the parents that fostered me has all that obviously my parents who foster me has go through procedures and worked through the social workers and get involve to make sure that the parents still see us... for me i don't even know my social workers name like you see i really don't know that.... ‘... they could be more present... they were at a distance maybe they communicate differently back then when there were no facebook... now can you monitor these things on facebook via e-mail you can monitor their behaviour these kind of things... my social worker was in Joburg and when we moved down here there was a different social worker like I said I don't remember.’*

(Participant, 8)

Further, in terms of foster care case file records of *participant eight*, his foster parents became part of a foster care group for the first time foster parents. The participant was found in need of care in terms of the Child Care Act no. 33 of 1960 and was placed in foster care

during June 1986. Two years after the placement of the participant in foster care during June 1998, a *section 16 extension report* was completed by the social worker in terms of the amendment Child Care Act no. 74 of 1983. The case records proved that the different social workers who rendered services to the participant in most instances made sure compliance reports like section 16 (2) extension reports and supervision reports were done. However, there were no records of social work intervention between social workers and the participant, but between social worker and foster parents on a more regular basis. According to foster care case records the social workers who rendered services to the participant ensured that extension- and supervision reports were regularly completed.

*‘Regular visits (social workers) to the home to see how the child is and support. They would go to the home but not a lot. Yes I was satisfied.’* (Participant, 9)

Foster care case records indicated that four different social workers rendered services on a rotational basis to *participant nine* in the form of administrative requirements by completing court reports, transfer reports, extension reports and so forth. However, there are no records in the foster care case file that reflected that the participant was ever supported when she simply needed advice or provision of any material aid. However, the social worker complied by legally placing the participant in foster care and punctually submitted the required section 159 extension reports in terms of the Child Care Act No. 74 of 1983 and transferred the participant in terms of section 34 of the same act to the care of her elder sister. But there was no proof of any direct services rendered during the two years of supervision services. This gap was reflected in the archived foster care case file that was researched.

It is clear from above responses that participants 1 to 9 reflected their views during the interviews. These responses were corroborated with references in the case file records on social work service intervention and the role of the foster parents. *Participant 5* who showed signs of foetal alcohol syndrome disorder was not able to give his views on social work intervention. Participants 1 and 7 had very positive experiences with social workers whom they believed supported, protected and assisted them. However, most of the nine participants (6 out of 9) felt that social workers were too absent in their lives and *participant two* even stated that she did not trust and disliked social workers. Almost all participants could remember that the social workers engaged with their foster parents, but not with them. They did not know or remember their social workers’ names and there were too many rotations of workers.

Participants in general felt that social workers should engage more in terms of regular and more frequent contact with foster children. They should act promptly and faster on complaints when reported. The participants all had similar views of the foster parents who loved and caring to them, but there was also negative feedback. For *participant two* it was hurtful when her foster mother when rising and giving care, constantly compared her with her biological parents. Participant three indicated that foster parents should not be aggressive towards foster children and had to treat them the same as their own children. Participants felt strongly that foster parents should not mistreat foster children and let them do all the dirty work.

The foster care case file records reflected directly on social workers' administrative work and report writing showed a lot of gaps in almost all the files. While social workers ensured that administrative required documents in terms of children's court and legislative process were kept up to date, the process notes which provide evidence of the day-to-day child care and protection social work activities were lacking in almost all files. In most instances the researcher who is an experienced practitioner, could not trace written evidence where social workers engaged one-on-one with foster children.

Non-Profit Child Protection Organisations in SA as reflected in chapter two (See 2.3.5: The Children's Act and the child in need of care and protection) who employ practising social workers face daunting challenges which affect the ability of organisations to deliver effective foster care support services to children in care (Louw, 2013). A South African study by Earle (2008:6), e.g. indicated that sixty three percent of Child Welfare social workers had caseloads of more than sixty, and thirty six percent had caseloads of more than one hundred. Owing to high caseloads and crises management style, the social workers are unable to do regular foster care supervision (Naude, 2013). Kadungure (2014:33) further argued that the social worker should become integrally part of the child's life while in foster care and should give more support to the foster child in process of leaving foster care as it is a crisis period of a child's life. In addition, Kadungure (2014:34) stated that it appears that social workers are not very encouraging or motivated to ensure regular contact between the foster child and his or her family and the longer they stay in foster care, the less likely it would happen that they would return home, which makes it difficult when aging out of foster care.

## 5.4 Summary and Conclusion

Connections, similarities and gaps between the foster care case records and the interview data collected during the research study were highlighted and compared. Hence, an overview on the profile of all nine participants as reflected in chapter 4 was given (See 4.8 Demographic Information, Table 8: Overview of the Demographics of the Research participants). Moreover, the themes and sub-themes using the life histories of the participants that emerged from the data collected in terms of the adjusted life history interview guide of Dan P. McAdams (1995) were used. This resulted in the contextualisation of the case of past foster care experiences of adults who lived in the Overberg region of the Western Cape. By drawing on this combined approach of data collection the participants were taken through different chapters of their life-histories, be it high points, low points, critical events and from their earliest memory to their current adult life situational journeys. Furthermore, the interview data was studied and compared connected and similarities extracted in terms of positive and negative influences on the participants' life-history as a foster child, as well as alternatives for their future. Apart from interview data, foster case files of participants were investigated to develop a more holistic sense of their personal ideology regarding their beliefs and values that might have impacted on their lives. However, the central themes in their lives and the impact that professional social work service interventions might have had in their life courses as foster children were included in this thick descriptive study.

The participants confirmed that foster parents were a pillar in their lives and almost all of them gave negative feedback in terms of their biological parents. They also stated that they understood the reasons for their removal from their parents' care. This finding validates those of Kadungure, (2014). The participants spoke out about their dissatisfaction with professional social workers, confusion with social auxiliary workers and the ineffective role these professionals played in their lives. Some of these sentiments that were expressed connect with what other authors have recorded on the topic. For example, Thomas (2005:118) wrote that the worker to whom the child is assigned serves as the nucleus, even the medium for surveillance and for assessment of the on-going life situation. Thomas (2005:118) further stressed that the social worker is responsible for working with each of the individuals involved and is also responsible for arranging supplementary services and integrating them back into their communities. The sentiments expressed by these participants once more reinforce the important care and protection role that professional social workers have in both statutory and non-statutory work and interventions in child care and protection services.

In some instances, information covered in the foster care case file records of the nine participants was not similar to information shared by the individual participant, because their views were not always reflected in the case file records or vice versa. Field notes of the archived case files were checked and verified for comparisons, disparities and connections between the foster care case file records and the data collected from the interviews.





## **Chapter Six**

### **6. Conclusions and Recommendations**

#### **6.1 Introduction**

This chapter draws conclusions based on the literature review in Chapter Two and the empirical findings presented in Chapter Four and Chapter Five. The researcher will describe how each of the objectives of the study was achieved, followed by an outline of the key findings of the study with its conclusions and recommendations.

#### **6.2 Research goal and objectives**

The main goal/aim of the study was to explore, understand and describe the perspectives of adults reflecting on their childhood experiences in foster care.

This goal was met through fulfilling the three main objectives of the study. The first objective was to explore, understand and describe the foster care and child-hood experiences of adults through their journey and transitions. This objective was met through Chapter Two, which summarised key global and regional (African) theoretical perspectives on childhood and youth experiences of foster care, and contextualised South African child protection and foster care developments post-1994, with specific reference to youth that transitioned through foster care into adulthood or as ‘emerging adults’ as referred to in the literature. The analysis of selected literature perspectives over the last decades in chapter two provided background to the problem and case study investigation (Chapter Three) that was compared with the findings generated through implementing the life-story (narrative) approach. By using and combining documentary evidence (archived individual case records or files) and semi-structured interviews, data were analysed and findings were presented in terms of nine themes or topics covered in the research instrument based on the life story approach. The information obtained through case records were verified through ‘narratives’ following an adapted version of a life- story interview guide designed by McAdams (Revised 1995). The data or ‘narratives’ that were generated were also compared with the broad assumptions of Life Course Theory.

The second objective, i.e. ‘to explore, understand and describe how social work services are delivered in the field of foster care in the Overstrand Service Delivery Area’ was addressed through the discussion of some dilemmas in implementing the research project, and a

contextualisation and description of foster care services by Non-Profit Organizations in the Overstrand region. Findings were presented in Chapters Four and Five.

### **6.3 Conclusion and Reflections on Research Assumptions of the Study**

While the goal and objectives of the study were successfully achieved, the research assumptions as reflected in chapter 1 (See 1.7.2: Research Assumptions) serve as pointers for a further in-depth study and research. For example, the first assumption, i.e.

*“Too many children are removed from foster care before the age of eighteen years old but insufficient literature exists on studies carried out especially in the Overberg District, a semi-rural area in the Western Cape”* has now been addressed, albeit it through this ‘evidence-based’ micro-study initiative. The study documented some base line information on the social services and regulated work by social workers (guided by the Children’s Act) with foster families employed by registered NPO organizations. By providing access to their archival records, a very small sample of individuals that shared their biographical life histories was reached, giving a glimpse into the life world of young adults that transitioned through the ‘post- apartheid’ South African child care protection system from adolescence into adulthood. By using the single case study methodology and the lens of Life Course Theory to report on the findings, several social issues pertaining to the profession of social work; and the experiences of families and children within the South African Child Protection and Care System, including Foster Care System emerged that have implications for further investigation and study.

Having implemented the mentioned single case design and case methodology (archived records and biographical life story approach), the key issue of ‘identity construction’ (Chaitin, 2004:7) of the young adults who experienced foster care that were sampled in the study, became apparent in a particular dynamic, demographically changing local municipal and regional context of the Western Cape. The shifting in- migration patterns due to structural unemployment with the increasing demands and growth in foster-care services (both kinship and non-kinship care) should be investigated on a larger provincial scale, as well as nationally in the South African policy context. The observable overall shift and expansion in kinship statutory care is significant enough for such an investigation.

These local changing social dynamics could be pursued for further theorising by practitioner social workers, in search of answers to the rapidly changing context, growing

diversities, and dire need for more informed, research-based policy and planning to influence opinion on the need for systemic changes to foster care practices and services by both the state and private social work agencies who are in partnership, rendering services to parents (including foster parents), families and the young adults that emerge from foster-care placements.

The fact that there is a high or rapidly growing demand for more foster parents and lack of social workers to cope with the demand may have caused a lack of conscientious recruitment, a lack of effective screening and insufficient or no training of foster parents, with devastating or traumatic consequences for the child or children in foster care that seems implicit in the findings. This calls for more action research and empirical baseline studies to establish the scale of the identified challenges.

By not adequately focussing on the changing demographics of the regional population in the local planning and implementation of social services by social workers, which this study uncovered (Chapter Four and Five), some notable shifts and changes in the social dynamics and intricacies (including cultural practices) of foster care placements pertaining to kinship care and non-kinship care may be seriously overlooked by the current child protection care system. Contrary to the African Continent and South African context where customary issues and the role of extended family and grandparents (kinship care) are almost taken for granted; where child-headed household and siblings caring for each other for example are on the rise (Martin & Mbambo, 2011); an important policy shift to statutory kinship care that is also locally evident, is observed at a global level to re-emphasise child welfare in terms of the importance of the extended family system as care and support for vulnerable children. For example, Connolly, Kiraly, McCrae and Mitchell (2017:88) recently recorded that governments in western industrial societies (and not only in developing countries like Africa), have over the last two decades prioritised *kinship care* as the preferred alternative option for children who cannot live with their parents.

Hence, while the *first* of the above assumptions stated that too many children are being removed from foster care, this current study noted an apparent contradiction in this perception as almost all nine participants of the sample of adults remained in their foster families with their foster parents beyond the age of 18 years, while transitioning into adulthood. Only two of the nine participants that were interviewed left the foster home before the age of 18 years old. And in this study, even though these cases were assigned to social

workers or social service agencies, the lack of social work intervention and services to this category of clients referred to in Chapter 5 (See 5.3.9: Theme: Social work service intervention in the life of the foster child and the role of the foster parents) is of great concern for child protection services in the case of the Overberg region, and should be further explored for the rest of the province and in South Africa.

The researcher would however argue that the *third* assumption about biological parents and/or families who may view the foster care placement as a relief to continue unacceptable lifestyles was confirmed, as almost all participants when they exited their foster homes, did not return to their biological families and started more independent life styles or continued to stay on with the foster families although above 18 years old. According to Wulczyn (2004:95) an American based study nearly 30% of children who were reunified in 1990 re-entered foster care within 10 years. Parental rights are protected by legislation, but the burden of proving fitness is in many ways the parent's burden and not government. There is clearly a lack of reunification services and the real in-depth work with families of origin is lacking in the foster care system. Wulczyn (2004:110) stated that little progress has been made over the past 20 years in defining and implementing meaningful reunification programmes.

The fourth assumption about the unhealthy relationships between foster child and foster parents and/or siblings, as well as feelings of instability, uncertainty, confusion, frustration, and continuing trauma of unhealthy foster care placements could not be generalised as true for all nine individuals in the study. Surprisingly the majority of the nine participants (five of the nine ) constructed their foster parents as 'heroic figures' as referred to in Chapter 5 (See 5.3.1.1: Sub-theme: Highpoints in your life-story as a foster child). This positive construction ties in with Chaitin's (2004:5) theorising on the conceptualization and construction of identity that is rooted in the study of group identity.

For example, Chaitin (2004:5) in her article on how the life-story method and the concept of identity can be tied together to understand and explain the expressions of individual and collective group identity, pointed out two basic assumptions. These are significant for social work in the sense that it could improve practitioner's understandings of how young adults reconstruct their past identities as foster children when growing older and transitioning into adulthood. The first assumptions are that an individual identity consists of multiple identities: personal identity which consist of person, idiosyncratic aspects; and social identity which is based on social aspects (Foster Care), such as group membership. In this case study the self-

concept of the foster child can be conceived of as a ‘cognitive structure’ consisting of a set of concepts that are subjectively available to an individual that tries to define him or herself. The second assumption in the literature on group identity that Chaitin identified that is relevant to the findings and conclusion of this study, is ‘the representation of the other’ (e.g. foster parent) and ‘the self’ and the changes over time concerning the representation that plays a central role in the process of developing a personal and collective (group) identity.

Hence, over the life course one meets different significant others (new friends, partners, work mates/colleagues) that both influence and are influenced by us and ‘we construct our identities in relation to these others’ (Chaitin, 2004:05). Many identities are thus based on individual’s locations with the overall social structure and the roles that they and others play within that system. But we are reminded that these roles are not always stable and therefore the border of the self will change depending on the circumstances and on time.

According to postmodern theory on identity on which Chaitin (2004:5) draws, the construction of identity (identity formation) is dynamic - processes that develop and change over the life course of the individual. A key aspect of this theory is thus the *fluctuating or ‘fluid’* nature of ‘identity’. Following Chaitin (2004:5), although people tend to identify with many social groups based on factors such as race, ethnicity, class, gender, nationality, age, etc. these factors become important at different times and in different ways that contribute to this ‘fluid’ nature of identity constructions as evident in the reconstructions of these young adults of themselves in relation to their foster parents and/or foster families and their own transitioning into adulthood and lives as young parents.

#### **6.4 'Making sense': The contribution of Life Course Theory to understand South African social work child protection and foster care services**

The main points of the literature review that traced the relevance of this theory to the study and argued for its applicability to answer the main research question, aims and objectives of this study was thus met. The relevance of Life-Course Theory and emerging adulthood as argued for in this study (see Chapter 2; 2.2.1: Life-Course Theory and emerging adulthood perspectives), have been applied and demonstrated as an important relevant perspective, not only in contemporary social work to explore the foster care and childhood experiences of the participants following the life-story model of McAdams (1995), but also by Greeson (2013) and in health and epidemiological studies (WHO, 2000).

In this single case research study, the combination of archived foster care files, interview data and Life-Course Theory were illuminating, because it displayed serious systemic gaps in social work administration, planning and implementing foster care services. It identified that there is a lack of one-on-one contact between the professional social worker and the participant (now adult) as a foster child, which are important issues for further research.

Thus, through the aim and objectives of this study, the researcher brought into perspective his own professional assumptions, because by drawing on Life-Course Theory he was able to understand the 'transitioning' period that is associated with the emerging young adult in the context of the challenges with rendering reunification services. His exploration and research led him to discover further that globally there are policies designed to guide social workers to respond in more appropriate ways to prepare youth for this period of 'transitioning' out of foster care into independence and adulthood. This should guide and allow us to seriously review current social policies and practices. Thus, during the life course of 'identity seeking' individuals in this contextual study, their struggles and challenges as told by the participants, became better known and understood. As a practitioner and social work researcher the researcher was also able to identify the current dilemmas faced with by designated child protection NPO organisations working under many constraints rendering foster care services at local community and family level.

The research study should alert policy makers (including academic training institutions), at local state and organizational levels, as well as individual social work professionals, of their constitutional citizenship and ethical obligations to take cognisance and great care of the significance of case file records; not only in making policies about when to archive file records, but also when rendering foster-care services. This would include all professional report writing. Records or reports per se, including archived documents (Bryman, 2004) are particularly important, because they may assist with assessments in finding where the gaps in services are, but also for further research and planning. This would include court records or evidence. Moreover, organizational policies (both state and private) of 'archiving'; 'storage' or 'destroying' or 'disposal' of records may very well be in contravention of new democratic post- 1994 legislation that guarantee citizens access to personal information (PAJA, 2000).

Furthermore, the importance of verification of case file records and other forms of data collection (semi-structured interviews) should be reiterated, because it demonstrates the important leadership role of professional social workers in foster care practice.



## 6.5 Recommendations

The following recommendations are made, based on the findings of the study:

- *Establish foster care parental forums to evaluate and discuss issues regarding selection, assessment, screening, recruitment; and to explore ongoing and/or changing needs;*
- *Establish Foster care groups for children in foster to create an opportunity for relationship building, trust and communication and for social workers and associated professions to workshop and discuss common issues and challenges in the foster care placement;*
- *Establish career opportunities for social workers who wish to specialise in Child Protection and Foster care services as there is a need for it to be a specialized field. This will give social workers the opportunity to engage directly on a more continuous basis with foster care children;*
- *Establish foster parent groups where foster parents could learn about the statutory obligations, support each other, share parenting skills, preserve each other and so forth. Attendance and family support should be mandatory on receiving state subsidies and for both state and non-profit organizations. The registered social work practitioner and associate professionals should lead and account for services rendered (with others) and guide these foster parents groups;*
- *Create platforms for joint sessions (foster family group conferencing) between social worker, foster child and foster parent groups to deal with issues pertaining the foster care placement;*
- *Social Work practitioners to create platforms (groups) where foster child and the biological family engage and have continuous mutual contact (strengthening of re-unification services);*
- *Social Work practitioners to create opportunities for foster children, foster parents and biological parents to engage towards family reunification;*
- *Special training of Social Auxiliary Workers and trained EPWP workers in the field of foster care should be supported to monitor foster care placements on a continuous basis. With the leadership of social workers, they should engage the foster children with programmes such as life-skills, substance abuse, career-path, after-school, recreational programmes and so forth;*

- *More action research is necessary to address the big financial gap between State child support grants and foster care grants which could determine the placement option, because the growing demand on foster-care grants and State child-support grants place an increasing burden on the national budget;*
- *Further research should be done in terms of the new democratic legislation into the archival policies of both State (Public) Sector and Private Registered Child Care and Protection Organisations (including Child and Youth Care Centres/Children Homes etc);*
- *Digitalization of archived records for preservation, improved storage and research purposes.*

## **6.6 Summary**

It is clear that the lack of resources, lack of financial support and lack of specialization in child protection and foster care aggravates the situation of systemic caring and support for foster children in South Africa.

It was important in this study that the researcher had to become aware and build new understanding of the lived experiences of foster children that are now adults, as well as to explore and investigate the current needs and challenges in the foster care system to conclude that social work services in terms of foster care needs as articulated by lived experiences of subjects that have been through the South African child protection and care system, are in need of renewal. The lack of understanding often causes and reinforces the perception by foster children that they were failed by social work professionals. It became clear to the researcher that child protection organisations that employ these professionals are dismally underresourced, understaffed and struggle continuously to survive financially. It is hoped that this research study will contribute significantly towards advancing more critical awareness and appropriate support for the Care and Child Protection work of Non-Profit social service organizations and all social service staff engaged with the care and support of families. 'Re-unification' services can only be realised by strengthening this support.

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**Annexure 2****UNIVERSITY OF THE WESTERN CAPE**

Private Bag X 17, Bellville 7535, South Africa

Tel: +27 21-959 2012 Fax: 27 21-959 2845

E-mail: mcdonald.mlm@gmail.com

**ANNEXURE 2 A****CONSENT FORM**

**Title of Research Project: Child hood Experiences of Foster Care- An Adult  
Life History Perspective?**

The study has been described to me in language that I understand. My questions about the study have been answered. I understand what my participation will involve and I agree to participate of my own choice and free will. I understand that my identity will not be disclosed to anyone. I understand that I may withdraw from the study at any time without giving a reason and without fear of negative consequences or loss of benefits.

**Participant's name.....**

**Participant's signature.....**

**Date.....**

## Annexure 2 B



## UNIVERSITY OF THE WESTERN CAPE

Private Bag X 17, Bellville 7535, South Africa

Tel: +27 21-959 2012 Fax: 27 21-959 2845

E-mail: mcdonald.mlm@gmail.com

## Imvume yophando-nzulu

Umxholo wophando: Amava ngendlela okhula ngayo xa uthe wakunono phelo

Iwabanye Abazali ude ubemdala.

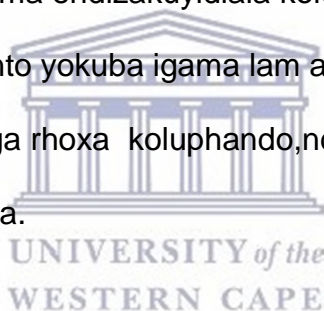
Oluphando nzulu lucaciswe ngolwimi lwam. Imibuzo ebendinayo ngoluphando

iphendulekile. Ndiyayiqonda indima endizakuyidlala koluphando ndiyavuma ukuba

yinxalenye yalo. Ndiyayiqonda into yokuba igama lam alizochazwa lizohlala

liyimfihlo. Ndiyayazi ukuba ndinga rhoxa koluphando, ndinganikezi izizathu zokuyeka

kwam ndibe ndingoyiki koyikiswa.



Igama lam:

Participant's name.....

Participant's signature.....

Date.....

### Annexure 3

#### **PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET** **Fieldwork Supervisor**

**Project Title:** Child-hood Experiences of Foster Care- An Adult Life History Perspective?

#### **What is this study about?**

This is a research project being conducted by Godfrey Matinka at the University of the Western Cape. We are inviting you to participate in this project because of your knowledge and experience of being a foster child. The purpose of this research project is to explore adult experiences of being a foster child, and to make recommendations to the Child Protection Organisations to inform and improve guidelines for training of social workers rendering foster care services.

#### **What will I be asked to do if I agree to participate?**

You will be asked to participate in an interview that will be done privately at the most convenient place that suits you best. You will engage in discussions with the researcher on your adult experiences of being a foster child; your journey as a foster child and how your inputs could assist to generate specialized experiential knowledge and understanding that could inform guidelines for training of social workers rendering foster care services.

#### **Would my participation in this study be kept confidential?**

We will do our best to keep your personal information confidential. To help protect your confidentiality,

- a) All audio-taped interviews and files will be kept in a locked filing cabinet to which only the researcher has access.
- b) The researcher will make use of codes instead of participants' names in the reports.
- c) Responses included in the report will refer to codes and not the participants' names.
- d) Responses will not be made public without your consent.

If we write a report or article about this research project, your identity will be protected to the maximum extent possible.

In accordance with legal requirements and professional standards (SACSSP), we will (with your permission) only disclose to the appropriate individuals information that come to our attention concerning child abuse or potential risk to you or others.

#### **What are the risks of this research?**

While sharing your experiences, you may become emotional and traumatised. We understand that this could happen, and if it does, we will refer you for therapeutic counselling at an organisation that specialises in this field.

### **What are the benefits of this research?**

The results of this research may help the researcher and other relevant service providers to learn more about foster care and persons understanding who have experienced this.. We hope that through improved understanding, by learning from you, appropriate steps may be taken to address these issues so that others may benefit in the future.

### **Do I have to be in this research and may I stop participating at any time?**

Your participation in this research is completely voluntary. You may choose not to take part at all. If you decide to participate in this research, you may stop participating at any time. If you decide not to participate in this study or if you choose to stop participating at any time, you will not be penalised at all.

### **Is any assistance available if I am negatively affected by participating in this study?**

Yes, should it be necessary, you will be referred for therapeutic counselling to an organisation that specialises in counselling and foster care or any other service that may be deemed appropriate.

### **What if I have further questions?**

The research is being conducted by Godfrey Matinka at Department of Social Development, Overstrand Service Delivery Area. If you have any more questions about the research study itself, please contact:

Godfrey Matinka at No. 1 Church Street, Hawston  
Tel: 028-3151028 (office hours)/ 0728230043 (after hours)  
Email: Godfrey.Matinka@westerncape.gov.za

Should you have any questions regarding this study and your rights as a research participant or if you wish to report any problems you have experienced relating to the study, please contact:

Chairperson of the Ethics Committee  
University of the Western Cape  
Private Bag X17  
Bellville 7535  
Email:  
Tel: 021 9592949

This research has been reviewed according to the University of the Western Cape's Ethics Committee procedures for research involving human subjects.



# UNIVERSITY OF THE WESTERN CAPE

Private Bag X 17, Bellville 7535, South Africa

Tel: +27 21-959 2012 Fax: 27 21-959 2845

E-mail: mcdonald.mlm@gmail.com

## Annexure 4 : Archived data extracting tool

**Date: 07 February 2017**

**The Social Work Manager**

**Child Welfare S. A**

**Hermanus**

**7200**

### **Re: Identifying of participants for data collection for Masters in Social Work Studies.**

Permission was granted by Child Welfare S.A. National Office as well as the local office of Child Welfare S.A. - Hermanus to interview your previous clients who was foster children:

The researcher needs certain identifying details to recruit participants for this study. The following information is needed:-

1. Name and Surname of foster child :
2. Address and Telephone :
3. Age of participant (between 25-35 years old) :
4. Ethnicity :
5. Gender :
6. Case file number :
7. Intake date :
8. Temporary detention report :
9. Availability of children's court reports :
10. Section 159 reports :
11. Any other reports available (indicate) :
12. Date of Children's Court inquiry :
13. At what age placed in foster care :
14. Date file was closed :
15. Name and Surname of foster parents :
16. Name and Surname of biological parents :
17. Status of biological parents :
18. Address and or telephone no. of foster parents :
19. Address and or telephone no. of biological parents :

Note : My sample for Child Welfare S.A Hermanus will be male and female between 25- 35 years of age. The participants should be one 'coloured', one 'white' and one 'black' person. Furthermore, it should be one English-speaking male or female, one Afrikaans-speaking male or female and one Xhosa-speaking male or female. However, it will help if at least 10 persons could be identified from which the researcher could choose from.

***Important: All participants must be adults who were fostered as children. No participant should have been in a child and your care centre but only in foster care.***

*Godfrey Matinka at No. 1 Church Street, Hawston  
Tel: 028-3151028 (office hours)/ 0728230043 (after hours)  
Email: 8956201@myuwc.ac.za*

Should you have any questions regarding this study, please contact:  
*Chairperson of the UWC Senate Research Ethics Committee  
University of the Western Cape  
Private Bag X17  
Bellville 7535  
Tel: 021 9592949*

This research will be reviewed according to the University of the Western Cape's Ethics Committee procedures for research involving human subjects.

Kind regards

Mr G.W.Matinka  
SACSSP Reg.nr.: 10-16575







# UNIVERSITY OF THE WESTERN CAPE

Private Bag X 17, Bellville 7535, South Africa

Tel: +27 21-959 2012 Fax: 27 21-959 2845

E-mail: mcdonald.mlm@gmail.com

## Annexure 5 A

**RESEARCH PROJECT:** Childhood Experiences of Foster Care- An Adult Life History Perspective.

**INTERVIEW GUIDE:** A Life History Interview Approach

**RESEARCHER:**

**Mr G.W. Matinka**

**Student nr: 8956201**

UNIVERSITY of the

**Masters in Social Work (MSW)**

**DEPARTMENT**

**Social Work**

**SUPERVISOR:**

**Dr Marie- Minnaar Mcdonald**

**FACULTY:**

**Community and Health**

## **INTERVIEW GUIDE: INDEPTH SEMI-STRUCTURED**

### **‘LIFE HISTORY’ INTERVIEW<sup>2</sup>**

#### **TOPIC LIST:**

- 1. LIFE CHAPTERS IN THE LIFE OF A FOSTER CHILD**
- 2. CRITICAL EVENTS DURING YOUR LIFE OF A FOSTER CHILD**
  - 2.1 EVENT 1: Peak experience in your life as a foster child**
  - 2.2 EVENT 2 : Low Points in your life as a foster child**
  - 2.3 EVENT 3 :Turning points in your life as a foster child**
  - 2.4 EVENT 4 : Earliest Memory**
  - 2.5 EVENT 5: Important Childhood Scene as a foster child**
  - 2.6 EVENT6: Important Adolescent Scene as a foster child**
  - 2.7 EVENT7: Important Adult Scene**
  - 2.8 EVENT 8: One other Important Scene**
- 3. LIFE- CHALLENGES AS A FOSTER CHILD**
- 4. INFLUENCES ON THE LIFE HISTORY OF A FOSTER CHILD: POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE**
  - 4.1 Positive**
  - 4.2 Negative**
- 5. STORIES AND THE LIFE-HISTORYOF THE FOSTER CHILD**
- 6. ALTERNATIVE FUTURES FOR THE LIFE-HISTORY**
  - 6.1 Positive Future**
  - 6.2 Negative Future**
- 7. PERSONAL IDEOLOGY**
- 8. LIFE THEME**


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<sup>2</sup> Adapted from: McAdams, D.P (1995) **North-Western University, Revised 1995'**

## 9. OTHER

Topic list	Life- History Interview	Questions
1.	<b>Life chapters in the life of a foster child</b>	<p>Thinking about your life as a story while being in foster care. All stories have characters, scenes, plots, and so forth.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•There are high points in a story, therefore tell more about these high points in your life as a foster child.</li> </ul> <p>The outstanding things in your life. The wonderful things in your life and those that are positive.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•There are low points in a story, tell me about the low points in your life as a foster child.</li> </ul> <p>The negative things those that were not nice. The heartbreaking and traumatic things that happened in your life.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•There are good times in a person's life, please tell me about your good times during your life as a foster child.</li> <li>•There are bad times, tell me about your bad times as a foster child.</li> <li>•Everyone has heroes, tell me who were yours and why.</li> <li>•There could be villains, tell me who were yours and why.</li> </ul>
2.	<b>Critical Events during your life as a foster child</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•For each event, describe in detail what happened, where you were, who was involved, what you did, and what you were thinking and feeling in the event as a foster child.</li> <li>•Also, try to convey what impact this key event has had in your life story as a foster child and what this event says about who you are today as a person. Please be very specific here.</li> </ul>
2.1	<b>Event 1: Peak Experience in your life as a foster child</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•A peak experience would be a high point in your life story. It would be a moment or episode in the story in which you experienced extremely positive emotions, like joy, excitement, great happiness, uplifting, or even deep inner peace.</li> <li>•Today, the episode would stand out in your memory as one of the best, highest, most wonderful scenes or moments in your life story.</li> <li>•Please describe in some detail a peak experience, or something</li> </ul>

		<p>like it, that you have experienced some time in your past as a foster child.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Tell me exactly what happened, where it happened, who was involved, what you did, what you were thinking and feeling, what impact this experience may have had upon you, and what this experience says about who you were or who you are today.</li> </ul>
2.2	<b>Event 2: Low Points in your life as a foster child</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Thinking back over your life as a foster child, try to remember a specific experience in which you felt extremely negative emotions, such as disappointment, despair, disillusionment, terror, guilt, etc.</li> <li>•Consider this experience to represent one of the "low points" in your life story as a foster child. Even though this memory is unpleasant, I would still appreciate an attempt on your part to be as honest and detailed as you can be.</li> <li>•Please remember to be specific. What happened? When? Where? Who was involved? What did they do? What did you do? What were you thinking and feeling? What impact has the event had on you? What does the event say about who you were or who you are today?</li> </ul>
2.3	<b>Event 3: Turning points in your life as a foster child</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Please identify a particular episode in your life story as a foster child that you now see as a turning point.</li> <li>•If you feel that your life story as a foster child contains no turning points, and then describe a particular episode in your life as a foster child that comes closer than any other to qualify as a turning point.</li> </ul>
2.4.	<b>Event 4: Earliest Memory in your life as a foster child</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Think back now to your childhood, as far back as you can go.</li> <li>•Please choose a relatively clear memory from your earliest years and describe it in some detail.</li> <li>•The memory need not seem especially significant in your life today.</li> <li>•Rather what makes it significant is that it is the first or one of the first memories you have, one of the first scenes in your life story. The memory should be detailed enough to qualify as an</li> </ul>

		<p>"event."</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This means that you should choose the earliest (childhood) memory you are able to identify what happened, who was involved, and what you were thinking and feeling.</li> <li>• Give us the best guess of your age at the time of the event.</li> </ul>
2.5	<b>Event 5: Important Childhood Scene as a foster child</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Now describe another memory from childhood, from later childhood, that stands out in your mind as especially important or significant.</li> <li>• It may be a positive or negative memory. What happened? Who was involved? What did you do? What were you thinking and feeling? What impact has the event had on you? What does it say about who you are or who you were? Why is it important?</li> </ul>
2.6	<b>Event 6: Important Adolescent Scene as a foster child</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Describe a specific event from your teen-aged years as a foster child that stands out as being especially important or significant.</li> </ul> 
2.7	<b>Event 7: Important Adult Scene</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Describe a specific event from your adult years (age 21 and beyond) that stands out as being especially important or significant.</li> </ul>
2.8	<b>Event 8: One other Important Scene</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Describe one more event, from any point in your life as a foster child or even beyond foster care that stands out in your memory as being especially important or significant.</li> </ul>
3	<b>Life Challenges as a foster child</b>	<p>Looking back over the various chapters and scenes in your life story as a foster child, please describe the single greatest challenge that you have faced in your life.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How have you faced, handled, or dealt with this challenge?</li> <li>• Have other people assisted you in dealing with this challenge?</li> <li>• How has this challenge had an impact on your life story?</li> </ul>
4	<b>Influences on the life history</b>	<p><b>Positive-</b> • Looking back over your life story, please identify the single person, group of persons, or organization/institution</p>

	<b>as a foster child</b>	<p>that has or have had the greatest positive influence on your story.</p> <p>Please describe this person, group, or organization and the way in which he, she, it, or they have had a positive impact on your story.</p> <p><b>Negative- •</b> Looking back over your life story, please identify the single person, group of persons, or organization/institution that has or have had the greatest negative influence on your story.</p> <p>Please describe this person, group, or organization and the way in which he, she, it, or they have had a negative impact on your story.</p>
5	<b>Stories and the life-story of the foster child</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•You have been telling me about the story of your life as a foster child. In so doing, you have been trying to make your life into a story for me.</li> <li>•I would like you now to think a little bit more about stories during your life as a foster child and how some particular stories might have influenced your own life story. From an early age, we all hear and watch stories.</li> <li>•Our parents may read us stories when we are little; we hear people tell stories about everyday events; we watch stories on television and hear them on the radio; we see movies or plays; we learn about stories in schools, churches, synagogues, on the playground, in the neighbourhood, with friends, family; we tell stories to each other in everyday life; some of us even write stories.</li> <li>•I am interested in knowing what some of your favourite stories are and how they may have influenced how you think about your own life and your life story. I am going to ask you about three kinds of stories.</li> <li>•In each case, try to identify a story you have heard in your life that fits the description, describe the story very briefly, and tell me if and how that story has had an effect on you.</li> </ul> <p>Television, Movie, Performance: Stories Watched</p>



		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Think back on TV shows you have seen, movies, or other forms of entertainment or stories from the media that you have experienced.</li> <li>•Please identify one of your favourite stories from this domain -- for example, a favorite TV show or series, a favorite movie, play, etc.</li> <li>•In a couple of sentences, tell me what the story is about. Tell me why you like the story so much. And tell me if and how the story has had an impact on your life.</li> </ul> <p>Books, Magazines: Stories Read</p> <p>Now think back over things you have read -- stories in books, magazines, newspapers, and so on.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Please identify one of your favourite stories from this domain. Again, tell me a little bit about the story, why you like it, and what impact, if any, it has had on your life.</li> </ul> <p>Family Stories, Friends: Stories Heard</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Growing up, many of us hear stories in our families or from our friends that stick with us; stories that we remember. Family stories including things parents tell their children about "the old days," their family heritage, family legends, and so on. Children tell each other stories on the playground, in school, on the phone, and so on.</li> </ul> <p>Part of what makes life fun, even in adulthood, involves friends and family telling stories about themselves and about others.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Try to identify one story like this that you remember, one that has stayed with you.</li> <li>• Again, tell me a little bit about the story, why you like it or why you remember it, and what impact, if any, it has had on your life.</li> </ul>
6.	<b>Alternative Futures for the Life Story</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•<b>Positive Futures-</b> First, please describe a positive future. That is, please describe what you would like to happen in the future for your life story as a foster child, including what goals and dreams you might accomplish or realize in the future.</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Please try to be realistic in doing this. In other words, I would like you to give me a picture of what you would realistically like to see happen in the future chapters and scenes of your life story.</li> </ul> <p><b>Negative Futures-</b> Now, please describe a negative future. That is, please describe a highly undesirable future for yourself, one that you fear could happen to you but that you hope does not happen. Again, try to be pretty realistic. In other words,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•I would like you to give me a picture of a negative future for your life story that could possibly happen but that you hope will not happen.</li> </ul>
7.	<b>Personal Ideology</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Now I would like to ask a few questions about your fundamental beliefs and values and about questions of meaning and spirituality in your life. Please give some thought to each of these questions.</li> <li>•Consider for a moment the religious or spiritual dimensions of your life. Please describe in a nutshell your religious beliefs or the ways in which you approach life in a spiritual sense.</li> <li>•Please describe how your religious or spiritual life, values, or beliefs have changed over time.</li> <li>•How do you approach political and social issues? Do you have a particular political point of view? Are there particular issues or causes about which you feel strongly? Describe them.</li> <li>•What is the most important value in human living? Explain.</li> <li>•What else can you tell me that would help me understand your most fundamental beliefs and values about life and the world, the spiritual dimensions of your life, or your philosophy of life?</li> </ul>
8.	<b>Life – Theme</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Looking back over your entire life story as a story with chapters and scenes, extending into the past, as well as the imagined future, can you discern a central theme, message, or idea that runs throughout the story?</li> </ul> <p>What is the major theme of your life story as a foster child? Explain.</p>
9.	<b>Other</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•What else should I know to understand your life story as a</li> </ul>

		<p>foster child?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What are the lessons which you had learnt as a foster child now that you are an adult or a parent?</li> <li>• What do you take with you as adult or parent to your new family what you have learnt as foster child?</li> <li>• If yes or even know give some reasons or explain?</li> <li>• What proposals will you make for social workers who should render care and support services to foster children? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What do you think social workers should do to improve services?</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Did you know the social workers who render foster care services to you while in foster care? Explain more. Did the social worker visit you and what kind of services did the worker render? How do you feel towards your social worker today and why? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Were you satisfied with the services social workers have rendered to you while in foster care. Yes or No? Explain.</li> <li>• What was the specific services rendered by the social worker which you were happy with?</li> <li>• What was the service rendered by the social worker which you were not happy with?</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Regarding family reunification services did the social worker render services to them? Are you aware of the services rendered and how did you experience or feel about it?</li> <li>• Would you ever like to go back to your family of origin? Please explain.</li> <li>• What proposals would you like to make to foster parents today or who still have foster children in their care? What should they do to be better foster parents?</li> <li>• Did your foster parents look well after you as a foster child? Explain more or describe. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What do you think foster care parents could do to make foster children happy?</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
--	--	--

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• What did your foster parents do good for you as foster child which you can take with you into the future?</li><li>• Did anything happen or did your foster parents do anything that was unacceptable which made you unhappy? Please explain?</li><li>• What was nice for you being a foster child?</li><li>• What was not so nice being a foster child?</li><li>• What proposals do you want to make to foster parents?</li></ul>
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UNIVERSITY *of the*  
WESTERN CAPE



# UNIVERSITY OF THE WESTERN CAPE

Private Bag X 17, Bellville 7535, South Africa

Tel: +27 21-959 2012 Fax: 27 21-959 2845

E-mail: mcdonald.mlm@gmail.com

## Annexure 5 B

**NAVORSINGSPROJEK:** Die lewenservaringe van 'n pleegkind- 'n Volwasse  
Lewensgskiedenis navorsingsperspektief .

**ONDERHOUD RIGLYN:** 'n Semi-gestruktureerde Lewensverhaal onderhoud.

**NAVORSER:**

**Mnr G.W. Matinka**

**Studentenr: 8956201**  
**UNIVERSITY OF THE WESTERN CAPE**

**Meestersgraad in Maatskaplike Werk**

**DEPARTEMENT**

**Maatskaplike Werk**

**TOESIGHOUER:**

**Dr Marie- Minnaar- Mcdonald**

**FAKULTEIT:**

**Gemeenskap en Gesondheid**

## **ONDERHOUD RIGLYN: DEURTASTENDE SEMI- GESTRUKTUREERDE LEWENSGESKIEDENIS ONDERHOUD**

### **ONDERWERPLYS:**

#### **10. LEWENSHOOFSTUKKE**

#### **11. KRITIESE GEBEURTENISSE**

**11.1 GEBEURTENIS 1: Spanningsvolste ervaring in jou lewensverhaal as pleegkind;**

**11.2 GEBEURTENIS 2: Laagtepunte in jou lewensverhaal as pleegkind**

**11.3 GEBEURTENIS 3: Keerpunte in jou lewensverhaal as pleegkind**

**11.4 GEBEURTENIS 4: Vroegste Herinneringe in jou lewensverhaal as pleegkind**

**11.5 GEBEURTENIS 5: Belangrike gebeure/toneel in jou lewensverhaal as pleegkind.**

**11.6 GEBEURTENIS 6: Belangrike gebeure/toneel in jou lewensverhaal as adolessent tydens pleegsorg**

**11.7 GEBEURTENIS 7: Belangrike gebeure/toneel in jou lewensverhaal as volwassene**

**11.8 GEBEURTENIS 8: Enige ander belangrike gebeure in jou lewensverhaal**

#### **12. UITDAGINGS IN JOU LEWE**

#### **13. INVLOEDE OP JOU LEWENSVERHAAL: POSITIEF EN NEGATIEF**

**13.1 Positief**

**13.2 Negatief**

#### **14. STORIES EN DIE LEWENSVERHAAL**

#### **15. ALTERNATIEWE TOEKOMSIDEALE VIR U LEWENSGESKIEDENIS**

**15.1 Positiewe Faktore vir die Toekoms**

## 15.2 Negatiewe Faktore vir die Toekoms

### 16. PERSOONLIKE WAARDESISTEEM/IDEOLOGIE

### 17. TEMAS

### 18. ANDER

Onderwerp lys	Lewensverhaal Onderhoud	Vrae
1.	<b>Hoofstukke in jou lewensverhaal as pleegkind</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Dink aan jou lewe as 'n storie. Alle stories het karakters, insidente/ gebeure, stories wat ontvou en so meer.</li> <li>•Daar is hoogtepunte in 'n storie, vertel my meer oor die hoogtepunte in jou lewe as pleegkind</li> <li>•Daar is laagtepunte in 'n storie, vertel my meer oor die laagtepunte in jou lewe as pleegkind.</li> <li>•Daar is goeie tye in 'n mens se lewe, vertel my meer oor die goeie tye in jou lewe as pleegkind.</li> <li>•Daar is minder goeie tye/slegte in 'n mens se lewe as pleegkind, vertel vir my meer oor die minder goeie tye/slegte in jou lewe as pleegkind.</li> <li>•Almal het helde, vertel my wie was helde in jou lewe as pleegkind en hoekom hulle jou helde is of was.</li> <li>•Daar was dalk mense in jou lewe as pleegkind wat jy nie van hou, booswigte, verraaiers of skurke, vertel my wie hulle is en hoekom jy nie van hulle hou nie.</li> </ul>
2.	<b>Kritiese Gebeure in jou lewensverhaal as pleegkind</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Vir elke kritiese gebeurtenis in jou lewe as pleegkind, beskryf vir my in diepte wat het gebeur, waar jy was toe die kritiese oomblike in jou lewe gebeur het, wie was almal betrokke, wat het jy gedoen, en wat het jy gedink en gevoel tydens die gebeure.</li> <li>• Kan jy ook aan my verduidelik watter impak die sleutel gebeurtenis op jou lewe gehad het en dui aan watter rol dit gespeel het in die persoon wie jy vandag is.</li> <li>•Ek sal dit</li> </ul>



		<p>waardeer indien jy baie spesifiek kan wees.</p>
2.1	<p><b>Gebeurtenis 1:</b></p> <p><b>Uitstaande</b></p> <p><b>Ervaring as</b></p> <p><b>pleegkind</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Die mees uitstaande ondervinding in jou lewe as pleegkind kan ook 'n hoogtepunt in jou lewensverhaal wees.</li> <li>•Dit kan 'n oomblik of episode in jou storie wees waar jy baie positiewe emosies ervaar het, soos vreugde, opgewondenheid, aanmoediging, groot blydschap of selfs innerlike vrede.</li> <li>•In jou lewe vandag kan so 'n herinnering as een van jou beste, hoogste, mees wonderlike gebeure of mees wonderlike oomblike in jou lewensverhaal wees.</li> <li>•Beskryf in detail 'n uitstaande ondervinding/ervaring of enigiets in die verband wat jy ervaar het in jou lewe as n pleegkind.</li> <li>•Vertel my presies wat gebeur het, waar dit gebeur het, wie almal betrokke of teenwoordig was, wat jy op daardie oomblik gedoen het, wat jy gevoel het, watter impak hierdie ervaring het op jou, en wat hierdie ervaring sê oor wie jy was of wie jy vandag is.</li> </ul>
2.2	<p><b>Gebeurtenis 2:</b></p> <p><b>Laagtepunte in</b></p> <p><b>jou</b></p> <p><b>lewensverhaal as</b></p> <p><b>pleegkind</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Dink terug oor jou lewe as pleegkind , en probeer dan onthou 'n spesifieke ondervinding waar jy vreeslik negatiewe emosies ervaar het, soos teleurstelling, wanhoop, radeloosheid, verwerping, ontnugtering, skrikwekkend, ontstellend, skuld gevoelens en so meer.</li> <li>•Beskou die ervaring as een van die laagtepunte in jou lewe as pleegkind. Selfs al is die herinnering baie onplesierig, sal ek steeds dit waardeer as 'n poging om eerlik te wees en in detail vertel soos jy kan.</li> <li>•Onthou om baie spesifiek te wees. Wat het gebeur?Wanneer? Waar?Wie was betrokke? Wat het hulle gedoen?Wat het jy gevoel en gedink?Watter impak het die insident op jou gehad?Wat sê die insident wie jy was en wie jy vandag is?</li> </ul>

2.3	<b>Gebeurtenis 3: Keerpunte in jou lewensverhaal as pleegkind</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Identifiseer 'n spesifieke episode in jou lewensverhaal as pleegkind wat jy vandag as n keerpunt in jou lewe beskou.- Omdraai /Omswaai</li> <li>•Indien jy voel dat jou lewensverhaal as pleegkind geen keerpunte bevat nie, beskryf dan 'n spesifiek episode in jou lewe as pleegkind wat naastenby aan enige aspek kom wat kan kwalifiseer as n keerpunt.</li> </ul>
2.4.	<b>Gebeurtenis 4: Vroegste herinneringe in pleegsorg</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Dink terug aan jou kinderjare, so ver as moontlik terug. Kies 'n relatief duidelike herinnering van jou vroegste jare en beskryf dit in diepte.- 'Memories'/ 'Remind'</li> <li>•Die herinnering mag dalk nie vir jou belangrik wees in jou lewe vandag nie.</li> <li>•Wat maak dit kenmerkend is die dat dit die eerste of een van die eerste herinneringe was.</li> <li>•Die herinnering behoort jy indiepte/detail oor te dra sodoende dat dit kan kwalifiseer as 'n gebeurtenis.</li> </ul>
2.5	<b>Gebeurtenis 5: Belangrike gebeure/toneel in jou lewensverhaal as pleegkind</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Beskryf 'n ander herinnering van jou kinderjare, jou later kinderjare wat uitstaan in jou gedagte wat jy as kenmerkend of belangrik beskou.</li> <li>•Dit kan 'n positiewe of negatiewe herinnering wees. Wat het gebeur? Wie was betrokke?Wat het jy gedoen?Wat het jy gedink en gevoel? Watter impak het die gebeurtenis/insident op jou gehad?Wat sê dit oor wie jy is en wie jy was?</li> </ul>
2.6	<b>Gebeurtenis 6: Belangrike gebeure/toneel in jou lewe as adolesent tydens jou jare as pleegkind</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Beskryf 'n spesifieke gebeurtenis of insident van jou tienerjare as pleegkind wat uitstaan en as baie belangrik of kenmerkend beskou word.</li> </ul>
2.7	<b>Gebeurtenis 7:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Beskryf n spesifieke gebeurtenis van jou volwasse lewe</li> </ul>

	<b>Belangrike gebeure/tonele in jou lewensverhaal as volwassene.</b>	(21 en ouer) wat vir jou uitstaan as baie belangrik of kenmerkend.
2.8	<b>Gebeurtenis 8: Een ander belangrike gebeurtenis as pleegkind</b>	•Beskryf nog een ander gebeurtenis van jou lewe as pleegkind wat uitstaan in jou gedagtes wat jy as baie kenmerkend of belangrik beskou.
3	<b>Lewensuitdagings</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Kyk terug oor die verskeie hoofstukke en gebeure in jou lewensverhaal as pleegking, beskryf die enkel grootste uitdaging wat jy in die gesig gestaar het in jou lewe as pleegkind.</li> <li>•Hoe het jy die uitdaging hanteer en in die gesig gestaar?</li> <li>•Het ander mense jou gehelp om die uitdaging te hanteer?</li> <li>•Hoe het die uitdaging 'n impak op jou lewensverhaal?</li> </ul>
4	<b>Invloede op jou lewensverhaal as pleegkind</b>	<p>Positief- • Kyk terug oor jou lewe as pleegkind, identifiseer die enkele persoon, groep of mense, of organisasie wat die grootste positiewe invloed op jou lewensverhaal as pleegkind gehad het.</p> <p>Negatief- • Kyk terug oor jou lewe as pleegkind, identifiseer die enkele persoon, groep of mense, of organisasie wat die grootste negatiewe invloed op jou lewensverhaal het of gehad het. Beskryf die persoon, groepe, of organisasie en die manier hoe hy, sy, of hulle n negatiewe impak op jou storie/lewe gehad het.</p>
5	<b>Stories en lewensverhaal as pleegkind</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Jy het vir my vertel oor jou lewensverhaal as pleegkind. Jy het probeer om jou lewe in die vorm van 'n storie aan my te vertel. Ek wil nou graag hê dat jy moet dink aan stories en hoe sommige stories 'n invloed gehad het op jou eie lewensverhaal as pleegkind.</li> <li>•Almal van ons het reeds van 'n baie jong ouderdom van</li> </ul>

		<p>stories gehoor en gekyk. Ons ouers het dalk of dalk nie vir ons stories gelees toe ons klein was of nie; ons hoor mense vertel stories oor alledaagse gebeure; ons kyk stories op televisie en hoor daarvan op radio; ons sien rolprente en opvoerings; ons leer van stories in skool, kerke, sinagoges, in speelparke, in die woonbuurt, met vriende, familie; ons vertel vir mekaar stories in ons daaglikse lewe; sommige van ons skryf selfs stories.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ek is geïnteresseerd om te hoor wat is sommige van jou gunstelingstories en watter invloed dit op jou vandag het, indien jy terugdink oor jou eie lewe en jou lewensverhaal.</li> <li>• In elke geval, probeer om 'n storie te identifiseer wat jy gehoor het in jou lewe wat by die beskrywing pas, en beskryf die storie baie kortliks, en vertel vir my of die storie 'n effek het op jou lewe en hoe dit jou affekteer.</li> <li>• Televisie, Rolprent, Opvoering: Stories. Dink terug aan televisie-rolprente wat jy gekyk het, rolprente, of enige ander vorm van vermaak of stories wat jy ervaar het.</li> <li>• Identifiseer een van jou gunsteling stories- byvoorbeeld 'n gunsteling televisie-film of reeks, 'n gunsteling movie/rolprent, toneelstuk en so meer.</li> <li>• Vertel vir my in 'n paar sinne wat die storie behels.</li> <li>• Vertel vir my hoekom hou jy so baie van die storie.</li> <li>• En vertel my of die storie 'n impak gehad het op jou lewe en hoe.</li> <li>• Boeke, Tydskrifte: Stories vertel</li> </ul> <p>Dink nou terug oor dinge wat jy gelees het- stories in boeke, tydskrifte, nuusblaaie, en so meer.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identifiseer een van jou gunstelingstories van die era. Weereens, vertel my meer oor die storie, hoekom jy daarvan hou, watter impak, indien enige, dit gehad het op jou lewe.</li> </ul>
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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Familie Stories, Vriende: Stories Gehoor</li> <li>•Terwyl jy opgegroeï het het jy baie stories gehoor van jou families of by ons vriende wat blywend is.</li> <li>•Stories wat ons altyd sal onthou. Familiestories wat dinge insluit wat ouers vir kinders vertel het oor die oudaë, hul familie herkoms, familie legendes/helde, en so meer.</li> <li>•Kinders vertel gewoonlik vir mekaar stories in speelparke, by die skool, op die telefoon, en so meer.</li> <li>•Daar is dele in n mens se lewe waaruit mens plesier vind, selfs in jou volwasse lewe.</li> <li>•Deel wat lewe 'n plesier maak, selfs gedurende volwassenheid, betrek vriende en familie wat stories vertel oor hulself en oor ander.</li> <li>•Probeer om een storie uit te wys soos die wat jy kan onthou, een wat altyd saam met jou gebly het.</li> <li>•Weereens, vertel my oor die storie, hoekom hou jy daarvan of hoekom onthou jy dit, en watter impak dit gehad het op jou lewe, indien enige.</li> </ul>
6.	<b>Alternatiewe toekoms vir jou lewensverhaal as pleegkind</b>	<p>UNIVERSITY OF THE WESTERN CAPE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Positiewe toekoms visie- Eerstens beskryf vir my hoe sien jy jou toekoms op 'n positiewe manier. Beskryf wat jy graag wil hê moet gebeur in jou toekoms ten opsigte van jou lewe, watter doelwitte en drome jy graag sal wil bereik in die toekoms. Probeer realisties wees in die bereiking daarvan. Met ander woorde sal ek graag wil hê dat jy 'n prentjie moet skets wat jy realisties sal wil sien wat gebeur in jou toekoms en tonele van jou lewensverhaal.</li> <li>•Negatiewe toekomsvisie- Omskryf vir my jou toekoms vanuit 'n negatiewe oogpunt. Beskryf 'n hoogs onbegeerlike/ontoepaslike toekoms vir jouself, een wat jy vrees wat met jou kan gebeur, maar wat jy nie graag wil hê of hoop moet met jou gebeur nie. Weereens, probeer realisties wees. Met ander woorde, sal ek graag wil hê dat jy 'n negatiewe prentjie skets vir jou lewensverhaal wat</li> </ul>

		moontlik kan gebeur maar wat jy hoop nie met jou gebeur nie.
7.	<b>Persoonlike waardesisteem</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Nou wil ek graag 'n paar vrae vra oor jou geloof en waardes en oor vrae van betekenis en geestelikheid in jou lewe. Sal u nadink oor elke van die vrae.</li> <li>•Neem vir n oomblik inag die godsdienstige of geestelike dimensies van jou lewe. Beskryf in kort jou godsdienstigheid of op watter manier jy geloof of godsdiens benader.</li> <li>•Beskryf hoe jou godsdiens of geestelikheid, waardes of geloof verander het.</li> <li>•Hoe benader jy politieke en sosiale idees/geskille/aspekte?</li> <li>•Het jy 'n spesifieke politieke uitgangspunt? Is daar spesifieke “issues” of oorsake wat jy baie sterk oor voel? Beskryf dit?</li> <li>•Wat is die mees belangrike waarde volgens jou in die lewe? Verduidelik.</li> <li>•Wat meer kan jy my vertel wat my sal help om beter te verstaan jou mees belangrike geloofsoortuiging en waardes oor jou lewe en die wêreld, die geestelike dimensie van jou lewe, of jou filosofie van lewe?</li> </ul>
8.	<b>Lewens Tema</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Kyk terug na jou hele lewensverhaal as 'n storie met hoofstukke en gebeure, as 'n uitbreiding na jou verlede sowel as die verbeelding in jou toekoms, kan jy 'n sentrale tema/middelpunt, boodskap, of idee wat deurlopend in jou lewe voorgekom het onderskei.</li> <li>•Wat is jou hooftema/belangrikste van jou lewensstorie/verhaal? Verduidelik?</li> </ul>
9.	<b>Ander</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Wat anders moet ek weet om jou lewensverhaal as pleegkind te verstaan?</li> </ul>



# UNIVERSITY OF THE WESTERN CAPE

Private Bag X 17, Bellville 7535, South Africa

Tel: +27 21-959 2012 Fax: 27 21-959 2845

E-mail: mcdonald.mlm@gmail.com

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## Annexure 5 C

**RESEARCH PROJECT:** Childhood Experiences of Foster Care- An Adult  
Life History Perspective

**INTERVIEW GUIDE:** A life History Interview Approach

**RESEARCHER:** Mr G.W. Matinka  
Student nr: 8956201  
Masters in Social Work (MSW)

**DEPARTMENT** Social Work

**SUPERVISOR:** Dr Marie- Minnaar Mcdonald

**FACULTY:** Community and Health



## **ISIKHOKELO SODLIWANO-NDLEBE: ISIKHOKELO ESINZULU**

### **UDLIWANO-NDLEBE 'NGEMBALI YOBOMI**

#### **ULUHLU LWEZIHLOKO :**

##### **1. IZAHLUKO ZOBOMI**

##### **2. IZIGANEKO EZIMANDLA**

###### **2.1 ISIGANEKO 1: Amava akwincopho**

###### **2.2 ISIGANEKO 2 : Amava obomi obuphantsi**

###### **2.3 ISIGANEKO 3 : Uvutho-ndaba**

###### **2.4 ISIGANEKO 4 : Iinkumbulo zamhlamnene**

###### **2.5 ISIGANEKO 5: Umboniso obalulekileyo wobuntwana**

###### **2.6 ISIGANEKO 6: Umboniso obalulekileyo wobutsha**

###### **2.7 ISIGANEKO 7: Umboniso obalulekileyo wobudala**

###### **2.8 ISIGANEKO 8: Amanye amava abalulekileyo**

##### **3. AMANZITHI NZITHI OBOMI**

##### **4. IIMPEMBELELO KWIMBALI YOBOMI: IZIPHUMO EZINTLE NEZIMBI**

###### **4.1 Ezintle**

###### **4.2 Ezimbi**

##### **5. AMABALI NEMBALI YOBOMI ALTERNATIVE FUTURES FOR THE LIFE-HISTORY**

##### **6. IZINTO EZINGAQHELEKANGA NGEKAMVE LEMBALI YOBOMI**

###### **6.1 Ikamva eliqaqambileyo**

###### **6.2 Ikamva elimfiliba**


##### **7. IINKOLELO ZAKHO**

##### **8. UMXHOLO KUBOMI**

##### **9. EZINYE IZINTO**

Uluhlu lezihloko	Udliwano-ndlebe ngembali yobomi	Imibuzo
1.	<b>Izahluko zobomi</b>	<p>Ucinga ngobomi bakho njengebali. Onke amabali anabalinganiswa, imiboniso, izakhiwo, izahluko, njalo njalo.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unovutho-ndaba luyafumaneka ebalini, khandichazele ngovutho-ndaba kobakho ubomi.</li> <li>• Amathuba aphantsi ayavezwa ebalini, ndixelele ngamathuba aphantsi kobakho ubomi.</li> <li>• Umntu uyawaxhamla amathuba obumnandi, ndixelele ngawakho.</li> <li>• Akho amaxesha enkohlakalo, khandixelele ngawakho.</li> <li>• Wonke umntu unabahlanguli, yayingoobani abakho yaye utsho kuba kutheni.</li> <li>• Zingakho neenkewu, chaza yayingobani ezakho ngokuba kutheni</li> </ul>
2.	<b>Iziganeko ezimandla</b>	<p>• Kwisiganeko ngasinye, chaza kuvokothেকে kwenzeka ntoni, wawuphi yayingoobani abachaphazelekayo, wenza ntoni, wawicinga yaye waziva njani malunga neso siganeko eso.</p> <p>• Kwakhona, kha ucacise ngempembelelo esi siganeko esathi sanayo ebalini lobomini bakho yaye sichaza ntoni ngawe xa kungoku.</p> <p>• Zama ukucacisa kuvokothেকে kweli ibakala.</p>
2.1	<b>Inqanaba 1: Amava akwincopho</b>	<p>• Uvuthondaba iyakuba lithuba apho ubusehlelwa ziindidi zeziganeko ebomini bakho.</p> <p>• Iya kuba lithuba ebomini bakho apho uxhamle iimvakalelo ezakhayo ezifana nemivuyo, imincili, ulonwabo olugqithisileyo, ukomelezwa komxhelo nomoya, okanye ukuxola emphefumleni.</p> <p>• Namhlanje, kwimiboniso yembali yakho elo thuba lakuvelela kwiinkumbulo zakho njengelona liphucukileyo, liqaqambileyo nelona limangalisayo.</p> <p>• Kha udandalazise elubala iinkcukacha zovuthondaba ngobomi bakho njengenkedama.</p>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Ndixelele kweenzeka ntoni, yeenzeka phi, ngoobani ababekho, wenza ntoni, wawucinga yaye uziva njani, mpembelelo ni eso siganeko esinayo kumntu owawunguye nonguye ngoku.</li> </ul>
2.2	<b>Inqanaba 2: Amava obomi obuphantsi</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Camngca ngobomi bakho, zama ukukhumbula isimo esakwenza waziva ungonwabanga, njengokudana, uzive uncamile, ungonelisekanga, usoyika, unesazela, njalo njalo.</li> <li>•Cinga ngesi simo “njengomgangatho ophantsi” kwimbali yobomi bakho.</li> <li>•Nangona ezi ngcinga zingonwabisi, kungandivuyisa ukuba ungazama unikezela ngezi nkukacha ngentembeko enkulu.</li> <li>•Zama uchaze ncakasana. Kwenzeka ntoni? Nini? Phi? Ngobani ababekho? Benza ntoni? Wenza ntoni? Wawucinga ntoni uziva njani? Mpembelelo ni esathi sanayo eso siganeko kuwe?? Nkcazeli ni esiyifumanayo ngawe kubomi bamhla mnene nobangoku?</li> </ul>
2.3	<b>Inqanaba 3: Uvutho-ndaba</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Kha ubangule umboniso kwimbali yobomi bakho onokuyithatha njengovuthondaba.</li> <li>•Ukuba ibali lobomi bakho akuluboni lunovuthondaba, kha uchaze umboniso othile onokuthi uwithathe njengovuthondaba.</li> </ul>
2.4.	<b>Inqanaba 4: Iinkumbulo zamhlanene</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Camngca ngeemini zobuntwana kangangoko unako. Nceda ukhethe yaye udandalazise iinkumbulo zobutsha bakho.</li> <li>•Ezo nkumbulo akunyanzelekanga ukuba zibe kanti zibalulekile ebomini bakho ngoku.</li> <li>•Okubalulekileyo kukuba ezo ngcinga sesinye sezehlo okanye enye yeengcinga onazo, okanye yenye yemiboniso kubomi bakho.</li> <li>•Le nkumbulo yipeculule khon’ukuze izalisekise ukuba “sisiganeko”</li> <li>•Oko kukuthi kufuneka ukhethe eyona nkumbulo (yobuntwana) oyakukwazi ukunxulumana noko</li> </ul>

		<p>kwakwenzekile, kuvele abo babekho, indlela owaucinga nowawuziva ngayo.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Nxulumanisa umyinge wobudala bakho nesiganeko eso.</li> </ul>
2.5	<b>Inqanaba 5: Umboniso obalulekileyo wobuntwana</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Ngoku cangcatha kwenye yeengcinga zakho zobuntwana, ngethuba uqalisa ukufikisa, ephuma phambili ngokubaluleka.</li> <li>•Ingayingcinga ekhuthazayo okanye embi. Kwenzeka ntoni? Ngoobani ababekho? Wenza ntoni? Wawucinga uziva njani? Eso siganeko sazala imiphumela enjani kuwe? Ithetha ukuthini ngobuwena nomntu owawunguye? Kutheni ibalulekile?</li> </ul>
2.6	<b>Inqanaba :6 Umboniso obalulekileyo wobutsha</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Kha uchaze isiganeko esiveleleyo okanye esibalulekileyo esenzeka ngethuba lobutsha bakho.</li> </ul> 
2.7	<b>Inqanaba 7: Umboniso obalulekileyo wobudala</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Kha uchaze isiganeko esenzeka ngethuba lobudala ukususela (kwiminyaka ye 21 ukunyuka) nebonakala ibalulekile okanye efuna ukuthathelwa ingqalelo.</li> </ul>
2.8	<b>Inqanaba 8: Amanye amava abalulekileyo</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Chaza isiganeko sibe sinye nangaphezulu, esenzeka nangaliphina ixesha kubomi bakho esivelelayo kwiingcinga zakho nesibonakala njengesibalulekileyo.</li> </ul>
3	<b>Amanzithi nzithi obomi</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Xa ujonge emva kwingqukuko yezahluko neziganeko zembali yobomi bakho, kha uchaze inzima okhe wahlangabezana nayo.</li> <li>• Wajongana njani nayo, wayiphatha njani okanye wayisombulula njani,</li> <li>• Ingaba abanye abantu bakhe bakunceda ekusombululeni le ngxaki?</li> <li>• Yaba namiphumela injani le ngxaki kwimbali yobomi bakho?</li> </ul>
4	<b>Iimpembelelo kwimbali yobomi</b>	<p><b>Iziphumo ezintle-</b> • Xa ujonge imbali yobomi bakho, kha ukhethe umntu abemnye, iqela labantu okanye</p>

		<p>umbutho/iqumrhu, eliye lashiya ifuthe eliziphumo zintle kwimbali yobomi bakho.</p> <p>Kha uchaze lo mntu, iqela okanye umbutho ngendlela athe okanye othe wanefuthe elihle kwibali lakho.</p> <p><b>Iinkumbulo ezimbi- •</b> Camngca ngembali yobomi bakho, chonga umntu abemnye, iqela labantu okanye umbutho owathi efuthe elibi kwimbali yobomi bakho.</p> <p>Nceda uchaze indlela lomntu, iqela labantu, okanye umbutho awathi wanefuthe elibi kwimbali yobomi bakho.</p>
5	<b>Amabali nembali yobomi</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Ubundixelela ngembali yobomi bakho.</li> <li>•Ngokwenza njalo, ubuzama ukundibalisela ubomi bakho njengebali.</li> <li>•Ngoku ndingathanda ukuba ucinge nzulu ngamabali nendlela amanye amabali athe anempembelelo kwimbali yobomi bakho.</li> <li>•Kusukela ebuntwaneni, siva yaye sibukele amabali.</li> <li>•Ngethuba sisakhula abazali bethu bebengasifundela amabali; besiya kuva abantu bebalisa amabali ngeziganeko ezechla mihla le; sibukele amabali koomabonakude sive nakoonomathotholo; sibukela imiboniso bhanya-bhanya nemidlalo; sifunda ngamabali ezikolweni; ezicaweni; kwiindawo zonqulo; kwiindawo zokudlala; ekuhlaleni; kubahlobo; kusapho lwethu; sibaliselana amabali mihla le; abanye bethu bade babhale amabali.</li> <li>•Ndinomdla wokukwazi malunga namabali owathandileyo nokuba ananxaxheba ni ayithathileyo ngendlela ocinga ngayo ngobomi nembali yakho. Ndiza kubuza ngeendidi ezintathu zamabali.</li> <li>•Kwisimo ngasinye, zama utyumbe ibali owakhe waliva , khawuthi vandla vandla ngebali elo, undixelele indlela okanye imiphumela yelo bali kuwe.</li> <li>•Umabonakude, umboniso-bhanya bhanya, umdlalo: Amabali abukelwayo. Camngca ngemiboniso owawukhe</li> </ul>

		<p>wayibukela kumabonakude, imiboniso bhanya bhanya okanye naluphi uhlobo lomdlalo okanye amabali owakhe wawava kumaziko osasazo.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Nceda utyumbe amabali avusa umxhelo kuwe kolu luhlu—umzekelo, elona bali uluthandayo kumabonakude, owona mboniso uwuthandayo, umdlalo, njalo njalo.</li> <li>•Kwizivakalisi ezingephi, ndixelele ukuba ibali lingantoni.</li> <li>•Ndixelele yintoni le ikubangela ukuba ulithande ibali elo.</li> <li>•Yaye undixelele ukuba ibali laba nampembelelo injani ebomini bakho.</li> <li>•Iincwadi, iimagazini: amabali afundiweyo</li> <li>•Ngoku camngca ngezinto owakhe wawafunda—iincwadi, iimagazini, nezinye izinto ezifundwayo.</li> <li>•Nceda utyumbe elinye lamabali owathandayo kolu luhlu.</li> <li>•Kwakhona, khawuthi gqaba gqaba ngebali elo, kwakutheni ukuze ulithande, yaye mpembelelo ni, ukuba yayikho elaba nayo ebomini bakho.</li> <li>•Amabali osapho, abahlobo: Amabali owakhe waweve Ekukhuleni, uninzi lwethu luva amabali kwiintsapho okanye kubahlobo bethu nathi aphile nathi; amabali esithi siwakhumbule.</li> <li>•Amabali athi afumaneke kwiintsapho zethu aquka izinto abathi abazali bazibalisele abantwana malunga “neentsuku zakudala” inkcubeko, iintsomi, njalo njalo.</li> <li>•Abantwana babaliselana amabali kwiindawo zemidlalo, esikolweni, kwiimfono-mfono, njalo njalo.</li> <li>•Inxalenye eyenza ukuba ubomi bube bumbandi nasebuntwaneni, iquka ubukho babahlobo nosapho bebaliselana amabali ngabo nabanye.</li> <li>• Zama uchonge ibali osalikhumbulayo, nelathi lahlala kuwe</li> <li>• Kwakhona, kha undenzela amagqaba ntshintshi ngebali elo, ukuba kutheni ulithanda okanye kutheni</li> </ul>
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		ulikhumbula, miphumela mini elithe lanayo ebomini bakho.
6.	<b>Izinto ezingaqhelekanga ngekamva lembali yobomi</b>	<p>• <b>Ikamva eliqaqambileyo</b>- okokuqala, kha undixelele ngekamva eliqqambileyo. Kha undixelele ngokulindeleyo kwikamva eliqaqambileyo lembali yobomi bakho, uquke iziphumo namaphupha ongawafezekisa ukuphumeza ikamva lakho. Xa usenza oku zama ukunyaniseka. Ngamanye amazwi, ndifuna undizobele umfanekiso okholelekayo ngoko unqwenela ukukuzuza kwikamva lakho njengenxalenye yezahluko nemiboniso kwimbali yobomi bakho.</p> <p>• <b>Ikamva elimfiliba</b>- Ngoku, kha undichazele ngekamva elimfiliba. Oko kukuthi, kha ndichazele ngekamva ongalingweneliyo, eli ucinga ukuba ungalifumana kodwa unganqweneli ukulifumana. Kwakhona, zama ukunyaniseka. Ngamanye amazwi, kha undizobele umfanekiso wekamva elimfiliba elinako ukwenzeka kodwa unqwenela ukuba lingenzeki.</p>
7.	<b>Iinkolelo zakho</b>	<p>• Ngoku ndinqwenela ukubuza imibuzo embalwa malunga neenkolelo ongqiyame ngazo nangezinto ezinexabiso kubomi bakho.</p> <p>• Nceda ucingisise nzulu ngale mibuzo.</p> <p>• Okwethutyana cinga ngonqulo. Ungangenanga nzulu kha uchaze ngenkolo yakho kunqulo okanye indlela ohlangabezana ngayo neenkolelo zakho.</p> <p>• Nceda uchaze indlela unqulo, izinto ezixabisekileyo okanye iinkolo ezithe zatshintsha ekuhambeni kwamaxesha.</p> <p>• Uhlangabezana njani neengxaki zezopolitiko kwakunye nezoluntu jikelele. Ingaba unayo imbono ethile yezobupolitiki? Ingaba unazo izinto ezithile ovakalelwa kakhulu ngazo? Kha uzichaze.</p> <p>• Yeyiphi eyona nto ibalulekileyo kubomi bomntu? Tyatyadula.</p> <p>• Yeyiphi enye into onokundixelela yona khon'ukuze</p>



		ndiqonde iinkolelo nezinto ezixabisekileyo ngobomi bakho nangelizwe jikelele, izinto ezidibene nonqulo okanye iimbono zakho ngobomi?
8.	<b>Umxholo kubomi</b>	•Xa ujonge emva kubomi bakho njengebali elinesakhiwo nezahluko, ubuyele emva ukwadibanisa nekamva elicingelekayo, ungakwazi ukukhupha owona mxholo, myalezo okanye eyona ngcinga irhuntyela ngebali? Ngowuphi owona mxholo wobomi bakho? Cacisa.
9.	<b>Ezinye izinto</b>	•Yeyiphi enye into emandiyazi khon'uze ndiqonde ibali lobomi bakho?





### CONSENT FOR DATA COLLECTION

I, PETER JOHN CLOETE, National Executive Director of CHILD WELFARE SOUTH AFRICA (CWSA) hereby confirm that permission has been granted to Godfrey Matinka to do data collection at CWSA Kleinmond and CWSA Hermanus.

CWSA has been provided with the proof of ethical clearance from the higher degree's committee of UWC.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "PJ Cloete".

**PJ CLOETE**  
**NATIONAL EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR: CWSA**

Date 16 NOVEMBER 2016

Signature of Researcher : \_\_\_\_\_



**SUPPORTS CWSA**

**A CHILD IN NEED IS A NEED IN DEED**  
**SAY NO TO VIOLENCE AGAINST CHILDREN**



**NATIONAL EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

**National Head Office: 011-452-4110 (T) • 011 391 1215 (F)**

247 Monument Road • Glen Marais • Kempton Park • 1619 • P.O. BOX 2846 • EDENVALE 1610

E-mail: [nedi@childwelfaresa.org.za](mailto:nedi@childwelfaresa.org.za): [www.childwelfaresa.org.za](http://www.childwelfaresa.org.za)

NPO Reg no: 000-834. PBO Reg: 930009521



**BESTUURDER: MAATSKAPLIKE DIENSPROGRAMME**

Tel: (028) 316 4739 / Faks 086 549 5557 / Sel: 082 803 6870 / Epos: riettabmd@telkomsa.net

2 May 2017

Mr Godfrey Matinka (M-student)  
HAWSTON

**Permission to do research within Badisa -**

Your email on 21 April 2017 refers.

Permission is given to you to do research within the program. We give consent that you can involve our office in Gansbaai (Hermanus, Stanford, Gansbaai Social Services/Badisa) in your research.

The following conditions apply:

- The research may not infringe on working time, no cost implication, participation of staff is voluntary.
- We cannot provide administrative support, and help with any arrangements.

Please note that all findings and recommendations must be provided to the organization.

Good luck with your research and study.

Kind Regards.

*MM Engelbrecht*  
MM Engelbrecht  
Manager: Social Services Programmes (Overberg)



**OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR: RESEARCH  
RESEARCH AND INNOVATION DIVISION**

Private Bag X17, Bellville 7535  
South Africa  
T: +27 21 959 2988/2948  
F: +27 21 959 3170  
E: [research-ethics@uwc.ac.za](mailto:research-ethics@uwc.ac.za)  
[www.uwc.ac.za](http://www.uwc.ac.za)

01 September 2016

Mr G Matinka  
Social Work  
Faculty of Community and Health Sciences

**Ethics Reference Number HS 16/6/31**

**Project Title:** Childhood experiences of foster care in the Overberg Region of the Western Cape – An adult life history perspective.

**Approval Period:** 24 August-2016 – 24 August 2017

I hereby certify that the Humanities and Social Science Research Ethics Committee of the University of the Western Cape approved the methodology and ethics of the above mentioned research project.

Any amendments, extension or other modifications to the protocol must be submitted to the Ethics Committee for approval. Please remember to submit a progress report in good time for annual renewal.

The Committee must be informed of any serious adverse event and/or termination of the study.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Josias'.

*Ms Patricia Josias  
Research Ethics Committee Officer  
University of the Western Cape*

**PROVISIONAL REC NUMBER - 130416-049**